

Psalm 62

Sunday 8 Year A
Evening Prayer Wednesday Week 2

In a situation of menace, the psalmist asserts his trust in God alone. In verses 8ff he pleads with others to do the same, reminding them that the power claimed by their oppressors is illusory. Real power rests with God. Ultimately what matters to God is the way we live. The title reads: 'To the leader: according to Jeduthun. A Psalm* of David.' Juduthun was a singer in David's court (see 1Chronicles 16:41 and Psalm 39).

This refrain expresses the mood of the psalm. It is repeated in verses five and six. 'Soul' translates the Hebrew *nepeš*. See the article 'Being' in the Introduction. Everything in him longs for God.

The psalmist is under extreme pressure.

Do not drag me away with the wicked,
with those who do evil, offering a greet-
ing of peace to their neighbours,
while mischief is in their hearts.

– Psalm 28:3

An enemy speaks sweetly with his lips,
but in his heart he plans to throw you into
a pit. An enemy may have tears in his
eyes, but if he finds an opportunity he will
never have enough of your blood.

– Sirach 12:16

This is a repeat of the refrain with which the psalm opened, with 'hope' replacing 'salvation'. The psalmist is confident that he will stand firm, thanks to his faith in God. We recall the words of Isaiah:

If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall
not stand at all.

– Isaiah 7:9

Here he is inviting others to join him in his faith.

***¹Only in God can my soul* find rest;
in him is my salvation*.***

***²He alone is my rock, my salvation*,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.***

***³How long will you assail a person,
will you batter your victim, all of
you, as you would a leaning wall, a
tottering fence?***

***⁴Their only plan is to bring down a
person of prominence.
They take pleasure in falsehood;
they bless* with their mouths, but
inwardly they curse. [Selah*]***

***⁵Only in God can my soul* find rest;
in him is my hope*.***

***⁶He alone is my rock, my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.***

***⁷In God is my salvation* and my
glory*, my mighty rock. My refuge
is in God.***

***⁸Trust* in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart* before him;
God is a refuge for us. [Selah*]***

Put trust in God alone

⁹Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; placed together on a balance, up they go; they are lighter than a breath.

There is a radical existential inconsistency in all that is human. However we might appear, we are in reality no more than a breath, a puff of wind [Hebrew *hebel*, *הֶבֶל*]. The only basis for any consistency is in the strong and faithful God. We must put trust in God. How can anyone rely on human beings?

... who live in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like a moth.

– Job 4:19

Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust ... All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

– Isaiah 40:15,17

YHWH, let me know my end, the measure of my years, that I may know how fleeting my life is. You have given me only a short span of life, and my days are as nothing in your sight. We human beings last no longer than a mere breath. I will pass away like a shadow. We worry over nothin. We amass possessions, but for whom?

– Psalm 39:4-6

¹⁰Put no trust* in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart* on them.

You reject this word, and put your trust in oppression and deceit, and rely on them.

– Isaiah 30:12

Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the alien residing within you suffers extortion; the orphan and the widow are wronged in you ... In you, they take bribes to shed blood; you take both advance interest and accrued interest, and make gain of your neighbours by extortion; and you have forgotten me, says the Lord God ... The people of the land have practised extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the alien without redress.

– Ezekiel 22:7,12,29

¹¹God has spoken once; twice have I heard this: power belongs to God, ¹²and kindness* belongs to you, O Lord, for you repay each person according to what that person has done.

Jesus told us:

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

– Matthew 6:21

Jesus insists on this point in his parable about the ultimate judgment (see Matthew 25:31-46).