

## ***Unshakeable God***

Trinity CRC, Edmonton, April 24, 2022AM  
GEMS Sunday, Baptism of William Wybenga

**Psalm 62 (v.2)**  
Rev. Richard deLange

### **Psalm 62**

- <sup>1</sup> Truly my soul finds rest in God;  
my salvation comes from him.
- <sup>2</sup> Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.
- <sup>3</sup> How long will you assault me?  
Would all of you throw me down—  
this leaning wall, this tottering fence?
- <sup>4</sup> Surely they intend to topple me  
from my lofty place;  
they take delight in lies.  
With their mouths they bless,  
but in their hearts they curse.
- <sup>5</sup> Yes, my soul, find rest in God;  
my hope comes from him.
- <sup>6</sup> Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
- <sup>7</sup> My salvation and my honor depend on God;  
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
- <sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, you people;  
pour out your hearts to him,  
for God is our refuge.
- <sup>9</sup> Surely the lowborn are but a breath,  
the highborn are but a lie.  
If weighed on a balance, they are nothing;  
together they are only a breath.
- <sup>10</sup> Do not trust in extortion  
or put vain hope in stolen goods;  
though your riches increase,  
do not set your heart on them.
- <sup>11</sup> One thing God has spoken,  
two things I have heard:  
“Power belongs to you, God,  
<sup>12</sup> and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”;  
and, “You reward everyone  
according to what they have done.”

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

Dear GEMS and congregation,

I think Psalm 62 wonderfully shows that God really understands the struggles of young people like our GEMS. Reading it slowly, I heard the writer talking about struggles with friends. I also heard about struggles with possession that make us think if I only had this or that—like other kids—I'd be happier. I heard struggles with identity. That's the beauty of God's Word. The Bible has something to say to us all, whether we are young or old, boy or girl, poor or rich, well-known or someone in the background.

If Psalm 62 was written by—let's say—a 10 or 12 year old girl, it might sound something like this. I'm not pretending to get this literally but to catch the spirit of it. Here's goes:

<sup>1</sup> I am so glad that I can rest in God;  
as my Saviour, he knows everything I need.

<sup>2</sup> Truly he is my best friend and my salvation;  
he holds me tight so I will never be shaken.

She says to those who make fun of her:

<sup>3</sup> When will you stop your relentless teasing and insults?  
I feel beaten down,  
ready to fall over like a wobbly old fence.

<sup>4</sup> I know that you really want me to crumble into dust  
so you never have to see my face again;

I wish you'd stop telling lies about me.  
To my face you act sweetly,  
but when I'm not around, you tell mean-spirited  
lies that hurt me deeply.

<sup>5</sup> O, I'm so glad I can rest in God;  
He's the reason I keep wanting to live.

<sup>6</sup> Truly he is my best friend and my salvation;  
he holds me tight so I will never be shaken.

<sup>7</sup> I have to keep telling myself the wonderful truth  
that salvation—even my honor and worth, my identity, comes from God;  
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

Those girls with toxic tongues are nothing compared to God.

<sup>8</sup> I just want to tell everyone to trust in God all the time;  
pour out your heart and pray to him,  
God is your safe place to turn when you feel battered.

<sup>9</sup> You know what trusting God has also taught me?

Whether I've got lots of money or status  
or very little, it makes no difference.  
Our worth is not weighed by what we have;  
things ultimately vanish like our breath.

<sup>10</sup> It's not worth striving to look good in the eyes of others if you have to do it by lying or stealing.

<sup>11</sup> Now, here's what I've decided to rest in; two things:

"Power belongs to you, God, not to people who are trying to knock me down.

<sup>12</sup> You, Lord, are the most faithful and true source of love;

I can trust you above everything and everyone else."

In addition to that, "When the end of time comes, we'll all get from you what we have coming."

I found it helpful to try to rewrite that psalm with the GEMS in mind. I hope you did too. Now let's back up. What did we hear in this psalm?

### **What Shakes and What Doesn't**

First of all, this psalm talks about what shakes and what doesn't. Our life shakes but God doesn't. When we get that straight in our head and heart, then the shaking in our life becomes less troublesome.

So, what shakes your life, young ladies? You might be able to guess this, but I've never been a young girl! I will, however, try to understand some of the things that shake your world and I want to focus on some of the things we find in Psalm 66.

#1: Sooner or later we all discover friends that aren't really friends. We think we have a good friend but then one day we discover that friend isn't who we thought she was. She has betrayed you. Lied about you. Trash-talked you. And whether she did it with words in the hallway at school or on some social media post, it really hurts.

#2: There are also the mean girls. You know you can't trust them. They think they are the coolest but they constantly gossip about everyone that's not in their group. They catch people in strange positions or with a funny look on their face, then they snap a picture on their phone and post these things on Instagram or another popular social media platform. They consider it their job to make girls like you look bad. Your parents tell you just to ignore those girls but what they say and do hurts a lot.

#3: Sometimes the means girls are also the rich girls. You always feel pressure to have what the popular girls have. I want to have clothes like them or have an iphone like them. Hey, I'd be happy if my parents would just let me have a flip-phone so I at least don't feel so left out.

#4: Maybe there's also a group of smart girls who make others feel dumb. They say things like, "What! You didn't get the answer to that easy question right?"

In short, GEMS, I don't honestly know what exactly shakes your world. And it's different for an 8 year old than it is for a 12 or 13 year old. But lots of things shake our

world. If it isn't some of the things I mentioned, it could be struggles at home. Fighting with a sister or brother. Maybe you hear your parents fighting and it scares you.

I remember being about 9 years old and staying at a friend's house for the weekend. I had never heard my parents fight. But when I was in bed at my friend's house, his parents were just screaming at one another. I was scared. And if that's what you hear at home, it might scare you too.

We've all just lived through 2 years of Covid. It can be pretty tough when you can't go to school for months and months and don't get to see your friends for a long time. You feel lonely and unconnected. That's a shaky feeling.

The truth is that we all know the feeling—young and old, richer or poorer—all of us. The supposed rich girls and mean girls and friends who betrayed you all feel the shakiness just like you do. It comes from different sources for each of us. But we all know some things in life that make us feel insecure or even afraid. Parents, teachers, counselors, grandparents and more. We all experience things that shake our world.

The writers of Psalm 62, however, found something that doesn't shake. SomeOne! And that is God!

*Ps 62:1 Truly my soul finds rest in God;  
my salvation comes from him.*

*Ps 62:2 Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

A slightly clearer translation says, "I shall not be greatly shaken." The writer is saying that there are things in our lives that do shake us up but nothing is so big that it can shake us completely. Here's why: the writer knows and takes comfort in the fact that he's standing on God who a rock! There's still lots of things that shake our lives but they can't shake us completely because the rock is immovable.

You think about things you've tried to stand on that don't hold up. A trampoline is fun to bounce on. It's intended to shake you up—for fun—but you wouldn't run to it for protection. You can stand on a chair or even a ladder, but they sometimes they tip over and you fall down. It's fun to stand on the beach as the water washes up on the sand and over your feet. But fairly quickly, the water washes away the sand and we lose our footing. But if you do the same thing when you're standing on a rock, the rock will not wash away.

Based on the experience of the psalmist, he knows that rocks don't move. Think of a mountain. When I think of a fortress-like mountain, I picture Mt. Robson, just past Jasper. That is one solid rock! Rocks don't crumble. They can withstand all sorts of pressure. The psalmist is perhaps thinking of a mountain that he's familiar with. Maybe he's picturing a building made of rock which is like a fortress. Or he's thinking of a cave which is a fortress right in the middle of a giant rock. In any event, he knows that rock is solid and unmoveable. Unshakeable!

That's the picture of God the writer wants us to hold on to. He starts the psalm saying God is my rock and my salvation. He repeats that in v.6 again and in v.8 calls God a *mighty* rock! And each time, he mentions not being shaken. Last week we talked about the security of our salvation in Jesus. This psalm also mentions salvation as something that God gives to us and which makes us feel secure! And that's what we need most from God.

We know what salvation means first and foremost. We know that we are sinners and need to be saved from our sin. That's what God does for us through Jesus. That's what we remembered on Good Friday. Jesus dies on the cross, suffers the agony of separation from God, of hell, for us. He ensures that we can stand before God redeemed, made clean and holy. As we heard last Sunday, as in Christ we die to sin because he pays for it on Good Friday, so in Christ are we resurrected to new life with him on Easter. With that salvation comes the assurance that death does not have the final word. We will live again, eternally. Because Jesus has risen from the dead, we shall too! That's salvation.

But if we limit salvation only to what we will receive in the life to come, then we sell God short. We are recipients of salvation now. And salvation includes a lot of things. Sticking to the theme of Psalm 62, it's important to remember that salvation involves a new identity now. It starts with remembering that our sin does not define us. What people say about us does not define us. What we feel about ourselves does not define us. Whether we have more or less than someone else does not define us. Whether we are young or old or white or black does not define us. Whether we are a girl or boy does not define us.

You know what defines us? Jesus does. Jesus makes us children of God. That's what defines us. That is part of God's salvation for us. He recreates us. He redeems us. He adopts us to be his children and everything that we truly need will be given to us. We are his beloved children.

That's something you can stand on. That's a rock of salvation which means we don't have to let other people identify or define us. We're God's dearly loved, redeemed children. Securely held and loved by God. Nothing can separate us from God's love, no matter what friends or enemies say or think or do. This new identity is all ours because of Jesus. Hence, we sometimes sing, "On Christ the solid Rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand!"

So, yes, we are shakeable in many ways but, praise God, he is not. He is unshakeable.

### **The Value of the Shakes**

Secondly, GEMS, the reason we have the shakes in our life is because of sin. Sin breaks our relationship with God and also with people and the world as a whole.

The whole creation suffers under the weight of sin. But, as I just told you, Jesus has saved us, saved the world from sin.

More than that, though, he redeems the shakes, making them valuable for us. Part of his salvation is that the shakes no longer destroy us. Instead, he turns them to our profit. Jesus makes the struggles of our life into something good. It may take time before we sense it. We may never fully understand or appreciate it on this side of heaven. We'd rather just avoid the struggle and shakes. So perhaps we need to see them as God does.

Please watch this video for a minute:

<https://www.facebook.com/1215059/videos/930815114198281/>

There's no volume. You don't need it. Just watch. Look how much shaking is going on there. That's a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. It's amazing to behold. It's beautiful.... But this is a time-elapsed video sped up to show the whole process in just 55 seconds. That's not how fast it really is for the butterfly. It's a hard struggle, lasting days—10 to 14 days from what I read.

(At the end of video:) The process of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly is called—anyone know? Metamorphosis. And that means change from one body type to another.

That kind of helps us understand what God does in our lives through struggles and times of shaking. We can be assured that as saved children of God he is up to something good in our lives in and through struggles. In the New Testament, there's a comforting verse that says that whatever trial or temptation comes to us, we can be assured that it's not more than we can handle because God is faithful and will help us through it (1 Cor 10:13). God promises to work in us and through struggles to make us better and stronger Christians.

The Bible uses all kinds of imagery to help us understand. It talks about God's refining fire, about going through the darkness, through the valley and finding God's peace, presence and power in those places. So, God helps us to learn in the hard times that we can really, truly and always depend on him. He doesn't always remove our struggles quickly. Some last a lifetime even. But in the process, he's changing us and we are becoming more like Jesus. It's a spiritual metamorphosis.

The shaking times in our lives are not wasted. They too are part of our salvation. God redeems the hardship to grow us into more beautiful people. That's what you can trust him to do for you, young ladies. You can do a lot to make yourselves beautiful on the outside but that's not God's primary concern. He already sees you as beautiful. But he also is working through our struggles to help us become increasingly beautiful on the inside too.

You know why? The more we are changed on the inside, the more our life becomes beautiful on the outside. People begin to see more and more of Jesus in us because we begin to shed the insecure and superficial girl that we were and rest in

Jesus. As we begin to let him love us and rest in that love, we are better able to love others.

That's our comfort as God's children. God is always at work in us because he loves us. He'll never let anything we go through go to waste, especially not things that shake us. He's redeeming it to make us better in service to Jesus and others. So, no matter what is shaking your world, please look to Jesus and remember what he has done for you on the cross. But also remember what he is continuing to do in you and through you. Stand on that rock of salvation and you will not be greatly shaken. Jesus is a steadfast Rock and he will hold you tight.

And all God's people say, Amen.