

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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Encouragement Letter (13NOV24)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for the PWA and the encouragement and labours they do in our church. The PWA has been meeting at Penrith for about 60 years seeking to serve him and seek his kingdom.

Today, our encourage from Psalm 62 is “God Our Refuge” before moving onto church matters.

ENCOURAGEMENT: God our Refuge

Where do you stand when you face the world? Do people see your faith in God? It can be hard standing up in the world and saying you are a Christian, especially in our polarised world where positions are pushed to the extremes and being a Christian makes you the target of verbal abuse and angry sentiment. It is easier to keep quiet and fly low under the radar instead of raising our colours that say, “I belong to Christ.”

We see David has been facing opposition, likely from political opponents. He feels weak near to falling but he finds his rest in God. David continues forward trusting in the Lord. He says:

My salvation and my honour depend on God;

he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

Trust in him at all times, you people;

pour out your hearts to him,

for God is our refuge. Psalm 62:7-8

God is the ground on which he stands, and whether he stands or falls it depends on God. His salvation depends on God. If he is to be rescued from this situation then that is beyond him and in the hands of God himself. So his eyes are lifted first and foremost to God's throne looking to him for deliverance. His honour depends on God. At one level, this is his reputation before others. He stakes his honour before others in God himself, so how he is regarded is intimately entwined with how people regard God.

At another level, how people perceive him does not matter. It is being honoured in God's sight that counts first and foremost. It is as God says, “Those who honour me, I will honour.” 1 Samuel 2:30

David declares God is his mighty rock and refuge. God is his safe place in the struggle and difficulty of life. God is the place he runs to when people oppose him and make life difficult for him. God is his shelter against the evils of this world. God will keep David near, no matter what happens, and bring him safe to himself. David knows this and has experienced this. Because David has found his security in God, he says to the people – “Trust in him at all times.” He can encourage others to trust in God, because he himself has experienced God’s care. He points others towards God to pour out their troubles to God, to find their refuge in God. God is not for him alone, but his salvation is to be declared to all.

As we face the world and the trials that come our way wrought by others, we are to find our refuge in God and bank our salvation and honour upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to share God’s on-going work in our lives, pointing to him as our refuge and strength. We are to speak of his salvation for us in Jesus’ death and resurrection and share personally how he has been our salvation and continues to be our salvation in the present and how we await the day Jesus will return and we will live forever with him, free of the trials of this world. Faith leads us to live confidently before the world, trusting our salvation and honour to Christ, and showing how he is our refuge so we can encourage others to find their refuge in Christ. Do not shirk from being identified with Christ.

Are you letting the world know you belong to him and Christ is your refuge?

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ENGAGING WITH GOD #7: The Big Picture

Our next engaging with God seminar is on Wednesday 20th November at 7.00pm at church building. We will be bringing it all together as we think how all we have looked at helps us live a life that engages with God.

“KIDS’ CHURCH” COMBINED SERVICE

We are having our Kids’ Church Combined Service on the 1st December. All three Sunday services will meet together for worship at 10.00am and the kids will encourage us with their annual Nativity play.

COMMUNITY PANTRY: CHRISTMAS

As we approach Christmas, we would love some donations of Christmas gifts for all ages so we can offer our guests an opportunity for affordable Christmas shopping.

TEAR: USEFUL GIFTS

The TEAR Useful Gift Catalogue is now available and is a way to support ministries in developing countries to build community and declare the gospel. This will be available at church, look out for Rhonda Milligan and the TEAR stall. Also, you can access the Useful Gift Catalogue online at: <https://www.usefulgifts.org/>

VOUCHERS FOR MILDURA

Those who wish to give vouchers for Colin and Alison Morrow to use to help those struggling on the land as well as to spread the love of God in Christ can put them in the box in the foyer of the church.

FINAL COMMENTS

*Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.*

*He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.*

*He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.*

*He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."*

Psalm 46:8-10

As always, love and prayers,
Steve