

Songs of Summer: Psalm 60

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This is a day we've been planning for and preparing for many, many weeks. As evidenced by this bright blue shirt, this is the first day of Vacation Bible school, we're calling Wild Summer Adventure. Different for us than any year in the past because it's not here on this property. We will be at Oconee County High School. There's supper tonight, if you want to get a hot dog and hang out with some folks. 4:30 there at Oconee county high school. Come for that. And then Bible school gets started at 5:30, registration I believe for kids is at the Oconee Civic center. Just that whole piece of property we are involved with. Vacation Bible school has right at 600 kids that are preregistered and we expect there'll be some others that walk up and register tonight. There's over 300 of you that have registered and prepare to serve during vacation Bible school this week.

It couldn't happen without you and thank you so much for making yourself available to help with VBS this year. A couple of things that we need help with is right after this service at 11:30, if you're available and could lift some furniture, could move some things, we're going to have trucks and trailers at the children's building and we've got to move a lot of furniture, a lot of supplies to the high school. Or you could go to the high school and wait there for loads of stuff to get there to unload but we need your help. We need you to use pronouns like "we" instead of "they", so we are having Bible school this week. We are moving furniture today. We are serving this week. We are praying this week. Next Thursday night we need help. At 8:30 we wrap up, we got to pack all of that stuff back up and bring it to the property cause we'll be using all of those supplies and things next Sunday.

A lot of churches that are new church plants across the land had to pack and unpack and load and reload and move every Sunday. This is one week we got to get it done, make it happen and we can do it with lots of help. So next Thursday night at 8:30, show up to help load and move stuff back here. We need prayer walkers, prayer warriors, maybe you haven't registered or maybe you have registered to serve. If you could come this afternoon and just walk the halls of the high school, walk the property of the high school and just pray. Praying for the kids, praying for the workers, praying for the families, praying for all the things that will go on this week. I know without question that Scott and Leah and Gayle, the whole VBS team, believed that the most important preparation for the week are our prayers.

We need you to be prayer warriors for this week and you could do it just by showing up and walking the property for a little bit today and praying for what's ahead. When you see this blue shirt, I think about, we're about to pump a thousand of these VBS shirts into our community over the next week, multiple colors. And these W's, you'll see all over the place, and somebody may ask or you may wonder yourself, what's the deal with the bar that runs through the W?

There's a point behind that. There's a verse behind that, there're two verses behind that. And that bar that runs to the W represents light. And in John 3:19 it says, "The light has come into the world." In John 12:46 it says, "I have come into the world as a light." And when we look at that W, and we think about Watkinsville, we think about Jesus Christ, the light of the world has come. He's interrupted our life, he's intersected our life and our lives will never be the same again because of that. And so when you see that W all week long be praying that the light of Jesus will interrupt, the light of Jesus will intersect lives all week long. Kids will be saved, parents will be saved, Jesus will do eternal work during this week. Let's pray together, let's bow and I want us to just continue to pray for what's happening with Bible school right now. Would you bow? The Lord will bring to your heart ways that you could pray for the week as you pray for wild summer adventure. I would ask you to pray also for a group of students that are serving around the globe. Right now we have eight college students that just landed in Boston. They will be there for the next two months. We have eight students that have just landed in Puerto Rico, four students, so eight in Boston, four in Puerto Rico. Would you pray for their summer of work, that "going" that we're part of. It's happening right here in our community it's happening in Puerto Rico, it's happening in Boston and let's do the work of prayer right now. Would you do that? Lift your voices, pray. I'll be quiet and then close us in just a second.

Father, we come to you with praise in our hearts, praise on our lips, praise in our mouth. You're worthy. Our trust is in you. We bow before you to ask for your help. We've done Bible school dozens of years. We've planned, we've prepared, we've got some routines, routines and habits, and ways of doing things. Father, as church family today, we acknowledge that it is vain. It is nothing if you're not in it. You are our strength. You are our help. Victory comes from you. You are wise and you know all things. We can't change hearts. We can't make an eternal difference in the lives of people. Father, we are asking you to do that work. We pray, Father, as the good news of Jesus is shared that it would land in good soil, good hearts, just hearts ready to receive and respond. And would you work out in advance of this sharing the gospel to prepare lives and hearts to be saved this week. Pray for families that will be around bringing their kids, that they would see Jesus in us and hear Jesus. Lord, we pray that every step along the way this week would be under your authority, under your control. Holy Spirit, fill us. Use us. Let the fruit of the spirit overflow from our lives. We'd die to ourselves. We are crucified with Christ. We want you to be exalted. We want you to do your work. Lord, we commit the week to you. We pray, Father, for a team that's in Boston, a team that's in Puerto Rico, that they would be strengthened today, that they would be encouraged. I pray that you would use them to bring encouragement to believers on the ground there and you would use them to share the gospel and use them to lead others to you. Would pray for changed lives and birth of new churches. We pray for your kingdom to advance. We pray for our study in psalms, particularly Psalm 60 right now. Holy Spirit, be our teacher, convicter, encourager. Lord Jesus, let us walk away from here today dependent on you, loving you more, surrender to you. If there's any person in this room, Father, that's never trusted you as Savior and Lord, we pray today for salvation to come to their hearts and their lives. Jesus, we pray in your name. Amen.

This is now the second week in our Songs of Summer series. We began last week with Psalm 59. We began several years ago, during the summer, months working our way through the hymn book of the Bible. 150 Psalms. 150 songs. Words put together by King David, by Moses, by Asaph, words that are put there for us to know what's happened in the past, to understand how God works in the present, even prophecies that will be fulfilled in the future. And today, we come to Psalm 60. By the end of the summer, we hope to end with Psalm 67 and I want to encourage you to memorize psalm 67. Seven verses, it's the Psalm that has the phrase in it, "Let the nations be glad." It's seven verses, have about eight weeks, nine weeks to memorize. Begin working on it now so that we can come together the last Sunday of July and we might be able to say that Psalm, those seven verses, together. Psalm 67. Commit it to memory over these summer months. Today we're in psalm 60. it's a different Psalm than any others. I want to acknowledge to you that Psalm 60 is a scary Psalm.

There is reality and Psalm 60 that is frightening and it's hard truth. It's an acknowledgement of something that we often don't show on our face, or say out loud, but deep in our heart we may believe has happened and I believe that there are times in our life where it is reality that what is spoken of in Psalm 60 does happen. The very first phrase of Psalm 60 is King David declaring that God has rejected his people. Look at it. Psalm 60 verse one

- You have rejected us, God, and burst upon us;  
you have been angry—now restore us!
- <sup>2</sup>You have shaken the land and torn it open;  
mend its fractures, for it is quaking.
- <sup>3</sup>You have shown your people desperate times;  
you have given us wine that makes us stagger.
- <sup>4</sup>But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner  
to be unfurled against the bow.<sup>[a]</sup>
- <sup>5</sup>Save us and help us with your right hand,  
that those you love may be delivered.
- <sup>6</sup>God has spoken from his sanctuary:  
“In triumph I will parcel out Shechem  
and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth.
- <sup>7</sup>Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;  
Ephraim is my helmet,  
Judah is my scepter.
- <sup>8</sup>Moab is my washbasin,  
on Edom I toss my sandal;  
over Philistia I shout in triumph.”
- <sup>9</sup>Who will bring me to the fortified city?  
Who will lead me to Edom?
- <sup>10</sup>Is it not you, God, you who have now rejected us  
and no longer go out with our armies?

- <sup>11</sup> Give us aid against the enemy,  
for human help is worthless.
- <sup>12</sup> With God we will gain the victory,  
and he will trample down our enemies.

One of the beautiful treasures of Psalms is that the words are so honest. The songs are so honest, there's no attempt to just wait around in the gray area. It's just clarity, honesty, not hiding things, and David is in a situation. King David is in a situation here where it's his assessment that God has rejected him and the Israelite people, and he's dealing with that. He's confronting that and the reason that he believes that God has rejected them is because they have suffered a surprising and serious attack. They have suffered from an attack of the enemy on the battlefield where they've been defeated, and David's assessment is, if God goes with us into battle and we've been defeated, it must mean that God did not go with us into the battle. And today I want you to think for just a moment in your own life about maybe times in the past or maybe a current time in your life where you're wondering if God has rejected you. If God has rejected your family or God has rejected you and it's evidenced in your life. You're thinking right now because of some battle, that you're losing some battle, that you lost some defeat, that you've suffered.

We have to wrestle with this Psalm this morning. What do we do when we believe that God has rejected us? The glory of this Psalm is that it does show us a way back. And I want to just give you quickly this morning kind of three approaches to dealing with a time in our life where we believe that God has rejected us. This psalm is a lament. It's a description of a dark time for the Israelites. In fact, if we did not have this psalm, we would think that David had basically won every battle on the field, but this Psalm lets us know that there was a breakthrough by the enemy. What do we do in our life when we believe that God has rejected us? Number one, we need to restore with prayer.

We need to work to restore that relationship with God with prayer. Not by being better, not by doing more things, not by trying to straighten up. That's not the first reaction. The first reaction for us, if we're looking at our life, you say, "Man, I feel like God has abandoned me. I feel like he's rejected me. I feel like he's left me alone. I feel like I'm in a situation where I'm losing and I can't figure out where God is." Our first reaction needs to be to restore with prayer. David does this. "Oh God", that is a cry of prayer. There is a call for God's attention. That is an address to the heavenly father. He says, "Oh God, you've rejected us" and he assesses the situation. This honest assessment, number one, that happens is David saying, I look at this and I believe that God has rejected us.

So we acknowledge that. We admit that. We take this and say, God, it looks like this is going on, but there's a second assessment here when he says that God has rejected them. In verse five he says that your beloved ones may be delivered. He goes to God in prayer and believing

that God has rejected them, he still works from a standpoint that he believes that God loves them. It's so critical this morning as you deal with the sense that God may have rejected you in your life, that that is not a testimony that God stopped loving you. David acknowledges that God can reject them, that God can let them go into a situation where they're defeated, yet it be filtered through his love.

When David makes this assessment that God had rejected them, he describes it in very vivid words. He says, you've rejected us and here's why he believes this. He says you've broken our defenses. We were strong. We had the military might. We had the strength. We had the weapons, we had the skill, but an army has broken through our defenses. We know the context of this psalm because of the title. Just before verse one in my Bible there's about five lines that give a title to this psalm and that title, the longest of any titles in the psalms, gives a lot of context for what's going on. It lets us know that the backdrop to psalm 60 comes from second Samuel chapter eight. It's a story that, because of the names that are listed in that title, lets us know that David was being a warrior. King David was on the battlefield in the northern kingdom and he was advancing to the north, picking up basically where Joshua had left off, and he was winning battles and taking land that had been promised to them by God when they had been promised to enter into the Promise land.

But we also see in this title that there is evidence of battles in the south in the southern kingdom. There's a description of a victory in the southern kingdom, but as you read psalm 60 what you figure out is that there's actually second Samuel Chapter eight and this title lets us know that as David advances in the north and he's winning victory after victory after victory in the north, that in the south they are attacked by the Edomites and they lose dramatically. And out of that loss in the south, David writes this psalm. It's the loss in the south that makes David believe God has rejected them. Their defenses have been broken. He goes on and he says, "You've been angry. Restore us. You've made the land to quake. You've torn it open." He pictures for them that this loss in the south was like, it was like the soul of their army had split open. It's like an earthquake. What an earthquake does to the land, and this shaking and shifting of the foundations. He said, this has rocked us. This is shaking us down. This defeat was not something we saw coming. We're winning and we're winning and we're winning, and God, you have shaken our foundation. He says repair its breaches for it totters. You've made your people see hard things. They had seen victory after victory after victory, after victory. They were advancing and they'd say, we're looking around now and we're seeing casualties on the battlefield. We're seeing defeat. Where did this come from? He says, "You have given us wine to drink that made us stagger." It's a figure of speech that says, God, you've left us stumbling. You have left us, our word for it today would be, you have left us reeling. The reality is that some of you may be here today gathered one more time in a worship service, knowing that in your mind and your soul, you're dealing with something in your life where the only way to describe it is you're reeling from it. It's like someone that has taken wine that leaves them staggering, stumbling, inebriated. What do you do? You restore with prayer.

King David's response was not to run away from God. His response was not to try to do more on his own. Look at verse four he says, "You have set up a banner for those who fear you, that they may flee to it from the bow that your beloved ones may be delivered. Give Salvation by your right hand and answer us." He says, God, here's the honest assessment. I believe you've rejected us. We're broken here, we're shattered, we're shaking, we're rocked to the core. If there's a place we can run to and it's you, you've raised the banner, we can come to you and we're coming to you acknowledging we've been defeated. You, Lord, must be our help. Restore with prayer.

What do you do? Start praying. Start running to God. Acknowledge, be honest, Lord, it feels like you've rejected us. Number two, reassert with confidence. We look at verse six, it says

God has spoken from his sanctuary:

“In triumph I will parcel out Shechem  
and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth.

<sup>7</sup> Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;

Ephraim is my helmet,  
Judah is my scepter.

<sup>8</sup> Moab is my washbasin,

on Edom I toss my sandal;  
over Philistia I shout in triumph.”

<sup>9</sup> Who will bring me to the fortified city?

Who will lead me to Edom?

What does this psalm do? This psalm is asserting with confidence that God is sovereign. It is an assertion of God's sovereignty and of God's sure promises.

And today, if you ever find yourself reeling from some storm in your life, some defeat in your life, some battle in your life, did you run to God with prayer? But you began to assert before him what belongs to him and that he's in charge, that he's the authority. That's what he's doing. When this Psalm describes the land and the different locations on the map of these places, listen to how God in His Holiness describes it. Giliad is mine. Manessa is mine. Ephraim is my helmet. Judah is my scepter. It is a declaration of sovereignty, of authority. And the promises were sure that when he had promised the land. So you can trust promises.

Here's how it works for us in our life where we feel like we're losing, where we feel like we have some attack of the enemy that has broken through our defenses. Assert with confidence who God is, what his promises are. It would go something like this, "Father, in my life, I'm defeated. I'm broken, but I'm yours. My heart belongs to you. I'm your child. I'm the one you love. I am your beloved. I cannot save myself. I cannot win by myself, but I'm yours and you're

my redeemer. You're my rescuer. You are the repair of my soul. You're the one that restores. I'm yours, and not the enemies.

You would work like this for a mom or a dad. "Father, my daughter is yours. My son is yours. Our family is yours and the enemy is bringing defeat in my daughters life or my son's life or in our marriage and our family. God, this marriage is yours. It is not the enemies. You are sovereign over this marriage. You are sovereign over this home. You have promised to be faithful to us, and I assert with confidence that You rule, you reign." As you restore your life with prayer and assert with confidence, you wait., you trust, you believe that God works. God, for Your glory, for your fame, for your name, will you do this work?

Number three, we restore with prayer, we reassert with confidence, we recognize with humility. We recognize with humility that we cannot win in our own strength. This morning we've sung some songs that we have to reconcile with this text. Some of the songs that we sang said that I will not be shaken. King David says here, you've made the land to quake. You've torn it open. You've made us stagger. What's going on?

Reality is that when we walk into this life, when we go into everyday routines and we are walking in our own strength, we're walking in our own experience, we're walking without prayer in our life. We're walking without dependence on God in our life. We set ourselves up to be shaken. We don't have a foundation that is firm when we're not walking on the word of God and we build our life on the sand. If we build our lives, even though we claim to be children of God, if we build our life and make our decisions and go through choices in our life without a dependence on God, we get Psalm 60. And in many ways it's the love of God that would come after us, allow us to taste defeat so that we would be, in some way, throw down some kind of block in our life to let us see how our life is headed for utter destruction if we're not dependent on him. Recognize with humility. Look what he does in verse 10, "Have you rejected us, O God? You do not go forth, O God, with our armies." It says, "so you stopped fighting for us, you're not with us." And then look at verse 11. I think you see the acknowledgement King David gets to the point of where they were and where they are and what they have to have. He says, "Oh, grant us help against the foe. For vain is the salvation of man, with God we shall do valiantly. It is he who will tread down our foes."

We need to recognize today with humility that we can be defeated, that we can lose, that we can be overwhelmed. As you look through Psalm 60 and second Samuel chapter eight, it seems to be that David is advancing and winning and advancing and winning and he's headed full board into the northern kingdom and his forces are strong there and he's bringing home all the trappings from war. But in the south he's attacked and he's defeated. He never saw it coming and from the direction and from the place that he thought he would never have any trouble. He thought those battles were won and done. They're attacked and they lose and he says, God, you've rejected us and I want to acknowledge to you, as evidenced by this loss, that we need

your help. We need your rescue. We need you. I cannot imagine any harder statement, any worse news than this. God, you have rejected me. That's awful. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, the only thing worse than that statement is that statement being true and being unaware. And maybe the hope of Psalm 60 is this: in the midst of God abandoning, rejecting, the Israelites in this battle, David was aware of what happens when you're not depending on God.

I want to ask you to do three things this morning in light of psalm 60. Number one, I want to call on you to run to the banner of prayer. Run to the banner of prayer. So many temptations of things to do if you're losing, and maybe some of those things are good things, but the first thing, the first thing to do is to run to God. Run to his banner. It says you've set up a banner for those who fear you. I think there's a picture of something being raised that you could see on the battlefield, that you could get to, that you could run to and find help there. Find guidance there. Maybe you've taken a tour of Washington D.C or been in some other country touring some artifacts, some land, some great scene of history, and in this museum or on this battlefield, there'll be this person. He's walking around with this long pole with an orange or red flag on the very top of that. When that pole goes up and that flag against the wave, everybody that's a part of that group runs to that guide, gathers around that guide, and then you move on. That's the picture here. He said, you've raised a banner. You've raised this flag that we can all see. Here's an opportunity for us to come to you for guidance and help. In dependence, run to the banner of prayer. Secondly, listen real close, this may be of everything that's said this morning from psalm 60, maybe this is above all else why we need to be here.

Second request is this. Identify your area of least likely defeat. Identify your area of least likely defeat.

What would you say today about your life? What would we say about our church? What would we say about our nation? What would we say in our world? You can take it to different levels in different places. What would you say is your least likely area of defeat. I'll tell you what, I struggle here, I'm weak here. I know if the enemy's going to get me, it's going to be right here. That's not what I'm asking you to identify. I'm asking you to identify the least in your assessment. What's the least likely area that you would be defeated? Why identify that? Because friends, that is the area that we're most likely to drop our guard in.

We might look around and say, I'm an honest guy. I struggle in a lot of ways, but I don't struggle with integrity. I don't struggle with the honesty. I mean, if there's something that needs to be said, I say it, I'm not hiding anything. I'm an open book. That's right, there it is. So I know this. I know a lot of people struggle with it, but I don't struggle with pornography. That's just not going to be the place where Satan picks me off. I don't know why it is. It doesn't bother me. Maybe, I just have a great attitude. I think it's just a gift from the Lord. Great attitude, glass is always not just half full, it's like almost always full, completely full. Just a great attitude. Life is great. I don't really get it when people say they're discouraged or they're depressed. Identify

this area where you think you're least likely to be defeated. And here's what I want to ask you to do today: apply huge doses of humility to that area in your life. I really believe King David thought there was nothing from the south that could get them.

Gordon Macdonald's, so many years ago said, "an unguarded strength is a double weakness." We take our eyes off that area and the enemy sees a place to run through. John Phillips, Bible commentator, put it this way, he says, "there's a spiritual lesson in all of this. We might be in the will of God, seeking to take on new ventures in the work of the Lord, but we must not become so flushed with victory that we become careless of the spiritual principles upon which those ventures rest, God will never bless the flesh. Moreover, we must not become so thrilled with new areas. We are appropriating for God that we neglect other areas of our lives. Long under control, long occupied and enjoyed. Many a man, for instance, has been busy branching out for God in evangelistic work only to lose his family in the process." This is just a little picture there of how those areas that we think we would never lose. If we don't have those submitted to the Lord, guarded by the Lord, protected by the Lord, Watch out. Run to the banner of prayer. Identify your area of least likely defeat and fortify that area. Guard that area.

Give it to the Lord. You see what he says in verse 11 he says, "vain is the salvation of man." He said, I have to acknowledge to you, Lord, I don't have the strength. I don't have the ability. I don't have the might. I don't have the power to win in every area of our life. We've got to call on God, in every battle, every day. I need you.

When I walk out of this house, when I take my first breath that I'm aware of when I wake up, Lord, right there, come fight for me. Here's the last thing I'll ask you to do today. Trust Jesus. Trust Jesus as your Savior. Now, a great hope would be is that every person in this room this morning would be able to say, "ah, I've done that", but maybe not.

And right here at the very end I want to just say to you that our hope, our victory, for this life is not in our strength, not in our salvation. Where it all starts is trusting Jesus alone for our salvation. Have you trusted him? Or are you trusting in yourself? Is the testimony of your life that you're just doing life alone, win some, lose some, some get rained out? Or would you be able to say, today, my hope and my hope alone is in Jesus Christ for this life and for life after this life. My sins are forgiven, my debt is paid because of what Jesus Christ has done for me. If you've been trying to pay your own way, why not today lay that down and trust Jesus Christ alone for your salvation.