The Gospel Promise Prompts the Church's Zeal for Prayer
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David Baum

Good morning!

Goodness, my first thought when I read Psalm 60 this week in preparation for this sermon was, "King David has been reading GABC's families' minds!" It certainly reminds me of my own life's goings-on. As Eric read the psalm this morning, how many of you thought, "That sounds familiar"? If you're so inclined, raise your hand. Thank you; you may lower your hands. Now raise them once more, keep them up for a bit, and look around. ***(Pause)*** These hands acknowledge our troubles and remind us that we are not alone: we are led by our Faithful Shepherd, Jesus Christ, whom we have confessed as Lord and Savior. You may lower your hands now.

No cease-fire was declared for our battles when you entered this morning. Rather, amid them, we have joined our voices in adoration, confession, and lament before God—as in David's prayer for Israel and himself. ***(Brief pause)***

And what gives us hope as we bring our lament? We are not left alone to face these struggles in our own strength. God is **RIGHT IN** our midst by the Holy Spirit, given to us by the Father at the request of Jesus Christ our Lord! (John 14:16) We can acknowledge the hard things honestly and still turn to Him for help. We ***MUST*** turn to Him. ***(Brief pause)***

David does not stand outside his people's distress. He is their king; he commands Israel's army and brings Israel's need for protection before God. Along with this, he intercedes for victory before the LORD GOD of Israel. But the story doesn't end there because it foretells the Lord of Armies Who leads those armies into our struggles to gain **His** victory for our safety and **His** glory.

Recall the hands we just raised as expressions of our shared needs. Psalm 60 gives us words for our response: to lament with hope, to ask for help, and to trust God while the battle continues. God's Word ***IS*** our assurance because Jesus sits on the Throne of God. Here in **this** sanctuary, we voice our lament together—not because every struggle is over, but because we need Him amid our struggles. ***(Brief pause)***

We are often prompted to ask God, "What did I do, if anything, to have this come upon my family and me?" But we must distinguish the guilt Christ has borne for us from **the opposition we face because we belong to Him**. To be clear, our sin warrants God's righteous judgment. But that judgment fell upon Jesus of Nazareth, who willingly took upon Himself all our sins. Our salvation comes ***ONLY*** from His love, grace, and mercy. The Holy Spirit gives these gifts to His children and is God's surety that He has saved us **from His wrath**. Christ has borne our guilt to free us from it. ***(Brief pause)***

God's salvation identifies us with Christ before the Father. **WE…Are…His!!!**

Satan and the world also recognize that we belong to Christ. The Father loves the Son and He loves us; Satan and the world hate us. On top of that, they can "spot us a mile away." In John 15:18–19 Jesus explained this to all of us.

That is what we habitually miss: belonging to God does not mean we will never again face opposition, hardship, or occasions when we displease God through spiritual neglect or the commission of sin. Those hands that were raised? We bring the battles and storms associated with them to Him ***BECAUSE*** we belong to Him and **our** battles **are His** battles, and He always calls us to Himself. Christ has assured us that He has come so that we have life and have it abundantly, in contrast to the thief that comes to steal, kill, and destroy. (John 10:10) ***(Brief pause.)***

Christ's gift of abundant life gives us reason to keep coming to Him in prayer with zeal; our prayers are a response to His grace, ***not*** the price we pay for that abundant life. How do we pray when the storms around us and the turmoil within us might be so severe that we ***seem*** to be rejected or forgotten by God? ***(Pause.)***

Psalm 60 gives us God's instructions for that struggle—and a lesson in trusting Him while the battle continues.

After we pray, we will begin with the psalm's introduction and follow its lesson through verse 12, considering three points. **The first point: the church of Christ laments with hope**. ***(Brief pause.)*** **The second, the church of Christ prays and trusts the Gospel Promise.** ***(Brief pause.)*** **The third, throughout its life, the church of Christ fights the good fight of faith with confidence**. ***(Pause.)*** **Let's Pray.**

May these thoughts and words boldly proclaim Your Gospel to all the souls gathered here today. AMEN!

Point 1: The church of Christ laments with hope

And its lesson begins in the introduction.

> **He Will Tread Down Our Foes**
>
> **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.**

God's covenant promise is certain! The printed heading, "He Will Tread Down Our Foes," directs us to the present assurance David voices in the last verse of the psalm, verse 12.

The introduction tells us this psalm is for instruction and that the prayer that follows begins with a plea for restoration. Here is the lesson: **God's people can hold fast to His promise of salvation while bringing their distress before Him,** whether the battle is self-inflicted or has been brought upon us.

Psalm 60 gives us a pattern for learning God's lessons in the middle of battle. We see King David amid Israel's campaigns and its victories, as the prayer voices distress. The

victorious king can still lament for his people and himself: success does not remove their need for God's help.

Now, look at verses 1 – 4

60 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.[b] *Selah*

Notice whose lament this is. David speaks for ***Israel and himself***—the people he calls God's "beloved ones" in verse 5.

First and foremost, **they** have displeased God and therefore need to be restored to Him before they need military victory from Him. David acknowledges God's anger, yet Israel remains beloved; the psalm does not name the particular offense behind that anger. We too can confess our sins and bring our distress honestly before God. Our guilt and our suffering need not be hidden from Him: we lament our sins and suffering, but our hope rests in who we are in Christ and in God's enduring love.

These verses show us how **the church of Christ LAMENTS with hope!** It is God's will for His people to know what it means to be rejected. He loves to hear our laments and does not treat His people's pain as entertainment, but He looks with derision upon those who bring that pain upon His beloved. We bring these hard things to Him as His beloved ones, asking for restoration in the assurance that ***His love has not ceased.*** God will take care of the enemies, too.

God's justice requires the destruction of evil. But notice whose distress David describes here: Israel's. The land quakes and is torn open; unless its breaches are repaired, it totters. These are the hard things God's own people bring before Him, pleading for restoration. We must not confuse their cry, "You have rejected us," with a declaration that seems to suggest they are no longer His beloved ones. On the contrary, they remain His beloved, as we who are in Christ remain His beloved. His discipline can be painful, even feel like abandonment, but it does not mean He has ceased to love us. Why? The Father corrects our behavior and thoughts in love. When He exposes how far we have drifted, we repent and return to Him.

And we must not assume that every hardship proves we have abandoned Him.

But David says God has made His people see hard things and given them wine that makes them stagger. Look ahead to verse 4: there were even UNSEEN bows aimed at ***THEM***! This is a picture of overwhelming distress, not an account of an ordinary drinking bout. It brings to my mind a weakened man who can no longer walk beneath what he has been forced to carry. As a spiritual application, it reminds us that sinful people cannot stand before the Holy God in their own strength: we **CANNOT** take another step ***without*** His help. When God

shows us how we have acted and thought apart from Him, our first step is repentance and a willing response to His correction. (Hebrews 12:5–6)

> [5] And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?
>
> "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
> nor be weary when reproved by him.
> [6] For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
> and chastises every son whom he receives."

Let's go through that again. God may place us amid such circumstances in order to show us one more time there is no hole so deep that we can ever be apart ***from*** Him. Nor is there a level of obedience so high that we do not need further correction. He reminds us who we are ***in*** Him. He is prompting us to **know for certain** that it is He and He alone Who can relieve our afflictions by whatever means and through whomever He chooses.

Why? Not so that we remain fixed on our surroundings! Rather, in order that we lament and fix our gaze upon Him ***amid*** our troubles. Does the serpent on the pole held by Moses come to mind? The Son of God upon the cross? Look at verse 4 again.

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

"… that they may flee to it from the bow." Consider: who has always been our Banner? Christ! That's worth a brief Selah at least! ***(Pause)***

Remember our raised hands? Friends, belonging to Christ does not exempt us from suffering now; ***(Brief pause)*** but Heaven's everlasting peace, though not yet ours to experience, remains our hope in Christ. We follow the One whose sufferings we are called to share.

These battles do not, by themselves, disprove our identity in Him. We do not know the reason for every hardship. Suffering alone does not tell us whether a particular battle involves correction for sin, opposition because we belong to Christ, or a cause we cannot yet understand.

God's everlasting love, boundless grace, and tender mercies give us reason to trust Him with the details, even when His timing remains hidden from us. We do not know when relief will come, but we can follow Christ faithfully while we wait, knowing that what comes to pass will serve His loving purposes.

Listen to these passages: ***they teach us to deny ourselves, follow Christ, and count knowing Him worth more than everything we may lose.***

Matthew 16:24, "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"

Luke 18:22: When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

Philippians 3:8–11, “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

In Christ, we **CAN** live for Christ! Matthew 16:24 ***calls us*** to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and **follow Him.** Luke 18:22 connects our surrender at Christ’s command with THE TRUE treasure in heaven. For us, that means obeying Him in today’s battles and trusting Him with tomorrow’s needs. Philippians 3:8–11 teaches us to count everything as loss beside **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ**. Our righteousness comes through faith. ***(Brief pause)*** We seek His resurrection power amid suffering. ***(Brief pause)*** And we look forward to resurrection from the dead. As we follow Him, we declare our identity in Him and bear witness to His character.

Following Christ through self-denial and suffering does not mean fighting our battles alone. Our hope rests in Christ’s final victory. ***(Brief pause)***

So we turn to Him for help. Seeking His banner brings us to prayer—and to verses 5–8, our second point:

Point 2: As its battles rage, the church of Christ prays and trusts the Gospel Promise

Listen first to verse 5 and the simplicity of their prayer, then to God’s declaration that gives them reason to trust.

That **your beloved ones** may be delivered,

give salvation by your right hand and answer us!

“Your beloved ones”—we are still loved yet still needing deliverance. David asks for salvation because he belongs to God. For Christians, the Gospel Promise is this: our salvation and righteousness come from God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not from our own efforts. In verses 6–8, God speaks in His holiness and declares His authority over these lands and nations. His promise sustains our prayer; it does not replace it. We trust Him while the battle continues, and because we trust Him, we keep asking for help.

Our trials are the believer’s call to prayer from the indwelling Holy Spirit. He rouses us from sleep and brings us to our knees. He bids us run to our Lord—our Banner, remember? And we can do this with the confidence that Jesus is the exact image of God because He is Immanuel, God with us.

In verses 6–8, learn in whom, not in what, our trust is grounded as God declares His authority over Israel’s lands **and** over the nations that threaten His people. Their distress is real, but their enemies have not taken the throne. The God whose help they seek remains sovereign.

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."

Don't miss the assurance here, brothers and sisters. God speaks as the One who owns and rules all creation, right down to these specific places: Shechem and the Vale of Succoth, Gilead and Manasseh belong to Him; Ephraim is His helmet and Judah His scepter. **The lands named here are actual places**; the metaphors lie in how God describes His relationship to them. The helmet, scepter, washbasin, and casting of a shoe express His ownership, rule, and superiority over all that is.

And what about Moab and Edom? Same thing. Moab is God's washbasin; upon Edom He casts His shoe; over Philistia He shouts in triumph. Moab is pictured in a lowly, serving role, and the shoe is cast upon Edom—it is not a picture of Edom becoming God's shoe. Rather, God figuratively tosses a shoe at them in an act of disrespect and degradation, declaring to them they are worthless and beneath Him. Thus, these images remind us that the threatening nations are beneath His authority. Some peoples may oppose God's people, but they are not His equals. They are no match for God. That is our reason to keep praying: **the enemies are real, but they are not sovereign. God is.** *(Pause.)*

Christians, this assurance of God's rule belongs alongside our hope in the place Christ has secured for His beloved, where we will dwell forever with Him in the new creation. That is our Christian hope, and it does not remove our present need to pray. Thanks be to God, who delivers us, His people, either from the battle or through it. ***(Brief pause)***

That assurance of God's rule brings us to verses 9–12 and our third point:

Point 3: The church of Christ fights the good fight of faith with confidence

Because God is sovereign, we can take the next faithful step—but not in our own strength. Listen as David turns again to questions and prayer before declaring his confidence in God's help.

9 Who will bring me to the fortified city? ***(Brief pause)***
Who will lead me to Edom? ***(Brief pause)***
10 Have you not rejected us, O God? ***(Brief pause)***
You do not go forth, O God, with our armies. ***(Brief pause)***
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.

What does confidence mean? Even after God speaks, David asks who will lead him, and His people plead for help. It is as though David is quizzing himself in verses 9–10a. In verse 10b, David's Holy Spirit "light bulb" turns on in reply to himself, "God does not go forth with our armies. God goes ahead of us and we follow God!" Verse 11 is the confession of Israel and of himself. Verse 12 is David's praise to God, Who is the ground of David's courage.

God's "beloved ones" remain loved in their lamenting, asking, and acting. Confidence is not knowing when the battle will end or how its next turn will unfold. Confidence is trusting God—not our own strength—for the next faithful steps we should take.

Today, that next step may be as simple as asking a brother or sister, "Will you pray with me about this battle?"

How **do** we pray when the storms and battles around us and the turmoil within us might be so severe that we seem to be rejected or forgotten by God? Bring every storm and battle before our Lord Jesus Christ and pray as David prayed in Psalm 60.

First, we **lament with hope**, honestly bringing our distress to Him. *(Brief pause.)*

Then, we **pray and trust His promise**, coming as His beloved ones—not to earn His love, but to appeal to His mercy. **The need drives us to pray with hope; the Gospel Promise assures us we may come to Him.** That assurance sustains our zeal: a willing, persistent return to Him, even through tears. *(Brief pause.)*

Then, **we fight the good fight of faith with dependent courage and confidence**—not standing idle, and not relying on ourselves, but taking the next faithful step with His help, just as David reminds us in verse 12, "With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes."

In our lament, our prayer, and our faithful action, all glory belongs to Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, our Priest, and our King. Together we rejoice under His Banner!

Remember those raised hands? Find one or two others and **RUN TO THE BANNER!**

Reader reference: Lament, prayer, and faithful action

Theme	What listeners are invited to do
Lament	Bring their distress honestly before God rather than hide it or wait until they understand every hardship.
Prayer	Keep asking for help as His beloved people—not to earn His love, but to appeal to His mercy.
Faithful action	Take the next step in dependence on Him. "Will you pray with me about this battle?" makes that step concrete and achievable.

Christ, our Banner, unites all three points: we lament with hope by looking to Him amid distress; we pray and trust the Gospel Promise by seeking His help as His beloved people; and we act with confidence by taking the next faithful step together, depending on His strength rather than our own. "RUN TO THE BANNER!" gathers these responses into one shared call to Christ.

The Gospel Promise assures us that we may come to Christ as His beloved people, prompting a willing, persistent return to Him in prayer—even through tears.