

Refuge

It is a fact that life has its ups and downs. We relish the ups and wish there were fewer downs but the ups rarely equal the intensity of some of the downs of this life. On occasion, the downs seem to overwhelm us. Getting through the good times is rarely an issue and, in fact, they are usually too short by our reckoning because we are so involved in the enjoyment of them. The bad times are the ones that seem to drag on forever, no matter what we do and no matter how we cope.

There was a period in David's life when all the good he could do seemed vain. He had been called up from the lowly station of shepherd to sooth the king's temper with his musical expertise, and the king threw a spear at him (1 Samuel 18:10-11). He had proven his loyalty to the king repeatedly (evidently too successfully, vs. 7-8), and was best friends with the king's son (vs. 1-3), and still, there he sat in a cave, hounded like a dog by that very same Saul. When David wrote Psalm 57, he resourced his sure and steadfast relationship with God: *"And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by"* (Psalm 57:1).

In a hot, dry climate, there is nothing like a good shade. Farm folk have often seen a mother hen shade her chicks from the harsh heat of the sun by spreading her wings over them. In fact, challenge her chicks and the posture she will take is threatening, wings spread, ready to give life and wing for her brood. God's comfort and protection is always available to His children, ready when requested.

Another challenge in hard times is to believe that hardships are temporary and that God is still very aware of our plight. David understood this and trusted in the mercy of God that *"reaches unto the heavens"* (v. 10). The struggles we face are not permanent; relief is available and, most times, sooner than we expect or deserve. God does not forget His children; the slowly ticking time of trial and tribulation will go by more quickly and easily if we trust in God's genuine love.

Trust in God and let Him be your refuge.

(Lovingly dedicated to Lily Hudson and her family)

JDS