

# Coronavirus: Fear, Tears, and Trust

A Blog By Caleb Martin

In this challenging time, we are faced with a myriad of difficult scenarios:

Job loss.

Workload increasing, yet working from home.

Guilt for working too much or too little.

Every family is a homeschooling family now.

Loss of dreams—a senior year with friends, a postponed wedding, or a death that was all too sudden.

To say there is a daily low-grade fear and sadness among us all may be an understatement.

I've been led to look at the Psalms in this season, and in particular Psalm 56.

While David wrote this Psalm in a completely different context, there is a theme here that resonates with our times: What is it like to trust God in the midst of fear and tears?

## **Psalm 56:**

David is fleeing Saul (see I Sam. 21 for context) and, of all places, he flees to Gath—a Philistine city—the birthplace of Goliath.

How dire must have his situation been to flee to this place? He was in utter desperation. And he had very real enemies all around him.

## **Read verses 1-4:**

- 1** Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me;  
all day long an attacker oppresses me;
- 2** my enemies trample on me all day long,  
for many attack me proudly.
- 3** When I am afraid,  
I put my trust in you.
- 4** In God, whose word I praise,  
in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.  
What can flesh do to me?

I want to focus in on the simplicity of verse three:

***When I am afraid, I trust in you.***

It's a very simple verse, but with huge implications. When I am afraid, I trust in you.

It's good to ask ourselves, "When I am afraid, where do I put my trust?" Or, really, we could say, "When I am afraid, where have I placed my trust other than in the good and powerful provision of God?" That twinge of fear or overwhelming anxiety can often times be traced back to a misplaced trust.

We can fill in the blank with all sorts of answers. And we are finding at the moment, that a lot of those places where we'd normally put our trust are just not that stable—health, money, relationships—you name it.

But David said, "When I am afraid, I trust in you." How could he be so confident in such despair? How was his heart propelled toward trust in God?

*(One caveat before we continue. Each of you have your own unique story with a unique set of experiences. Plus, you are uniquely made by God—there will never be another "you." No one else interprets life exactly the same way you do. Therefore, the applications of this and how we deal with our fears and learn to trust may look different for each of you.)*

### **Why can we trust in Him with our fears?**

God is all powerful and sovereign over all things. Jesus Christ "upholds the universe by the word of his power..." (Heb. 1:3). However, it's not only important that he's all powerful. He's not just "out there." He's close. Intimately close. Closer than you think he is.

David paints a picture of God's nearness in **verse 8**:

"You have kept count of my tossings;  
put my tears in your bottle.  
Are they not in your book?"

Sometimes our fears are so great, that we are led to tears. David had an actual physical enemy attacking him. He was fearing people who were seeking his life. We have a virus (along with the normal struggles and physical ailments because of the sin of Adam), our own sinful nature, and the evil one who is prowling like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us (I Peter. 5:8).

Our fears may be caused by different sources other than David's, but fear is still fear. Whether it's fearing an attacker, a virus, or the loss of a 401k, it's still hard. It can be crippling to feel like we are on our own and have to figure it out ourselves. And sometimes this fear is coupled with sadness—a lost dream.

Whatever the fear is, we learn in this passage that God is closer than we think, and more attentive than we could dream. Like David, wandering to Gath, he knows when your mind is anxiously wandering. He sees every tear; every twinge of pain and anxiety you feel. He

knows it all. And he remembers your tears—he captures those tears in a bottle and keeps record of them.

Now, what I'm about to say is speculation, because I don't know exactly what it's going to be like to meet Jesus—none of us do.

But I believe there will be a day when Jesus Himself will show you this bottle of tears that He's collected. *Your* bottle, the one with *your name* on it.

And then—He will explain every tear, and why you shed it.

You will be able to ask Him:

- What about *this* tear?
- Why *this* pain?
- Why did it have to be *this way*?

After all, we will be with Him forever—there will be no lack of time for these conversations.

And, like the Good Shepherd He is, He will show us that every tear had a *purpose*.

The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 8:28**:

And we know that in *all things* God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Not *some* things. Not *most* things. Not 99.9% of things. *All things*. *THAT* thing you're experiencing *right now*.

*That* tear, Jesus could say—*that*, was for *THIS*.

That tear of deep sadness of a broken heart, a deferred hope, a dream that died, a situation—or a life—where you think “I just didn't think it was going to be this way”. He is near: “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

And we will look in amazement at how He could have done such a wonderful thing and brought so much good from *that* pain.

Jesus keeps record of *your* tears because you are precious in His sight. He feeds the birds, numbers the hairs on your head, and He chose you before the foundation of the world. So, how could He *not* care about your pain, about your fear? About *those* tears?

He will show you this bottle of tears, because He experienced His fair share. In fact, Jesus' experience was so hard that His own tears literally turned into drops of blood (Luke 22:44). He will show you your bottle of tears because He drank the cup of God's

wrath that was supposed to be ours to drink. When *Jesus* was afraid, *He* trusted His Father. Jesus was the One who, though afraid, trusted perfectly.

So instead of us drinking this wrath forever, we cry tears now— “momentary afflictions”— that are exchanged for an “eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17). This is the “good” Romans 8:28-29 is talking about—being conformed into the image of Christ. God loves us too much *not* to make us more like His Son.

And in that eternal glory, if we start to have tears, Jesus will wipe them away. As John says in **Rev. 21:4**:

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

One day, the fear, tears, and pain will be “former things”. Not today, though. They are very real. And they don’t feel like they are leaving anytime soon. But it’s precisely *because* they are real now, we can know that He is working. So in the depths of the fear, the tears, the pain—whisper to God, “*Take this, and make it yours.*” It’s in those “groanings that are too deep for words” where the Spirit of God Himself actually intercedes for us. He’s listening. And He groans with you praying for the deepest desires to come true for you—desires that you didn’t even know you had.

He’s closer than you think. And He cares exponentially more than you could imagine. God’s merciful and gracious heart draws us in and, along the way, hopefully we can learn to say with David—and Jesus— “When I am afraid; I trust in you.”