For God alone my soul waits in silence
Psalm 62
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What are you waiting for today? Hold that question as we do a flyover of Psalm 62; we will come back to it at the end of the sermon.

We will hear the psalmist's strong exclusiveness, "God alone," three times. Charles Spurgeon called this "The Only Psalm": God alone, *Soli Deo Gloria*.

We will hear David confess who God is, then bring his complaint, then confess again, and finally instruct the people.

Look first at the complaint, which sits at the center of the Psalm. Curiously, it names no specific incident of trouble. Spurgeon suggests, and I paraphrase, "This is because each of us is either **in** an incident now, **exiting** a recent one, ***or*** we can **see one coming** on the horizon." Each of us is waiting for ***something*** at this moment.

Many things in daily life require us to wait before the thing can be done. A bacterial culture requires time to grow, dough requires time to rise, and a child requires time to be born. We wait for a culture to study, bread to bake, and a child to care for. Each has a silent stretch of known duration: overnight for a bacterial culture, several hours for dough, nine months for a child. In each case, the waiting is reasonable only because we know the nature of what we are waiting for.

Waiting on God is different. Unlike the culture, the dough, and the child, we do not know the nature or the duration of what we are waiting for, because only He knows exactly what the outcome will be, and when and where.

That is why David returns again and again in this Psalm to waiting on God alone and in silence: God alone governs all things, which is His providence, His sovereign rule over every outcome. So, we **must** wait in silence before Him. After we pray, we will learn how to wait in silence on God alone.

PRAY.

Bible Exposition

"Waiting in silence for God alone" is our theme today. The movements of Psalm 62, from waiting to complaint to hope to teaching, are the path we will follow, and there are five points to help our understanding. The first four come from Psalm 62:1–12; the fifth comes from Psalm 46:9–11. Here they are and each starts with, "Waiting in silence…:"

1. Waiting in silence characterizes the Church's life of obedient faith in God. (Psalm 62:1–2)
2. Waiting in silence produces Godly clarity of thought. (Psalm 62:3–4)
3. Waiting in silence follows Christ's own obedient and faithful life on earth. (Psalm 62:5–8)
4. Waiting in silence requires the Church's obedient faith, and God gives us His strategy and His reason for it. (Psalm 62:9–12)
5. Waiting in silence leads us to act wisely on God's strategy as instructed in His word, the Bible. (Psalm 46:9–11)

This brings us to our first point: **Waiting in silence characterizes the Church's life of obedient faith in God. (Psalm 62:1–2).**

Listen to how David opens in verses 1 and 2:

[1] For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
[2] He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. (ESV)

David opens in silence and confesses afresh that God is not only the source of his salvation, but his rock AND his salvation, and his fortress. From that confession comes David's assurance that he shall not be greatly shaken. The wherewithal for this silence is the Holy Spirit, Who produces His fruit in us. That fruit includes peace: a quiet restfulness of soul given to us by God, in stark contrast to **this** sin-filled, self-serving world. GABC practices this very thing congregationally each Sunday as we are led into silent confession. This local body gives a corporate example for everyone to engage their soul in quiet restfulness. Out of that silence God gently reminds us of Himself, and David's silence will help him phrase his complaint in a way that reflects his trust in God.

This brings us to our second point: **Waiting in silence produces Godly clarity of thought. (Psalm 62:3–4).** How clear, you might ask? Clear enough that even we can understand every word we utter even as we speak to Him by the Holy Spirit. Look at the flow of David's thoughts in verses 3 and 4:

[3] How long will all of you attack a man
to batter him,
like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
[4] They only plan to thrust him down from his high position.
They take pleasure in falsehood.
They bless with their mouths,
but inwardly they curse. *Selah* (ESV)

Notice the change in person from verse 3 to verse 4. In verse 3, David addresses his attackers directly ("all of you"). In verse 4, he speaks of them in the third person ("they"). Waiting in silence enables us to hear what we would otherwise miss. You inexplicably understand what you have been praying for in a context that had not occurred to you before. Thank You, Holy Spirit! Call it a B.F.O., a blinding flash of the obvious. David's B.F.O. is in verse 4: they want him thrust down from his high position, and they will love every moment of it. Only God would know this with such certainty, which is why it may be that David, having waited in silence, now hears and understands these attackers as God Himself assesses them. Do not confuse this "hearing and understanding" with prophesying. David is describing what he has learned from God's Word, by God's gift of faith to wait in silence for God. By the end of this sermon, this will be plausible because we will learn that David ***does*** present as one who hears God. But wait, there's more.

Not only is there a change in person in this text; there is also a vivid reminder of Christ and who we are in Him. Christ is hated. We are hated. This is the yoke of Christ we are to take; it is also our cross to bear to follow Him. Do not act surprised. Jesus taught us this very lesson in John 15:18–25:

[18] "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they

kept my word, they will also keep yours. **21** But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. **22** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** Whoever hates me hates my Father also. **24** If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. **25** But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'" (ESV)

That business about being hated makes the *Selah* at the end of Psalm 62:4 a fitting place to pause. Having been told we will be hated, we are given a moment to be quiet before God and let this soak in. Selahs are good places to be still and top off our peace tanks in His quiet restfulness. David is graciously and lovingly reminding us that our souls must wait in silence for God alone.

This leads us to our third point: **Waiting in silence follows Christ's own obedient and faithful life on earth. (Psalm 62:5–8).**

Check out verses 5–7 and see David's response, born out of waiting in silence, as he teaches himself what is going on! It's the natural product of a B.F.O. called "A-hah!" Notice this repeats verses 1–2: having worked through his complaint, David returns to the same confession with firmer confidence.

5 For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.
6 He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
7 On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God. (ESV)

Then comes the wonderful assurance David preaches to himself and to his people: **trust God!**

8 Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. *Selah* (ESV)

We are to trust God and to pour out our hearts before Him, as David invites God's people to do. Here David gives them hope from God in a world filled with delusion and deceit.

David's silence points us to The One greater than David.

That One is Christ, and walking in His footsteps is how we show we love Him. It requires true and complete submission to God, just as Jesus completely submitted to God right up to His death on the cross. Jesus knew God's plan and assented to it in eternity past, yet in the present, as fully God and fully Man, He asked if there was another way. That request was not granted. So in faith Christ submitted to the Father and drank the cup of God's wrath. God the Father had already given God the Son all the instruction necessary, so Christ obeyed the Father in the Father's silence, going on what He had already heard.

He is our model for obediently living the faith God has given us **because** of Christ's faithful obedience. Until we die, there will be battles we would prefer to avoid. We must engage them faithfully, trusting God's will, for His glory and the praise of our Lord. When God's response is silence, we do well to go back to the last time we heard Him and go from there in faith until we hear again.

Look at how this submission unfolded for Jesus! His temptations in the wilderness and His times of solitude away from His followers are examples of His being alone with God, waiting in silence. Jesus' silence with God alone is the fullest picture of what David confesses: his salvation and his glory rest on God Whom he calls his mighty rock and his refuge. David prefigures Jesus Who trusted wholly and only in God to accept His sacrifice as payment for our sins. This is why verse 8 can call us to trust Him at all times and pour out our hearts before Him: God is a refuge for us. In this God shows His steadfast love for us, and His steadfast love guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!

At the end of verse 8 comes another *Selah*, signaling that waiting in silence for God alone deserves our attention. Be assured: in this *Selah* we are right where God wants us, so that we may rest in His peace and be kept by His steadfast love.

That *Selah* then opens the door for us to receive David's teaching, which includes Godly strategy in verses 9–12.

This brings us to our fourth point: **Waiting in silence requires the Church's obedient faith, and God gives us His strategy and His reason for it. (Psalm 62:9–12).** We have not only God's spoken word, the Bible, from which we draw His understanding to improve our own, but we also have the Holy Spirit, Who guides us in all truth so that we can recognize falsehood for what it is: an attack on God's people and on Him. Remember the battle cloud on the horizon? This is how we meet it: we prepare for it. Hear how David teaches that preparation in verses 9–12:

> **9** Those of low estate are but a breath;
> those of high estate are a delusion;
> in the balances they go up;
> they are together lighter than a breath.
> **10** Put no trust in extortion;
> set no vain hopes on robbery;
> if riches increase, set not your heart on them.
> **11** Once God has spoken;
> twice have I heard this:
> that power belongs to God,
> **12** and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.
> For you will render to a man
> according to his work. (ESV)

The strategy God teaches in verses 9–12 is not just for our private peace; it is our strategy when others deceive and threaten us. The strategy is simple: when trouble comes, wait in silence for God alone. Remember David's and Jesus' submission, and let the peace that passes understanding guard our hearts, as we read in Philippians 4:7:

> "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will **guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus**." (ESV)

This verse is the reason for God's strategy: the peace of God, which is beyond our understanding and even our best reasoning, ***will*** guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. That is David's "I shall not be shaken" (v. 6) fulfilled in Christ. Because God guards our hearts, we can wait in silence for Him alone and still obey when the pressure comes. But to obey, we must first recognize what is false.

That is why we return to verses 9 and 10: they teach us to recognize what is false. They warn us that men are but a breath and that we must put no trust in extortion. Recognizing falsehood takes preparation, and God has given us His word and His Spirit for exactly that.

Verse 9 says those of low estate are but a breath and those of high estate are a delusion. Don't miss the imagery: when both estates are put onto the balances, we expect the heavier to reveal the lighter for what it is, a breath. Instead, the low and high estate together in one pan do not even outweigh the air that touches the other pan. What does that mean? First, they are lighter than air, and we are foolish to expect them to repay us for the good we do for them. Second, God's might is seen in the contrast: God warns us away from trusting man, who is but a breath, because He alone is sufficient for all our needs. God ends this lesson so gracefully with His words spoken through David:

> **10** Put no trust in extortion;
> set no vain hopes on robbery;
> if riches increase, set not your heart on them. (ESV)

God leaves open the possibility that faithfully earned riches might increase in this life, but we must not set our hearts on them. Instead, we set our hearts on Christ and rejoice rightly when riches come, because the Creator of the Universe gives them. We must also rejoice with others who receive their share. But if we are not to trust men or riches, whom do we trust? Verses 11–12 answer that question, and they are where this psalm lands.

Verses 11–12 begin with what God has spoken, and David's response is silent trust. David and God's people show Christ-like submission to God by faith in two ways. First, God alone knows what will happen, so David must trust Him for everything. Second, God alone knows when it will happen, so David cannot know when the wait will end. Nor can we.

Before we go on, never ever forget God's sovereign providence, declared in three parts in Psalm 62:11–12. First, power belongs to God alone (He owns it). Second, steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. Third, God will render to a man according to his work. Meaning what, exactly? Simple: steadfast love is His reward for covenant faith and obedience, and the just judgment of God for covenant disobedience.

If God alone knows what will happen and when, what are we to do while we wait? God has told us.

This brings us to our fifth point: **Waiting in silence leads us to act wisely on God's strategy as instructed in His word, the Bible. (Psalm 46:9–11).**

Turn now to Psalm 46:9–11. What David practices in Psalm 62, God commands in these verses:

> **9** He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
> he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
> he burns the chariots with fire.
> **10** "Be still, and know that I am God.
> I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth!”

11 The LORD of hosts is with us;

the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah* (ESV)

Notice who speaks in verse 10: God Himself, in the midst of wars that He alone brings to an end (v. 9). His command comes to us in the middle of our own battles, including the cloud on the horizon. To be still, then, is to stop striving and to know that He is God and we are not.

Only as we increasingly become still will we increasingly know that He is God, and with that the wisdom of His strategy for us. Stillness comes first; wise action follows.

So what does wise action look like? It looks like what David has already taught us: we put no trust in extortion or riches (Psalm 62:10), we trust God at all times and pour out our hearts before Him (v. 8), and we obey His word when pressure comes, letting His peace guard our hearts and minds. Each of these grows out of stillness.

David also shows how God’s word comes to us: “Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God” (v. 11). God’s word to us is sure because He alone is faithful; the life, death, burial and resurrection of God the Son assure our security in God through the Holy Spirit. Whatever wisdom we show when pressure comes is His gift, and the glory is His alone.

Since the glory is His alone, let us learn what we have seen: God alone governs all things, so we wait in silence before Him. That silence marks the Church’s life of obedient faith. It gives us clarity of thought. It follows the obedient faith of Christ Himself. It rests on God’s strategy and sovereign providence. And it leads us to act wisely on His word: be still, and know that He is God. Christ’s faithful waiting makes ours possible.

Remember where we began, with the question, what are you waiting for today? The bacterial culture, the dough, and the child each taught us to wait because we knew what we were waiting for. How much more do we wait in silence for God alone, Who knows exactly what will happen and when, whatever it is we are waiting for.

This week, find time each day to be silent before God. Bring Him the thing you are waiting for and listen to what He has already said in His word. When His response is silence, go back to the last time you heard Him and go from there in faith.

Let’s pray. O LORD, because You alone, God, govern all things, You view our silent waiting as trust and worship, not idleness. Out of that trust, founded in Christ, we pray in obedient confidence. Power belongs to You alone and steadfast love belongs to You alone. Because Christ waited and obeyed in faith, we bring our hearts before You in the quiet You have given us. Let Your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Give us wisdom to act on Your word. Thanks be to You, O God, Who delivers us because of the person and work of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, Priest, and King! Amen.