

Psalm 57:1, “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.”



The title of the psalm reads “To the chief musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.”

In this title, we have two interesting words: Al-taschith and Michtam.

Al-taschith means ‘Destroy not’. Michtam is uncertain, but it apparently is derived from a verb meaning “to cover,” and may indicate psalms dealing with protection (covering) from one’s enemies or psalms recited silently (with lips covering the mouth).

Looking at this verse, how do you see these words apply?

In 1 Samuel 24, we have the story of Saul pursuing David in an attempt to murder him. David and his men are hiding in a cave when Saul and his military men approach. Saul while sensing no eminent danger, tells his men to wait for him as he goes into a nearby cave to relieve himself.

David’s men see this as the providential hand of God placing Saul directly in David’s hands. They suggest for David to take his life.

Have you ever wondered if the events that fall into place are by the hand of God leading you in a specific direction? What do you think went through David’s mind as he contemplated the surprising events happening before him? What were his thoughts as he listened to the words of his comrades? What prevented him from heeding their advice?

The answer: the Word of God. David knew the scriptures and that taking Saul’s life would go against the Word of God. I believe that David was in a mental struggle. The Holy Spirit was using the Word of God

David had memorized and loudly proclaiming it to his heart to do right while his desire for revenge was seething. I believe this because, I have been there. The mental struggle is real and if we are not careful, the wrong thoughts can lead our actions. In that moment of struggle, David did something he later regretted: cutting Saul's garment.

1 Samuel 24:5, "And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt."

Verse 6, "And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD."

Why did David regret cutting Saul's royal robe? Why does he plead for mercy from God when he didn't do what he was tempted to do?

I believe it is because David reflected upon the intent of his heart and he knew God considers the mere thought of murder as serious as murder itself.

There are several lessons we can learn from this story and this verse:

- 1) Not all events that seem to 'fall into place' are due to the hand of God and thus man's logic cannot be leaned upon to interpret them as such.
- 2) Let the Word of God help you distinguish between God's Hand moving and a trap set by the devil. The leading of God will never contradict His Word.
- 3) Be careful allowing the opinions of others to sway you. You may end up like David and do something you will later regret.
- 4) Value the importance of memorizing scripture. During those times of temptation and mental struggle, we need God's Word ringing through our hearts and minds to help us make the right decisions with no regrets.
- 5) Like David, when you see a deeper heart issue, don't ignore it – deal with it. Go to God for mercy.
- 6) Don't allow yourself to excuse your own thoughts or actions. David could have simply stated that since he did not do any wrong, he had nothing in which to seek forgiveness. Our society is full of excuses for misbehavior. When we are bombarded with this attitude of constant excuses, we can surprise ourselves by easily adopting them as our own in times of difficulty.
- 7) Trials will come for every Christian. When they do, remember we can lean on the Lord. He is our refuge and our strength. We can hide under the shadow of His wings.