



## Wide-Awake to God in the Midst of Overwhelming Trouble

Dr. Keith Walker

Keith.Walker@Usask.ca

Minister-at-Large C & MA, Mid West District

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**Psalm 57: For the director of music. To the tune of “Do Not Destroy.” Of David. A *miktam*. When he had fled from Saul into the cave.**

<sup>1</sup> *Have mercy* on me, my God, *have mercy* on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.

<sup>2</sup> I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me. <sup>3</sup> He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me— God sends forth his *love* and his *faithfulness*.

<sup>4</sup> I am in the midst of lions; I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.

<sup>5</sup> **Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.**

<sup>6</sup> They spread a net for my feet—I was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit in my path—but they have fallen into it themselves.

<sup>7</sup> My heart, O **God**, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music.

<sup>8</sup> Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.

<sup>9</sup> I will praise you, **Lord**, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples.

<sup>10</sup> For great is *your love*, reaching to the heavens; *your faithfulness* reaches to the skies.

<sup>11</sup> **Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.**

### **Essence of Message:**

However it is that I come to experience trouble, my needs make me a candidate for God's mercy and grace. God is steadfast in His love and faithfulness. I can choose to place myself His care. I am safe in His presence as I worship. When I am most low, God is still most high. When life sucks, God's glory still fills the earth. When I am exhausted, God is still exalted. When others are hateful, God is still faithful. His glory pulls me from hiding in the depths of the cave to the place of community, overflowing thankfulness and the pleasure of His abiding presence, His love and faithfulness.

**Do you agree that "life's not fair" – Why do bad things happen to "good" people? Why do good things happen to bad people? Why is life so hard sometimes?**

**What we don't know and what we know about Humpty Dumpty!!**

- **Natural and logical consequences**
- **Explainable human condition and surprising circumstances of life**
- **Enemies: Real and imagined**

**Chased into hard places or chosen for the wilderness – find a cave (1 Samuel 24)**

**Notice from Psalm 57:**

**1. The presence and character of God**

- a. Merciful
- b. My refuge
- c. The most high
- d. Listens
- e. Vindicates
- f. Sends love and faithfulness and saves me
- g. Rebukes
- h. Is exalted
- i. Is praise worthy
- j. His glory displays everywhere.

**2. Wondering why, worrying about who, or worshipping God: Led from depths of cave to greeting the day  
Perspective of the cave "ethos"**

**Plato's Cave**

**3. I, too, pray For His Mercy (1-5) – Mercy = bend into me with your favour - Luke 18:13**

**Jesus Prayer: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."**

**4. I, too, praise His Majesty: Awake and awakening others to His Glory (6-8)**

I, too, **proclaim His Message** to everyone and all nations/peoples (9-11)

**5. Blessing: Romans 15:13 (Message): Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!**

## **Assiniboine Alliance Church**

**Marilyn Tam – Huffington Post – April 28, 2013**

Why do bad things happen to good people? "It's not fair," "there's no justice," and "God's not

paying attention" are the feelings that oftentimes arise when we learn about a tragedy that have befallen an innocent person or a group of people. When blameless people suffer a horrific disaster, like in the recent Boston bombings, earthquakes, or hurricanes, or when children are terribly hurt or killed, it tests our belief in a loving and just universe. This is especially challenging to deal with when we are directly impacted by the trauma.

How do we manage the frustration, anger, helplessness, and all the other emotions that flood in when this happens? When the JAL flight 123 crashed into two mountain ridges in Japan in 1985, 520 people died. It still is the biggest single-plane fatality in history of the world. This was not an intellectual tragedy for me; my father was on that flight. Four passengers miraculously lived; he was not one of them.

The Boeing 747 clipped one mountain ridge and crashed into another, flipped and landed on its back. The total elapsed time between the first explosion in the tail area and the final crash was 32 minutes. That was enough time for some passengers to write a farewell to their loved ones, and probably a good number said their last prayers or were in frenzied panic and hysteria before their untimely death.

It was even harder to accept that my father was gone when we found out that improper repair of the rear section of the plane allegedly caused the accident. *Why? How could this be? Tell me this isn't real, and again, why?*

Exhausted from jetlag, and in the pain and horror of spending a week looking at pieces of what used to be people to identify our father's remains, I was on my knees weeping and praying for greater guidance and strength. In that place of desperation and despair I felt a little sense of peace emerge from inside. A quiet inner voice said, look around for the blessings. The thought seemed ludicrous to me at that moment, with little sleep, food and even less information and knowledge of how to handle the situation, the message floored me.

So that is what it takes sometimes -- for us to shift from whatever we are feeling and thinking to a new way of looking at the issue. Release your grip on righteous anger, the sense of being wronged and ask -- what can I do now? Where is there light in these circumstances?

*"All we can do is try to rise beyond the question 'Why did it happen?' and begin to ask the question 'What do I do now that it has happened?'" -- Harold Kushner*

*"My understanding of God does not permit me to accept that every bad or good thing that occurs is a reward or punishment. There are times when bad things happen to good people ... We need consolation, not anger; love, not hate. The God I serve and pray to daily has charged me not to blame but to help." -- Jerome Epstein*