

# The Gospel According to the Psalms

## Psalm 60 – When God Rejects but Still Speaks Victory

Faith Church of Linden

By Daniel Patz on February 15, 2026

*The following notes are a draft of my sermon. These are not my pulpit notes or a manuscript I use to preach with but something I type up before writing out my “pulpit notes”. I hope they are helpful.*

### Introduction

We have spent recent weeks walking through a cluster of David’s psalms that deal intensely with **enemies**:

- **Psalm 55** (in August) — Betrayal by a close friend cuts deepest; yet we cast our burden on the Lord and trust He will sustain us.
- **Psalm 56** — When fear grips us because enemies trample us, we say, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you... What can flesh do to me?”
- **Psalm 57** — Trapped in the pit (the cave), David hides under God’s wings and awakens the dawn with praise before deliverance arrives (Hide and Hope).
- **Psalm 58** — We cry for God to break the teeth of the wicked, trusting that the righteous will rejoice when they see His vengeance, because there is a God who judges on earth.
- **Psalm 59** — Surrounded by bloodthirsty men prowling like dogs, we plead, “Deliver me,” and sing of God’s strength and steadfast love even before morning breaks.

Today we come to **Psalm 60** — a corporate, national lament. It is different. This is not one man fleeing Saul or hiding in a cave. This is **God’s people together** reeling after military defeat, feeling rejected by the Lord Himself. Yet the King will cry out for the people and not put His trust in Himself or man but in God.

**Superscription (ESV):** To the choirmaster: according to Shushan Eduth. A Miktam of David; for instruction; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and when Joab on his return struck down twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt.

The title points to victory (cf. 2 Samuel 8; 1 Chronicles 18), yet the psalm itself is prayed **in the aftermath of defeat**. God has rejected His people. The army has been broken. It feels like divine abandonment. This tension is the heartbeat of the psalm — and it is very real for God’s people in every age. We live in the tension of defeat and victory. We deal with pain and promise.

**Psalm 60** teaches us how to pray when we feel rejected by God, when the banner of victory seems furled, and when defeat is fresh. We divide it into three movements of prayer:

1. **Prayer Lamenting Devastating Pain** (vv. 1–4)
2. **Prayer Grasping Gospel Promises** (vv. 5–8)
3. **Prayer Depending with Confidence** (vv. 9–12)

**Psalm 60 (ESV – full text)** [1] O God, you have rejected us, broken our defenses; you have been angry; oh, restore us! [2] You have made the land to quake; you have torn it open; repair its breaches, for it totters. [3] You have made your people see hard things; you have given us wine to drink that made us stagger. [4] You have set up a banner for those who fear you, that they may flee to it from the bow. Selah

[5] That your beloved ones may be delivered, give salvation by your right hand and answer us! [6] God has spoken in his holiness: “With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Vale of Succoth. [7] Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet; Judah is my scepter. [8] Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast my shoe; over Philistia I shout in triumph.”

[9] Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? [10] Have you not rejected us, O God? You do not go out, O God, with our armies. [11] Oh, grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man! [12] With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

## 1. Prayer Lamenting Devastating Pain (vv. 1–4)

**Read vv. 1–4 again aloud.**

David (speaking for the nation) opens with five devastating verbs that describe God’s hand in their suffering:

- You have **rejected** us
- You have **broken** our defenses
- You have been **angry**
- You have made the land **quake** and **torn** it open
- You have made your people **see hard things** and **given** us wine to stagger

This is shocking honesty. The people do not blame the enemy generals or poor strategy first — they look straight to God’s sovereignty. When calamity comes, it ultimately comes through the **permission and purpose** of God (cf. Amos 3:6; Isaiah 45:7).

Amos 3:6 ESV Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?

Compare **Psalm 44:9–16** (another corporate lament after defeat):

[9] But you have rejected us and disgraced us and have not gone out with our armies. [10] You have made us turn back from the foe, and those who hate us have gotten spoil. [11] You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have scattered us among the nations. [12] You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them. [13] You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those around us. [14] You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. [15] All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face [16] at the sight of the enemy and the avenger.

Do you ever feel this way? That God has **rejected** you? That He is angry? That He has withdrawn? That the church, your family, your life feels broken and tottering?

It can often feel that way in the church...where is the vigor, passion, zeal, joy, freedom, victory?

This feeling is **not uncommon** among God's people. He has **not** ultimately abandoned you — but it can feel that way in the furnace of affliction.

Yet notice — they **do not stop praying**. They lament. They complain **to** God. They describe the pain vividly. And then they cry:

[1] ...oh, **restore** us! [2] ...**repair** its breaches, for it totters.

Even in devastation, they plead for restoration. And they cling to one glimmer of hope:

[4] You have set up a **banner** for those who fear you, that they may flee to it from the bow. Selah

There is still a rallying point. There is still a place of refuge for those who fear God.

God has set up a banner for us! Jesus Christ the righteous! Those who fear the Lord come to God in Jesus Christ...fallen and broken we return to the Signal to the nations to bow and worship the King of Kings who has been slain before the foundation of the world!

## 2. Prayer Grasping Gospel Promises (vv. 5–8)

**Read vv. 5–8 aloud.**

Verse 5 is the pivot: [5] That **your beloved ones** may be delivered, give salvation by your right hand and answer us!

On what basis does David plead for answer and salvation? Not their righteousness, not their military might — but God’s covenant love: “**your beloved ones**” (those He has set His affection upon).

Then comes the heart-stirring declaration:

[6] **God has spoken** in his holiness...

Everything changes when God speaks. These words come from His **holy sanctuary** — from the place of absolute authority, truth, and majesty.

What has God spoken? He declares His **sovereign ownership** and **triumphant rule** over the land and the nations:

- He will **divide** and **portion** the territory (Shechem, Succoth)
- **Gilead** and **Manasseh** are His
- **Ephraim** (northern tribes) is His **helmet** (protection)
- **Judah** (southern tribes) is His **scepter** (kingship, Messiah’s line)
- **Moab** is His **washbasin** (menial, contemptible)
- **Edom** — He **casts His shoe** upon it (insulting conquest)
- **Philistia** — He **shouts in triumph**

These are not wishful thoughts. “**God has spoken.**” He remembers His promises to Abraham, to Moses, to David. He will possess His people. He will subdue His enemies. Final victory is certain.

This is **gospel** — good news — even in the mouth of defeat. The people can pray with confidence because they know the end of the story.

We too face failures, setbacks, discipline, even seasons that feel like rejection. But we have been given **advance knowledge** of the favorable, glorious outcome. Christ has triumphed. The church will prevail. Every enemy will be subdued.

**Tie your prayers to God’s promises.** When you feel broken, run to what **God has spoken** in His holiness.

### 3. Prayer Depending with Confidence (vv. 9–12)

Read vv. 9–12 aloud.

The psalm closes with realistic questions and rock-solid confidence:

[9] Who will bring me to the **fortified city**? Who will lead me to **Edom**?

The fortified city (perhaps Petra) looks impregnable. Human help is vain.

[10] Have you not **rejected** us, O God? You do not go out, O God, with our armies.

He returns to the pain of verse 1 — honest realism.

But then the great reversal:

[11] Oh, grant us **help** against the foe, for **vain** is the salvation of man! [12] **With God** we shall do valiantly; it is **he** who will tread down our foes.

Victory does not come from numbers, strategy, or alliances. **Only God gives victory.** Man's strength is vanity. "**With God**" the weak become strong, the defeated become triumphant — for **His glory**.

### Conclusion & Application

Psalm 60 holds two realities in tension: **painful defeat** and **certain victory**. It refuses easy answers. It refuses despair. It refuses trust in man. It clings to what **God has spoken**.

### Lessons for us today:

1. **Do not despair when you live in the tension between present defeat and promised victory.** Lament honestly, but keep praying.
2. **Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of these gospel promises.** He is the Scepter from Judah, the King who subdues every enemy. Because He died and rose, we **will** win in the end.

3. **Christians are God's beloved ones** — chosen, owned, and eternally cared for by the Father.
  
4. **We must tie our prayers tightly to God's Word** — His character and His promises.
  
5. **With God the weakest saint is strong and will ultimately be** victorious — all for His glory.

Where do you feel rejected or broken right now — personally, in your family, in the church? Bring that honest lament to God. Then grasp what He has spoken in His holiness.

Then depend on Him with confidence: **“With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.”**