

## =STORIES BEHIND THE PSALMS=

### Lesson 11

#### Psalm 142: David in the Caves

AIM: to teach my pupils the story behind and the teachings of Psalm 142

INTRODUCTION: Psalm 142 finds David in the caves of Adullam. (See I Samuel 22:1.) He had been running from King Saul because he was afraid for his life. Saul was the popular king. When Saul was afraid to fight Goliath, David stepped forward and agreed to fight in his place. Saul was the natural one to fight the giant, for he was head and shoulders above all the people. (Read I Samuel 9:2.) However, because of his fear, he refused to do so. David substituted for him and killed Goliath. When this happened, all the ladies began to sing, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” (See I Samuel 18:7-9) This infuriated King Saul. He vowed to kill David. David fled. This Psalm finds David in the caves of Adullam, hiding from Saul. The key verse in Psalm 142 is verse 4, “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.”

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the pupils to discuss some time in their lives when they were very afraid, perhaps even afraid for their lives. Maybe they were fishing in a boat and a storm came up, or maybe they were on an airplane with engine trouble. Have the pupils relate briefly such experiences and lead them into a discussion of David’s time of fear for his life as he was in the cave hiding from Saul.

#### I. SOME WORD STUDIES FROM PSALM 142.

1. Notice in verse 1 the words, “I cried.” David was crying constantly. This is not one cry, but a constant cry. He was not afraid for his life one time, but constantly.
2. Notice the words, “I poured out,” in verse 2. In other words, he continues to pour out. This was a matter of a constant burden, constant fear. He lived in anguish.
3. Notice the first word, “When,” in verse 3. The Psalmist wishes to say that he had not cried because he feared that God was ignorant of his trouble, but it was this reflection which enabled him to stop looking at his circumstances. His heart was distressed, but he knew God was near. Then David says, “When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.” David knew that at such a time he could turn to the Lord!
4. Notice the word, “overwhelmed,” in verse 3. This means, “darkness itself is upon me, and I am faint.” In other words, David was in the darkest time of his life; yet, he cried to the Lord. These are the times when we, too, should cry to the Lord. Of course, we should cry to Him when the sun is shining; we also should cry to Him in times of darkness.
5. Notice the words, “right hand,” in verse 4. This was the position of one defending; when one person came to the rescue of another, he came to his right side. Yet, David looked on his right side and saw that no one had come to defend him. This teaches us that when all others have failed, we can certainly look to the Lord. He will never fail! He will never forsake! We can depend on Him!

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In the Bible, we’re commanded to have compassion for the souls of men. Parents, teachers, preachers, church members, all Christians should have a burden. Not to have such a burden is to be ungrateful to God; it is to be cruel to man; it is fatal to the soul.

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that they cause. When people need food, they come to God's people. When people need clothes, they come to God's people. When people are destitute, they come to God's people. At the right hand is always the place to look. David knew there was no help at the left hand. Every great, benevolent work in the country was started by God's people. The sad thing, however, is that in this case, even God's people failed David. They had not come to his rescue. How sad it is that oftentimes God's people do not care!

Teacher: Stress here the fact that the Pacific Baptist Church cares. Tell the pupils about the work with the deaf, the retarded, the rescue mission, the buses, the afternoon program, the Asian people, the Spanish people, the rest homes, the homeless, the shut-ins, and others. Explain to the class what the First Baptist Church of Hammond is doing to show that it cares.

- IV. A TEST PASSED. It was while David was in this cave that King Saul came looking for him. Not thinking David was around, and thinking he had not yet found David, Saul went to sleep at the entrance of the cave. While Saul was asleep, David found him. David had a sword in his hand. He drew his sword. Here is the time for vengeance. Here is the time for retaliation. Was not Saul trying to kill David? Was not Saul dedicated to the destruction of David? Was not David spending his entire life running from Saul? Now Saul was asleep and David had a drawn sword over his body. What does David say? He says he cannot lift up his hand against God's anointed. Saul was the anointed king. David was not. David simply cut off the skirt from around his garment, but did not take vengeance. Read I Samuel 24:1-12. Ah, here is a lesson for each of us: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." David trusted the Lord to care for his needs, yet David spared Saul. Let the Lord do it. Let the Lord fight your battles. Let the Lord take care of your vengeance. He is able. He can certainly heap coals of fire upon the head of the adversary.
- V. THE SATISFYING PORTION. Notice in Psalm 142:5b the words, "Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." This means that God was David's sufficiency. It is observable that in the courts of kings, the children and the rulers of people are much taken with pictures of rich showing. They please their fancies with the sight of rich hangings and with fine decorations, but the greatest statesman passing by such things does not take notice of the ornamental; his business is with the king! Thus it is that in this world most men admire the material things of the world—the tapestry, the carpeting—these are the forms and pieces of such opulence. The wise man looks over all these things; his business is with God! This is what David is saying here. David is saying, "The Lord is my portion. Others may look at the ornaments, furnishings, etc., but all I need is the Lord."

Here is a couple on their honeymoon. If they are really in love, they do not necessarily need Niagara Falls or the Rocky Mountains or Hawaiian music. As long as they have each other, this is the big thing. Some are in love with love, and they need the carpeting, the tapestry, the scenery, the music, etc., but if people are really in love with each other, that is all the portion that is necessary. This is what David is saying here. He's saying, "The Lord is my portion. As long as I have Him, that is all I need." What a blessed truth!

- VI. A TYPICAL PSALM. "Typical" means that the Psalm is a type of the cross. Go through the Psalm and find statements that remind you of Calvary. David in the cave alone is a type of Christ on the cross.
1. Notice the words in verse 1, "I cried unto the LORD with my voice." This Jesus did on the cross.
  2. Notice in verse 2, "I poured out my complaint before him." Remember on the cross the words of Jesus when He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
  3. Notice in verse 3, "In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me." This looks forward to Christ's trail toward Calvary.
  4. Verse 4 reminds us that Jesus was forsaken even by the Father on the cross. He was bearing our sins, and God the Father turned His back on Him. He looked on His right hand, and refuge failed Him. No man cared for His soul.
  5. Notice in verse 6 the words, "I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors." Here is a picture of Calvary.

6. Verse 7 has the words, “Bring my soul out of prison.” This looks forward to the resurrection of Christ. Yes, the Psalm can be called a Messianic Psalm, for it points to Jesus. David is a type of Christ.