

A New Year Resolution: Invitation to Rest
Psalm 62:5-12
January 1, 2023

Intro: The New Year is often a time to reassess our goals and plans for the future. We want to serve God, love Him, and love others with all our heart, mind, and strength. The New Year can propel us out of lethargy and into renewed service to God and His kingdom. And there are many who can benefit from such prompting. Psalm 62 drives us in the direction of rest. Not the kind of rest that is lazy or wasteful, but the kind of rest that pursues rest for our souls. This kind of rest enables us to love God and love others from a heart that is running over with joy, peace, assurance, and power.

SI: The New Year can be a tool of the Spirit to awaken us to a renewed focus on God's call and on our response to follow Him in obedient faith. And my proposal in choosing this psalm is to propose that we start with rest. Rest is a weapon against trusting in ourselves, and this is the greatest of all conflicts, battles and wars, and the war we wake up fighting every day. In whom will I trust today?

Read

Did not include vs. 3-4, but from the context we know that David is under duress, under attack.

How does he respond?

He deliberately and with focused intention seeks to rest in God.

Rest first. To lead us to obedience to God to seek Him. To cry out to Him to give us restful souls that then overflow in willingness to love Him and others with a heart that is running over with joy, peace, assurance, and power.

How does David do this? How is he a model for us when we are harassed and harried like sheep under attack?

He talks to himself.

He talks to the congregation.

He embraces his limits.

1Vs. 5-7 Talk To Yourself, Don't Listen to Yourself

I get this phrase from Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones – a physician and long time pastor of Westminster Chapel in London –

“Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problem of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you.” D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures*, pp. 20-21.

So then see what David does – He confronts his self-talk, his temptation to anxiety and fearfulness with talking to himself – turning on himself, exhorting himself with the truth- this great, sword wielding, devil defying, self-condemnation attacking truth- He only is my Rock, my Salvation, my Fortress. I shall not be shaken.

How deeply and continuously we need this word, “only” bc we are so fiercely tempted to lean on other comforters, other false assurances.

ILLUS - I’ve been reading Isaiah recently and it reminded me of the relevancy of the Bible to everyday modern life. These kings of Judah who would go to the big bully Assyria or Egypt and lean on him instead of on Yahweh. And so today – will you lean on your Christmas presents? Your new year’s resolutions? Your ability to please your boss? Your goals to lose fat and gain muscle?

He only is my rock, my fortress. Why do you need a rock? A fortress? A defense? The imagery is of where you go and what you put on – so that God is not only the One who defends you, He is your actual defense. He is not the rock you pick up when you need to feel strength, He is your actual rock.

What is the difference? It’s the difference between needing God to get you over the top and God being your everything. The difference between looking at the fortress from a distance and being inside the fortress.

So in Buffalo, NY this terrible tragedy of many people dying during a blizzard bringing more than 4 feet of snow. Even for those experienced with storms, one day a storm will come that overwhelms you – what will be your refuge? – story of Jay Withey, a 27 year old mechanic (from WSJ) who realized he was in a life or death situation and got out of his vehicle, found a building and broke in through the glass. And then the tragic story of another man who was found face down in the snow and there were buildings right nearby. These accounts help us with this spiritual truth: In God is life, outside of God is the path to death.

V. 6 – look at how his confidence grows the more he tells the truth to himself.. ‘not be shaken’ not be moved.

How does this talking to ourselves give us rest?

Because it is a weapon against the unrelenting attacks that say do more, do better. There is relentless pressure, especially on those whose meat and drink is social media, to constantly perform, constantly conform, constantly refresh and renew your profile, your activities, your presentation.

So talk to yourselves and resist listening to your self-talk of condemnation and comparison.

Some of you are going to hear this and think this is advocating against hard work. I long for you to take this psalm as food for your soul that comes up under your hard work, undergirds it, enables it, and gives you joy, peace, assurance and power because your

soul is at rest as a result of waiting on God, trusting in Him alone, not your performative accomplishments.

He talks to himself and then he talks to the congregation, to us.

2 V. 8 Talk to God: Pour Out Your Heart to Him

The realism of the Bible: when we are in a season of hard things coming at us, the Spirit says, I know. I am Your God and I know what you need. Come to Me, Jesus says, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. How? By trusting Him and demonstrating that trust with responding to His invitation here: pour out our hearts before Him.

Rest comes from emptying out.

We need a refuge, a place to go with our restlessness, with our frustrations, with our laments and longings that this brokenness won't destroy us and will one day be over. And that place is to God Himself.

Jesus is able – Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace. Go to Him. He is gentle and lowly. His heart is tender, sympathetic, empathetic.

He wants to hear your heart.

You are never too much for Him.

Jesus, God incarnate, invites us, welcomes us, calls us, commands us with strength, compassion, assurance, do this! Only He knows exactly what you need and only He can give it perfectly. And here, what He is saying is that sometimes you need emptying out.

What is this pouring out? Think of a time when someone really listened to you. When you were about to pop with anxiety or fear or some story of something that happened to you. And they listened and asked questions, gave you time and space and freedom to talk. Then you were ready to hear words of life and rest and counsel.

And don't miss this – v. 8 – these are all plurals - Especially in community which undergirds this so don't miss it – we need help from one another in pouring out our hearts to God – the great gift of community groups, of Sharing and Prayer.

Especially at New Years, this is counterintuitive. Which is a sign it's from God and not from us.

We sometimes think that more input is what we need... more information, more activity, more opportunity, more time, more cramming, more effort... when in reality, we might need more rest.

*ILLUS of exercise – Most of you probably already know this, but rest is when your muscles heal and get stronger. Article about exercise and how much rest and sleep your body needs in order to get stronger.

As far as an application of v. 8 here and how to find more rest in God:

Could social media habits be corrosive to your prayer life? Could constantly comparing your life through others' social media postings be depleting your trust, dependence, reliance, and joy in God alone? V. 5 – for God alone, o my soul, wait in silence. V. 6 – He only is my rock and my salvation.

Rest comes from emptying out to God. He wants your heart and soul. You want His depth. You need His depth. You will be anemic without it. Explore the refuge of God's power and love (end of vs. 8)

The structure of this psalm shouts it out – as you pour out your heart to God, He fills you with His power and steadfast love by giving you assurance that not only you need it, but you have it.

3 Vs. 9-12 Embrace Your Limits

Vs. 9-10 are poetic way of saying that the performance of mankind is nothing, vanity, delusion, breath and lighter than breath. The Holy Spirit, through David, is calling us to embrace our limits. Accept how God has made you and the particular ways the Fall and the brokenness we face has affected us.

Can you relate? >

“I wish I had more capacity! More ability to enjoy the things I enjoy. Why does this activity take so much out of me? I'm frustrated with myself. I should be able to do more.”

Or maybe you are more inclined to fall into binge watching TV or overindulging in video games.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/comfort-culture-hustle-ideology/>

It is easy for Christians to be affected by the culture around us – watch out for falling for comfort culture or hustle culture. The authors' proposal is that the culture teaches that purpose and meaning are to be found in either working hard to comfort ourselves, or working hard to perform better.

You're not doing a good enough job at comforting yourself. (this is the deepest and most powerful allure of pornography) You deserve this escape, this experience, this candle, this vacation...

You're not hustling hard enough. You could have gotten one more sale last month. You could've done that chore yesterday instead of procrastinating. You could have lifted 5 more pounds at the gym.

To embrace your limits means to prayerfully seek God as we seek to know ourselves and how God has designed us. Seek to know yourself and not be ashamed by how God has designed you. To accept the gift of limits. To be human is to have limits.

ILLUS of Monroeville Fire Dept - while on vacation I heard the Spirit nudge me to give up the fire department... I didn't want to, but I knew I had to in obedience to God... the

chief asked me, don't you want to stay on as chaplain? I do, but I can't, I've got to give it up all the way...

The greatest limit to embrace is to limit our pride – our self-sufficiency, our capability, our ability, our own sense of power. This only comes through the power of the cross. The cross crucifies our fleshly nature, hacks at it, kills it. So with Paul, we boast in our weakness. So with Jesus, blessed are the meek, the humble. So with Esther (and with David here), we trust and act upon that trust even if we perish.

Limit yourself to trusting in one thing only. My heart only has room for one trust. Although you are bombarded with temptations, problems, issues, circumstances and situations, your only trust is Christ.

This is v. 10 – wait, he's talking about extortion and stealing – yes, and aren't you often tempted to take things that aren't your own? To find advantage somewhere, somehow through your own shading of the truth? To tell a story in a way that advantages you and disadvantages someone else? To repent to an extent but not all the way down to the motives of your heart? Put no trust in this type of stealing. Set no vain hope on robbing someone of their reputation...

How? The key is end of v. 10 “set not your heart on them” and he graciously gives us the very next verse which is what TO set our hearts upon – (and the literary structure emphasizes this) > the power and steadfast love of the Lord
As you recognize your limits and say no to empty trusts, your ears will be more ready to hear verses 11-12.

v. 11 – power and steadfast love BELONG to God – and He gives to whom He pleases – and who gets these gifts? Those who trust only in Him.

Conc: v. 12 - He ends this psalm of rest with a word about work. Huh? How do rest and work go together? If I'm working, how can I be resting? Once again, the Bible is going for the heart. Speaking to and of the heart level. What are you working for? What are you striving for? What do you really want? Work and rest go together for the Christian bc our work is the work of faith. The anti-work of faith in Jesus' work.

This is where John 6:28-29 comes in – ‘what can we be doing to do the works of God?’
The work of God is this – that you believe in He whom God has sent!

God is saying here that you get what you want to get. If you want to gain life and peace and rest from your performance, you will only reap more requirements for more performance. (this is comfort and hustle culture) But if you want to get life and peace and rest from trusting in Jesus' performance, you can. You get what you want. You get your desires fulfilled. You get meaning, purpose, comfort, and hard work. You get life through the upside down nature of blessed are the meek, the humble.

Take Psalm 62 and its fulfillment by Jesus into your new year. And may He alone and only give rest to our weary souls.

For a New Years Resolution: Resolve to Rest, rest in Jesus.

Communion: A way to take in Psalm 62 and this invitation to rest. To resolve to trust in God alone, to trust in His power, His steadfast love, alone. To come repenting of our mistrusts and our distrust. Help us, Lord. And He says, yes! Here is my very body and my blood for your spiritual strengthening and empowering to trust in Me at all times. It is for you, his beloved people.

Bene: Ps 62:5-6

Questions for Small Groups:

What are New Year's Resolutions usually like for you? What are the positives and negatives in your experience?

How could soul restfulness undergird, inform, and empower goals for you and your family?

See verses 5-7. What is meant by, "don't listen to yourself, talk to yourself"? How could this technique serve to help you to rest in God?

See verse 8. What might be some things that keep us from pouring out our hearts to God? How can we help each other to do this better?

Can you think of one thing in your life that you could pray that the Spirit would help you to remove or overcome in order to help your prayer life?

Are there some limits that God has given you that are hard for you to accept? What limits has God given that you welcome as gifts?

How have you seen 'comfort culture' or 'hustle culture' around you? How can we help each other to resist? How can knowledge of this aspect of our larger culture help us point people to the gospel and to rest in Jesus alone and only?