**Background & Lesson: Psalm 56:1-13**

**Motivation:**  FDR famously said "There's nothing to fear but fear itself." While this attitude might work in the short term, it's really not practical for life management.

Dave wrote Psalm 56 sometime after he slew Goliath and before he was crowned King.

He was relatively young and in the process of fleeing for his life from King Saul.

David proveds a long-term process for overcoming fear. (1 Samuel 21:10-15)

**Examination:**

1. 1. **Admit Your Fears (1-7)**

   **A. Who to Fear**

   1. The Unmerciful "For man would swallow me up; (1a) We must trust in God's mercy ( "Be merciful to me, O God..."") For there are those who would show no mercy.

   They will seek to devour our reputation, resources, or respect.

   They have no concern about the consequences to us as long as their agenda is advanced.
2. The Oppressor *“Fighting all day he oppresses me...”* (1b) These enemies are relentless. They continue to keep the pressure on us. They seek to discourage (John 8:44), to devour (1 Peter 5:8) and to destroy (John 10:10a).

3. The Enemy *“My enemies would hound me all day”* (2) Satan continues to send his minions to *“hound” us day after day.*

When Jesus completed the 40 days of fasting and temptation, the enemy *“departed from Him until an opportune time.”* (Luke 4:13b).

Even thoroughly humiliated by Jesus Himself, Satan wouldn't give up.

He looked for another opportunity for ambush.

4. The Fighters *“For there are many who fight against me, O Most High.”* (2b) We are often surprised when we encounter spiritual opposition. Perhaps we grow accustomed to a *“politically correct culture in which no one is supposed to take a stand on any moral issue.”* So, when one sticks his head above the herd and declares a truth straight out of the Bible, he/she may face attack from *“many who fight against me.”*}

B. What to Do (3-4)

1. Trust *“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You”* (3) Notice that fear is a given. There absolutely will be times when we are afraid.
Courage is not the absence of fear.

Courage is the willingness to do the right thing (trust God) in spite of our fear.

We demonstrate trust by our obedience to His understood will and purpose for us.

2. Praise "In God I will praise His Word" (4) In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Blessed are you when they revile you and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

In Acts 5:41, we read "So they (the Apostles) departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name."

3. Understand "I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?" Jesus said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul..." (Matt. 10:28a, NIV).

Often, our fears focus on the temporal things which surround us.

We have to understand that we are built to last for eternity.

C. Why Should We Be on Guard (5-6)

1. Twisted words "All day they twist my Words..." (5a)

2. Evil thoughts "All their thoughts are against me for evil." (5b)
3. Unified opposition "They gather together"; (6a)

4. Secret plans "they hide"; (6b)

5. Deadly intent "they lie in wait for my life"; (6c)

D. To Whom Can We Turn? "In anger cast down the peoples, O God!"; (7b)

En garde! Man the barricades!

Circle the Wagons! All of these are probably good defensive strategies.

However, when were are fearful, we can trust in the Lord, not only to defend us but also to fight for us.

II. Focus on God (8-9)

A. God Knows Me "You number my wanderings"; (8a) David was fleeing in the wilderness from King Saul (1 Samuel 19-21).

In his flight, he lost touch with his wife, his best friend and his family.

Yet, he never lost touch with God.

When afraid, we sometimes wonder if God really knows what we're experiencing.

David's affirmation is that God keeps track of us.

B. God Care for Me "Put my tears in Your bottle; are they not in Your book?"; (8b)
1. He understands “my tears” - God’s care is based on His intimate knowledge of our inner workings, not only does He number our hairs (Matt. 10:30), but He also collects our tears. In heaven, God will wipe the tears away (Isa. 25:8).

2. He takes personal interest “Your bottle” - These tears of the saints become a personal possession of Almighty God.

3. He keeps exacting accounts “Your book” - The extent of God’s care is described in poetic language. He receives our grief and records our sorrows (Mal. 3:16).

C. God Defends Me “When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because God is for me.” (9) David was described as “a man after (God’s) own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14).

The key question is not whose side God is on; the real issue is whose side am I on.

III. Follow Through With Praise (10-13)

David concludes by sharing some resources which are helpful during fearful times:

A. God’s Word “In God (I will praise His word), In the Lord (I will praise His word)” (10). God’s Word is a praiseworthy strength during fearful times. His commands keep us on mission.

His corrections
keep us out of trouble.

His comforts (promises) keep us from despair.

His Word has the ability to take us deeper in fellowship with Him during fearful times.

David begins with "In God," a somewhat impersonal term of address; he goes on to use "the LORD," God's covenant name, Jehovah or Yahweh.

B. ▪ Trust "In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid.▪ What can man do to me?" (11) It is truly during fearful times that our trust is put to the test.

Will we waver or distance ourselves from God and God's people? Or, will our faith be renewed by His faithfulness.

Like steel being forged in a furnace, the fires of testing forge our trust and multiple its strength.

Vs. 4 "what can flesh do to me?" is essentially repeated.

King Saul vowed to kill David.

The Philistines imprisoned him at Gath.

Goliath tried to crush him.

David had seen it all, endured the worst, and come out of it stronger in his faith than before.

C. ▪ Commitment "Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God; I will render praises to You." (12) Times of trial and fear are not the best time to decide whether you'll be faithful to God. Such commitments must be made with a clear head and an uncluttered heart.

However, commitments to God can help us weather rough storms.
Our marriage vows are a good example of commitments providing strength in fearful times. When fear of a changing relationship or anger at supposed wrong would make us want to end a marriage, vows made to God can provide the endurance to see God work a miracle.

D. Experience "For You have delivered my soul from death. Have you not kept my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

At Gath, David was truly trapped "between the devil and the deep blue sea."

He was pursued by Saul & captured by the Philistines.

He faced death on a daily basis.

But God provided the insight to feign madness (1 Sam. 21:13) which allowed David's escape (1 Sam. 22:1).

David's past experiences of God's faithfulness gave him the assurance to face new challenges without, "...falling that I might walk before God..."

It is said that hindsight is 20/20.

In the spiritual realm, God's past performance is a guarantee of future expectations.

Applications:

1. Admit fear and trust God (1 John 4:18).

2. Our adoption by God prompts trust (Romans 8:15).
3. Fear only God and give Him glory (Revelation 14:7).

**Leader Pack Item 10:** Handout: "When I Am Afraid"; **Item 11:** Handout: "Reflecting on My Fears"

**Illustrator:** No Illustrator Article this week

**Notes:** **You may access David's Lesson Preview in MP3 format at:** http://www.hfbcbiblestudy.org/

**Dates:** 8/26 - 11/18 - Fall Midlink; 9/8 - 11/17 - LivingProof Bible Study; 10/31 - First Fest - CLC; 11/1 - Time Change Sunday;
- 11/7 - Breakaway Ministries Event;
- 11/8 - New & Pros. Member Orientation;
- 11/11 - FBA Veteran's Day Service;
- 11/15 - Parent Commitment;
- 11/15 - Christmas Store Gift Collection Day;
- 11/20 - FBA Grandparents & Friends Day;
- 11/29 -

- **Thanksgiving Weekend** - (No SBS)
- normal worship sched.;
- 12/5 - Christmas Store;
- 12/10 - FBA Christmas Fine Arts Festival;
- 12/11-12 - Christmas Celebration;
- 12/17
- FBA Primary & Lower School Christmas Plays;
  12/19
- Candycane Lane;
  12/27

Christmas Weekend (No SBS)
- normal worship Schedule.