

PRICELESS

Psalm 61

INTRO.: Happy Father's Day to all the dads here today. We hope and pray you have a truly blessed day. The video we just watched reminds us of many things and causes us to think about what we would want people, particularly our children, to remember about us. I also want to recognize that this may be a difficult day for some. Possibly your father walked out on you, he was always too busy, you never knew him, or he was abusive. Maybe you want to be a father, but it just hasn't happened, you've had a child die, or you're estranged from your children. My challenge today is for men in general and I hope it is encouraging to women as well. In a culture that has continued to downplay the importance of men, and, even at times, make men look foolish and clueless, we ask the question, "What is needed?" I have titled the message, "Priceless," because there can't be a dollar value placed on being a godly man nor on the impact of a godly man. As we look at finishing this sentence, "Needed, men who...", I want to tie together why, as we aim for these qualities, we need one another. Men, we need other men in our lives who will encourage and challenge us in our relationship with God and our family. In Scripture, once we come to know Christ as Savior and Lord, we are called "sheep." Sheep have various predators, one being wolves. Sheep are virtually defenseless, so the wolf wants to isolate the sheep to make them easy prey. That remains one of the best tactics of Satan, the enemy of our souls. At the end of each point, I will remind us that we need to enlist other men on our walk with the Lord (women need to do this with other women). Our Scripture this morning is Psalm 61 which is a lament. David finds himself far from home, far from Jerusalem, the city that he and his fellow Israelites identified with as the place of worship. This may have been the time when he was hiding from his son, Absalom. I can only imagine how painful it was to have his own son try to take the throne away from him. You can feel the pain as you read through this psalm which I believe has much to say to us today. We're going to stand and read this together.

Psalm 61:1-8 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. **2** From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. **3** For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. Selah **5** For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. **6** Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations. **7** May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him. **8** Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfill my vows day after day.

Needed: Men who:

PRAY

Psalm 61:1 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. **2** From the ends of the earth I call to you

Not only is David far from home, but he also feels far from God. What does he do? He cries out to God. This should be our first response not our last resort. You get a sense of urgency when reading this verse. He is not hesitant to come to God.

Psalm 62:8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

David pleads with God:

Psalm 61:1 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

Isn't it amazing, through prayer, we have an audience with Almighty God! What a comforting thought that God hears the cries of His children!

Psalm 61:2a From the ends of the earth I call to you,

Physical distance is not an issue when it comes to prayer. Where and when can we pray? When you and I feel far from God we still need to call out to Him. We need men who pray, who understand the importance and the necessity of prayer. There is no place unsuitable for prayer. Men, how often do you enlist other men to pray for you. How often do you pray for other men.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Be joyful always; **17** pray continually; **18** give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

These are all present tense commands! You want to know God's will? Here it is! If you're married, pray with your spouse. Pray with your children and your grandchildren.

We need men who: pray and who:

RECOGNIZE

Their need

Psalm 61:2b I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I

We are not meant to navigate life without God! Who here can relate to growing weary, to having a heart that grows faint? So much of the Psalms is David recognizing his absolute need for God. Two weeks ago, Pastor Luke spoke about the need to Remain in Him.

John 15:4–5 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. **5** “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Psalm 61:2b I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I

God is described as a “rock” 20 times in the Psalms (18:2, 31, 46; 19:14; 28:1; 31:2-3; 40:2; 61:2; 62:2, 6-7; 71:3; 78:35; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22; 95:1; 144:1) James Montgomery Boice

David asks God to lead him to the rock that is higher than him. We need the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. he leads us to our need of salvation and a personal relationship with God.

Charles Spurgeon, “For our part, not only do we need a rock, we also need the Holy Spirit to lead us to Him.”

This rock is higher than David. What is David’s position at the time he wrote this psalm? He is the King and there is no one higher than him in the kingdom, but he knows there is somebody much higher than him and that is Almighty God.

In Spurgeon’s day ships often ran upon the rocks off the coast of England, and mariners were cast into the water and drowned. At times the mariners would find themselves struggling at the base of the high cliffs, knowing they would be safe if they could only get up the steep, slippery face of the rocks. But they could not. At one place, according to Spurgeon, a man who lived at the top of one of these cliffs carved some stone steps into the rock face so wrecked mariners could climb up. And when the steps became badly worn and impassable over time, someone else added stanchions and a chain railing to help the struggling survivors.

We need men who recognize their need and who recognize:

The battle

Psalm 61:3 For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe.

There is an enemy that we face. He talks about God being two things as he faces this foe.

*A refuge: it’s a place one goes for protection, a place to get out of the storm. As James Montgomery Boice states, this is often connected with God being described as a rock.

“my rock, in whom I take refuge” (Ps 18:2)

“my rock of refuge” (Ps 31:2; 71:3)

“my mighty rock, my refuge” (Ps 62:7)

“the rock in whom I take refuge” (Ps 94:22)

There is a spiritual battle going on and it is real.

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls (present tense) around like a roaring (present tense) lion looking (present tense) for someone to devour.

*A strong tower: this would be part of a walled city where the enemy could be seen as they try to capture the city. One would not be alone here which is another reminder that men need other men to join in the battle. We urge one another on in fighting the battle.

We have the following account of when Moses was leading the Israelites and the Amalekites attacked them,

Exodus 17:9–13 Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.” **10** So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. **11** As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. **12** When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. **13** So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

The Word of God is absolutely essential in this battle!

Psalms 119:9–11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. **10** I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. **11** I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Remember that the enemy wants to isolate! Don't be too proud to enlist other men in the battle!

We need men who pray, who recognize their need and who recognize the battle. We also need men who:

SEEK A GREATER REWARD

Psalms 61:4 I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.

The word, "tent," used here would give the image of the tabernacle which represented the presence of God. David wasn't just thinking about his present state, he was looking much further down the road. This also shows David's desire to worship the Lord, to be at the place where people would gather to worship. We need men who are committed to being at the gathering of God's people. What a huge impact on children when Dad brings his family to church and participates himself. To drop the kids and family off at church and go home or do something else communicates that when you become a man this is not needed.

David was looking forward to being in God's tent forever and being under the shelter of His wings. What a picture of God covering the believer with His wings.

Psalms 91:1–4 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. **2** I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." **3** Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. **4** He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

David has eternity in mind. This certainly goes against the flow of society. We are told to collect as much stuff as possible. He who dies with the most toys wins. No, he who dies with the most toys still dies. Don't sacrifice eternal things for that which is temporary and short lived. How concerned are we about the our family's walk with God? Men, are we reminding each other about eternity? How does God want to use my job/career to be a witness for him? Young person, is my biggest question, "How much money can I make," or is it, "What does God want me to do and how can I be a witness for Him in wherever and whatever He leads me to go and do?" Men, who don't have children, you can still pour into the lives of others. Retired men, can I urge you not to retire from life. Use the wisdom you have from your years of experience in walking with the Lord to pour into others. Grandfathers, make a difference in the lives of your grandchildren.

Needed: men who pray, men who recognize their need of God and who recognize the battle they're in, men who seek the greater reward, living with eternity in mind, and men who:

LEAVE A GODLY LEGACY

Psalms 61:5 For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

It does us well to remember the lives of godly saints who have gone before us. I would encourage you to read biographies of godly people of days past. In Jesus Christ we are all related.

Romans 8:16–18 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. **18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Hebrews 12:1–3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. **2** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Let us be encouraged and challenged by the saints who have gone before us. In the video, the son says to his father, "You really are a lot like him aren't you?" "I hope I'm like you when I grow up."

The Apostle Paul challenges those in Corinth with this:

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NASB95) Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

What type of legacy are we leaving, men? We need to enlist other men in this journey.

Needed: men who pray, men who recognize their need of God and who recognize the battle they're in, men who seek the greater reward, living with eternity in mind, men who desire to leave a godly legacy, and men who:

PRAISE GOD

Psalms 61:-8 Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfill my vows day after day.

Men, do others see and hear us praising God, giving Him the glory for what He's doing in our lives? As God answers prayer David knows his need is to respond in praise. We live in a very negative society that is quick to grumble and complain. Complaining, grumbling, and gossiping is contagious. Praising God can also be contagious. He is worthy of our praise!

Psalms 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

Psalms 105:2 Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.

Psalms 106:1 Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Psalms 119:175 Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws sustain me.

Psalms 145:21 My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

As men we can talk about all kinds of things but how much do we talk about the great God that we have the privilege of knowing? Our children, grandchildren, our peers, those of the next generations need to hear us praise God.

Job 1:20-21 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship **21** and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

Needed: men who pray, men who recognize their need of God and who recognize the battle they're in, men who seek the greater reward, living with eternity in mind, men who desire to leave a godly legacy, and men who praise God.

SO WHAT??? We are thankful to God for how He is working in the lives of men. We don't want men to attempt do life alone, for the enemy loves to isolate believers. There are several opportunities for men to gather, to be encouraged and challenged. The opportunities include a Sunday Bible School class for men, Sons of the Savior; Saturday mornings at Basons on Mill Street, a 6 am prayer call Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings, men gathering for exercise and fellowship early every morning, and just recently several men joined together to commit to various challenges including Bible reading, memorization, fitness, accountability in a ministry called Fight Club. The name is taken from Nehemiah 4:14.

After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."

I thought it would be valuable to share with you some of the testimonies of those who were a part of Fight Club.

VIDEO

What am I aiming for as a follower of Christ? How does this affect my relationships with others? Who will I enlist to encourage me in these areas? Am I willing to set goals? Am I willing to share those goals? How about as it relates to:

Prayer

My need for God in the battles I face

Prioritizing the eternal

A Godly legacy

Praising God

This truly is priceless!!