

Psalm 62

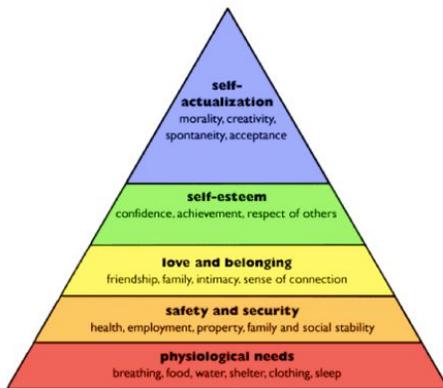
Be Trusting

Main idea: God calls us to trust Him, and Him alone.

Next Sunday I'm going to start preaching through the book of Ruth, so this will be the last sermon in the series that I've been calling, "You're So Emotional." That being the case, I thought I'd spend just a couple minutes talking about how we're to think about our emotions from a biblical worldview, compared to how modern psychology treats emotions.

As we've seen, the Bible makes it clear that emotions are good. God gives us emotions as gifts to be used for His glory. We're not to allow our emotions to lead us into sin,¹ but rather we're to lead our emotions so that we delight ourselves in the Lord.²

[Chart of Maslow's hierarchy of needs]



Some of you may remember this chart when I showed it to you about a year ago, or from school. This is known as Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It was created to explain why we do the things that we do. According to the chart, our primary needs seek to alleviate raw emotions such as anger and fear by providing for our physical and safety needs. And then as you move up the chart, you find more happy emotions such as love and confidence. So according to Abraham Maslow, many or perhaps even most of our emotions are simply a means to an end, so that we might eventually learn to accept ourselves for who we are. And our culture, whether they realize it or not, has pretty much embraced this model. It's pretty clear that our culture is completely obsessed with this idea of learning to accept ourselves.

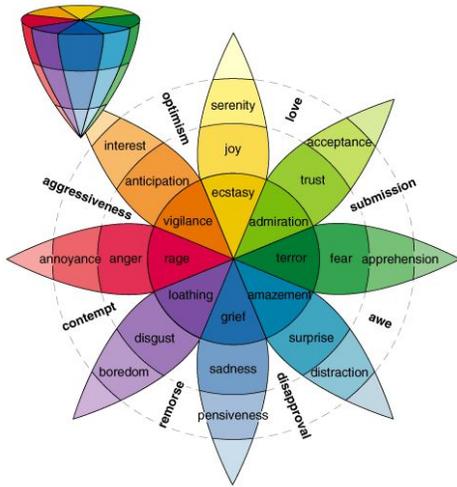
But should that be our goal? To accept...ourselves?

Robert Plutchik was another psychologist who was best known for his studies into human emotions, and he came up with something he called the Wheel of Emotions.

[Wheel of Emotions]

¹ Ephesians 4:26

² Psalm 37:4



Plutchik suggested that there are eight primary emotions: anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, anticipation, trust, and joy. Completely accidentally, we've actually talked about most of these emotions as we've looked at several of the Psalms this summer. According to the Wheel of Emotions, you can have stronger expressions of these emotions, or you can have weaker expressions of these emotions. Taking anger as an example, you can have a stronger expression of it such as rage, or a weaker expression of it such as annoyance. And I don't know if this whole Wheel of Emotions is completely accurate, but it does make some sense, especially with the emotion we're talking about today, which is trust.

According to the chart, the stronger expression of trust is something like admiration, while the weaker expression of it is something like acceptance. And that makes a lot of sense. Maybe the problem with Maslow's hierarchy of needs isn't that it culminates in accepting ourselves, but rather than it doesn't go far enough, because mere acceptance of ourselves is actually a very weak emotion. Maybe we need to come to trust and even admire who it is that God makes us as we find our identity in Jesus.³

And, you know, we often say that we're supposed to trust in the Lord, because the Bible certainly says we should,⁴ but when we say that, what do we mean? Do we use the word "trust" in a strong way, or in a weak way according to the Wheel of Emotions? Do you mean by it that a Christian is someone who admires and worships God, desiring that He directs their paths,⁵ or do you mean that a Christian is someone who merely accepts certain facts about Jesus, and then lives however they please? What does it mean to trust in the Lord?

It's interesting that when we talk about faith in Jesus, we often just mean that we believe certain things about Jesus. We believe that He's the Son of God. We believe that He died for our sin. And we even believe that He's coming again. And it's important to believe all these things. But is this kind of mere belief the same thing as trust?

I think Robert Plutchik got at least one thing right when we apply his thoughts to Christianity, and it's this: the kind of faith that God would have us to have is far more than merely accepting facts about Jesus, but rather loving and admiring Him for who He is. So in this last sermon about the emotions that God has given us for our good and His glory, we're going to look at something that's more than emotion, and yet it ought to make us very emotional. We're going to answer the question: what does it mean to trust in Jesus?

³ 1 Corinthians 4:3, 2 Corinthians 5:17

⁴ Proverbs 3:5

⁵ Proverbs 3:6

Psalm 62:1.

To the choirmaster: according to Jeduthun. (Psalm 62:1a)

The Bible only mentioned Jeduthun a couple times. Most likely, he was in the temple choir. So even though David wrote this psalm, it was probably written for Jeduthun to sing. I think that means, as members of God's choir, we should all try to sing it. So let's continue.

A Psalm of David. For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. (Psalms 62:1b-2)

So in the opening verses of the song, we're directed to admire God for who He is. David calls God his rock, and salvation, and fortress. A good, large, strong rock was often important to find because it provided many benefits to people in those days. It was unmovable. It could provide safety from enemies. It could be used as a foundation for a building. And for the Jews, a rock also symbolized God's provision, since God told Moses to strike a rock, and it gave them water to drink.

So when it says that God is like a rock, it reminds us that He protects us. He's strong. Unshakeable. And He gives good gifts to those who ask Him. In other words, God is trustworthy.

David also writes that God is our salvation. In our pluralistic society, in which everybody likes to pave their own path and choose their own way, Jesus declared in John 14:6:

"I am the way." - Jesus

And Paul said about Jesus:

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Jesus is our salvation. In fact, that's what the name "Jesus" means. The Hebrew form is "Yeshua."⁶ "Ye" is the shortened form of "Yahweh" meaning God, and "shua" means salvation. So literally, when Jesus came, we were reminded that God is salvation.

David also wrote that God is our fortress. In order for God to be your salvation, you must abide in Him. Like a mighty fortress, it does no good if you stand on the outside. You must enter in. And God's character says, "Whosoever will may come."⁷

David then contrasts God's character with the character of man. Verse 3.

How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? 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 (Psalms 62:3-4)

⁶ Hebrew: יֵשׁוּעַ

⁷ Revelation 22:17

As we've seen before in studying the Psalms, the word Selah is a direction given that means to pause and reflect on what you just heard. So it seems that David is describing his enemies, but remember that he wrote this song not just for himself, but for others to sing. So pay close attention to who it's talking about. The beginning of verse 3 says, "How long will all of you..." So if David wrote this for all of us to sing, who are we singing to? All of us!

One really cool aspect of singing together as a church is that we're not just singing to God, but to one another. We're reminding each other of important truths. Sometimes when we're singing hymns or praises, I'll just pause a second to listen to all of you, and I'm reminded not just by the words of the song, but by all of you just how trustworthy God is.

So anyway, everyone is singing to everyone about everyone. So let's see what they're singing. Verse 3 again.

How long will all of you attack a man to batter him... (Psalms 62:3a)

Woah. That escalated quickly.

Why do we attack each other? I'm not talking about armies and nations and governments. God gave them the power of the sword for a reason.⁸ I'm talking about us, as individuals made in the image of God.⁹ The Bible says that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."¹⁰ So why do we criticize each other so much, whether it's our spouse after a long day, or our neighbor who seems so difficult to get along with, or that politician that you vehemently disagree with about everything?

Listen: they're not the enemy. We have an enemy who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy,¹¹ but it's not our fellow man. And yet, because we were ensnared by the devil to do his will,¹² we should not put our trust in man. In fact, even when people were coming to Jesus in faith because they saw His miracles, it says this in John 2:

Jesus on his part not entrust himself to [men], because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. (John 2:24-25)

And it says this in Jeremiah 17:9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

And don't just understand this to be talking about everyone else's heart, but even your own. My own. Especially my own. You see, in contrast to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and in contrast to God's trustworthy character, we are deceitful and full of sin. Our goal shouldn't be to just accept ourselves, but to trust in the One who can save us from ourselves.

So don't put your faith in man or politics, but in God.

Verse 5.

⁸ Romans 13:4

⁹ Genesis 1:26-27

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:12

¹¹ John 10:10

¹² 2 Timothy 2:26

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. (Psalms 62:5-6)

Verses 5 and 6 appear to repeat verses 1 and 2, but they actually don't. See if you can find the differences. Verse 1.

For God alone my soul waits in silence... (Psalms 62:1a)

And then verse 5.

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence... (Psalms 62:5a)

You see, verse 1 expresses a reality: my soul waits. But then verse 5 states the same thing as a command: my soul, wait. He's telling his soul to wait. So here's the truth of the matter. If you wait on the Lord, if you trust in Him, then you will actively put your trust in the Lord, waiting on Him to save you. It's not going to be just something you say or believe, but something you do.

There's a scene from the movie "Never Back Down" where we see a kickboxing match between a Bolivian and a marine. The Bolivian is showing off a lot, flipping around, and the crowd is just going crazy for him. But as soon as he gets into the Marine's space, the marine hits him once and the Bolivian falls flat.

God gives us a humble power. It's not showy. Paul wasn't a powerful presence in person. But the Holy Spirit inside him was powerful. And we have the same Holy Spirit. And the faith that we're to have shouldn't cause us to be all showy, or all talk, but cause us to do something. We live out our faith with confidence in God.

There are a couple other differences between verses 1 and 2, and verses 5 and 6, but for our purpose this morning, I just want to look at one of them. The end of verse 2 states:

I shall not be greatly shaken. (Psalm 62:2b)

But the end of verse 6 leaves out the word "greatly," and just says:

I shall not be shaken. (Psalm 62:6b)

See the difference? So which is it? Will we not be shaken at all, or just not be shaken greatly? But, of course, the answer is both. If you wait on the Lord, trusting in Him, then you find that He's your rock, and you won't be moved, because your confidence will be in the unshakeable Christ.

But that doesn't mean there won't be troubling times. There will still be things that trouble you. I'm surprised by how many people think receiving Jesus leads to a trouble-free life. I've baptized many people over the years who disappear from the church and never return after they get baptized because they seem to think that getting baptized will lead to no more problems. So when they continue to have problems, they think it didn't work. But it doesn't work that way. However, if you put your hope in God, and not in your circumstances, then you will not be greatly shaken by those things, because while you may not know what tomorrow holds, you know who holds tomorrow.

David tells us exactly why we should not be shaken in the next two verses. Verse 7.

On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah (Psalms 62:7-8)

There's another Selah, so think about that. "On God rests my salvation and my glory." Is that true of you? Do you believe that your salvation rests completely on God, or do you think that you contribute something to your salvation?

The Bible is clear that salvation is by grace alone, and that God's grace is evident in us through our expression of faith. Our faith doesn't cause God's salvation, but rather expresses the reality of God's salvation, and even this is a gift from God.¹³ So our salvation rests completely on God.

And what about your glory? Do you believe that your glory rests completely on God? Or do you seek to glorify yourself in this life? In other words, is your glory physical or spiritual? And how do you get it? Do you earn glory for yourself through your achievements, by beating everyone else, or do you receive glory by grace?

This is what's wrong with a lot of what's called Christianity. We think in order for us to win, someone else has to lose. So we have all these competing denominations and churches, trying to prove themselves as the right one, or the better one, forgetting that our glory isn't at all about what we can do, but about what Jesus has already done.

So trust Jesus to both save you and justify you by grace.

And then the next two verses remind us again why we should not put our trust in men. Verse 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. Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them. (Psalms 62:9-10)

Notice that it says that we can't trust the high or the low. Don't put your trust in the rich and famous as if they have the key to heaven, and don't put your trust people who flatter you. We can't trust anything in this life. Why? Verse 11.

Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work. (Psalms 62:11-12)

And that's a strange place to end the song. "Trust in God, put your hope in Him, because He renders to man according to his work!"

So what is your work earning you? We've seen several times in this psalm that we can't trust men. So, can you trust your own work? No. And yet, there is One Man, the unique God-Man, fully God, and fully man, whose work we can trust.

But trust in Jesus is more than mere acceptance of facts about Him. It's admiring Him, loving Him, worshiping Him for who He is and what He's done. Jesus died for you, and rose from the grave, so that you would find that He is your salvation and glory.

¹³ Ephesians 2:8-9