

“The Rest We Share”  
Psalm 62:1-8

Social media have brought more information to our electronic devices than ever before. These media give us instant news with live interviews of people experiencing all kinds of situations in their lives from happy occasions to devastating disasters to bizarre moments. But in times of crisis, electronic devices can be a great blessing. Rescuers mobilized before the winds and rains of Hurricane Michael subsided were able to receive calls, texts, emails, and other messages from people in dire need. First responders were able to pinpoint where these people were and how best to bring them the help they desperately needed.

But social media have, for many, actually raised the level of fear and uncertainty about their safety and even their future. Church and school shootings, terrorist acts, and threatening Facebook or Snapchat postings are just a few things that have robbed many people of their sense of security and peace. Instead of the world moving closer to peace and love and brotherhood, the world seems to be drifting further away. Hatred and division are on the rise while love and peace are losing out.

Where does a person go for peace and security in an uncertain world like ours? Hiding will not help. Denial is no good. Going “off the grid” may bring temporary relief but the cruel reality of sin and strife is still there, lurking within the next bit of unhappy news.

Many centuries ago a man struggled mightily with the insecurity of his world. Although he was king of a small nation, he was under a serious attack from an enemy or enemies who wanted to overthrow him as king. That man, now in his elder years, was King David. And he wrote

Psalm 62 to share some of his own uncertainty and where he found peace and rest. Let's read his words. Psalm 62:1-8:

“For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation.

He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood.

They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from Him.

He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”

Notice how aged King David compares himself to “a leaning wall, a tottering fence”? Isn't that what typically happens with old age? In our younger years we can stand erect and straight, but as time goes along we tend to lean further and further forward until we become like a leaning wall or a tottering fence” in need of something to prop us up a bit. And when a person reaches old age, the last thing he or she should have to worry about is security or peace or rest. After all, aren't those the “golden years,” the take-it-easy years, the sunset years of peace and tranquility?

Not for David. What did he have on his plate? Well, for one thing, he had a rebellious son named Absalom. You might remember that Absalom would rise up early in the morning and stand by the city gate engaging people and telling them how their lives would be better if he were king. The Bible tells us that Absalom “stole the hearts of the men of Israel.” After doing this for four years he gathered his supporters at the city of Hebron and declared himself king.

When this news came to King David, the real king, he had to flee Jerusalem quickly, and if it weren't for God's spirit moving Absalom to believe some bad advice and thereby not immediately pursue his father, David might not have survived the attack. Certainly aged King

David was in a very precarious situation. His own son was out to kill him and usurp the throne God had given to him.

This is what was going on in David's life; a time of great uncertainty, fear, and anxiety. But the years, despite robbing him of his ability to stand vertically, taught him to stand straight in unwavering faith. He learned, and now teaches even us today, where to find rest and peace when confronted with the threats and uncertainties of our world. Rest and peace are found in God alone. He is the rock. He is the fortress. He is the salvation we need.

You may have heard about Melissa Falkowski, a journalism and English teacher at Parkland High School in Florida, who hid 19 students in her classroom closet when she learned there was an active shooter at the school. This heroic woman is a reflection of God who hides you and me in the shadow of His wings as evil rages around us. Or how about assistant football coach Aaron Feis at Parkland, who stepped in front of students to protect them from the gunfire. Aaron Feis gave his life for his students. On the cross, Jesus, the very Son of God, your Brother, took what would crush you and died in your place. The only place you can find lasting rest in this turbulent world is in the One who conquered death and gives you life. Through that living Word, Jesus Christ, you receive rest. Through the presence of Jesus in Holy Communion, you are hidden in Jesus' grace, strength, and forgiveness. This world will rage. It may even injure you physically and emotionally. But Jesus, who is Lord over all, is your rock of protection and salvation.

Psalm 62 is different from most other Psalms. Psalms usually describe the bad situation the writer is experiencing and then includes prayers or petitions to God asking Him to do certain things about it. Psalm 62, however, has no such requests. Here, David makes a simple but strong statement of faith and confidence in the God who knows all things, sees all things, and who

promises to bless those who trust in Him. Psalm 62 simply and powerfully declares God to be our rock and our salvation, the one who gives us rest and quiets our souls.

It is also interesting that David does not use the usual Hebrew word for “rest” in this Psalm. Instead, he uses a less familiar Hebrew word that is translated “silent” or “silence.” “For God alone my soul waits in silence,” David wrote. This Hebrew word goes beyond physical or emotional rest. It invites us to stand in the presence of the almighty God not saying anything and not bringing anything, but in silence receiving the peace that God our rock and salvation gives us no matter what is happening around us.

In a turbulent and frightening world, this is the gift we’ve been given. Listen to the Apostle Paul as he describes the harrowing journey of God’s people through the wilderness in the Old Testament under the leadership of Moses: “For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them.” And what was the spiritual rock that followed them and sustained them through flood and heat and scarcity and fear? St. Paul says this: “And the Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

Stories of dramatic rescues following the flooding and destruction of hurricanes Florence and now Michael are widely known. You have seen stirring photos and videos and have been moved by the accounts of self-sacrifice and risking life to save life. But there was, and continues to be, a storm more violent, destructive, and widespread than Michael. It is the storm of sin and death, and it has engulfed all of humanity. All of us were stranded helplessly by the floodwaters of our fallenness. We were in imminent danger of being swept away forever by sin’s turbulence.

But then the greatest rescue in the history of the world unfolded. Jesus as our rock and our salvation came and bore our sins and the punishment we deserve because of them. He is the one who was promised to Adam and Eve; the one who died and rose from the dead to give us great confidence and assurance no matter who attacks us or what is happening around us. Oh, we will get shaken. We will be blown. We will feel insecure, anxious, even fearful. But in Jesus we stand before the Father with our soul silent, receiving life abundantly and a peace that passes all human understanding.

Many congregations in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are celebrating and thanking God for the ministry of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League. For 76 years the LWML has been supporting mission work nationally and internationally. The women are truly Lutheran Women in Mission, and they are also women of encouragement. The LWML hasn’t just been collecting pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters in their mite boxes, they have also been encouraging women and men in their faith-walk to find true rest in God alone. Over the 76 years of ministry, the LWML has lived through major challenges in our world and country, and even in their own organization, trying to meet tremendous human needs in body, mind, and soul. Through all of the challenges and uncertainties, the LWML has placed their trust in God and have looked to Him for direction. Lives have been touched through their work, and people have received that rest that comes from the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

David lived in uncertainty and so do we. David received from God a certain physical and emotional rest, and he also received a silence—a rest that nothing in this world of insecurity could take away from him. We have this same assurance as we live in this uncertain age. It is the gift we can stand upon because our God is our rock and salvation—the one who loves us and sent His

Son to redeem us. May God grant us His Spirit so that we may daily say, "My soul finds silence in God alone." Amen.