

When the Ground Beneath You Shakes

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Life Lessons | August 8, 2026 | Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 23:4-5; Psalms 26:1; Psalms 39:2-12; Psalms 39:4-5; Psalms 46:10; Psalms 62; Psalms 77:1-9

Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

All right, if you have your Bibles, I want you to grab them and turn to Psalm chapter 62.

I am glad to be back this morning. I've traveled this summer, been away for a few weeks, and I'm grateful that you afford me some time out of the pulpit just to rest and reflect.

I was thinking about what to preach this week. Last week I was away, and in my time alone, I read Psalm 62. I thought, "Man, that was great." I wrote down a verse in my journal, and I was just thinking on it, reflecting on it. I packed up my Bible and my journal, and I got a text message from a friend of mine who's actually a church planter down in Lubbock, Texas. He said, "Jarrett, I just want you to know I'm praying for you," and he attached Psalm 62 to the text.

He asked me, "What are you preaching this weekend?"

I said, "Well, it looks like I'm going to preach Psalm 62. God gave it to me, and you gave it to me. I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I feel like this is a message that you must need to hear."

Before I ever preach it to you, I preach it to myself. I'm just really excited to open up God's Word with you once again this morning. It's good to be back at Champion Forest.

Next week is Kickoff Sunday, and that's when all of our age-group ministries move up, if you will. Our children and students go to their new classrooms. I'm going to be starting a seven-week series next week called Pray Like Jesus. I've been getting ready for this, and I'm really excited.

We're going to spend seven weeks looking at the prayer life of Jesus. We have in the Scripture prayers of Christ - not just the prayer that He teaches His disciples to pray in the Sermon on the Mount, but the high priestly prayer and prayers from the cross.

This fall is going to be all about spiritual awakening. It's going to be about seeking the face of God. It's going to be about growing in our prayer life. Who better to learn from than the Lord Jesus Himself?

I'm really excited. I hope you'll be back next week. If you miss any of these messages, you can, of course, go to our app and get them there. You can download them from the web. I always tell you, if you're having trouble sleeping, turn my messages on. It will do the trick. It'll put you right out.

That's next week, Pray Like Jesus. But today is Psalm chapter 62, and the message I'm titling, "When the Ground Beneath You Shakes."

We've all been there, haven't we? You get that phone call concerning a bad test result. Maybe you're served papers declaring that the relationship is over, the marriage is dead. Maybe you've been called to your supervisor's office, and they're downsizing and your job has been terminated. Or maybe, for you Texas Tech fans, you hear your highly paid NIL quarterback made some bad decisions and he's not going to be playing this year.

We all know what it's like to receive bad news, to get that feeling in the pit of your stomach, for your heart to drop. So the question we want to address this morning and attempt to answer is this: What do you do when the ground beneath you shakes?

Psalms 62 answers this question for us. Let's look at it together. The Bible says this:

> 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. > > 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. > > 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. > 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. > > 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. > > 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.

Jeduthun and the Anointing of God

We don't know the exact context that caused David to write this psalm. We know that he wrote it because, if you're looking in your Scriptures, the description right there in your Bible tells us that it is a psalm of David. It also gives us a little note, if you see it there: "To the choirmaster: according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David."

Jeduthun was a worship leader. David had three primary worship leaders who led the nation of Israel in temple worship. The most well-known was Asaph. Outside of David, Asaph is responsible for the greatest number of psalms written. I think 12 are attributed to Asaph.

There was another worship leader named Heman - spelled like He-Man, but not Masters of the Universe, all right? Heman. In 1 Chronicles, he is referred to as the king's seer.

That's important because, for all three of these worship leaders, Jeduthun included, there was a prophetic gift that accompanied their musical skill. In other words, it was more than a talent. When they were writing these psalms, putting them to music, and leading people in worship, it was a calling and a gifting given to them by God. To put it in a word, they were anointed to do what God had called and gifted them to do.

We use that term "anointing," and I don't want to use it in light terms. I don't want it to spook us out. Sometimes we hear it in more charismatic circles: "the anointing." What does all that mean?

Pastor R.T. Kendall, who's been with us before and will be with us again in October at our conference that we're hosting - I'll tell you more about that later - defines the word anointing like this. He says, "The anointing is the power of the Holy Spirit," and it's usually seen in a gift that functions easily when it's working.

As it relates to these worship leaders in Israel, they were called by God, they were gifted by God, and when they were doing what God had gifted them to do, there was an anointing that rested on their lives. It's a beautiful thing, and it's important because when you are operating with a sense of anointing, not only is God on that person and using that gift, but we've got to be very aware of it and in tune with it. When the anointing is present, that means God is present as well.

It's different from charisma. It's different from just being uber-talented. I mean, you can win a season of The Voice and not have the anointing, okay? You can be a talented musician and wow a room but not have the anointing. The anointing is something that God supernaturally gives. It's when God comes and He just rests on you and what you're doing.

I call it the "it factor" in spiritual terms. You just know when somebody has the it factor, all right? When Michael Neale, one of our worship pastors, writes music, the anointing of God is on his life. When Darrell Comedy or Jamie Jeffe, who was leading us this morning, gets up here singing, they're operating in their gifting and the anointing is on them. There's just a weight to it. You know when somebody has it, and you know when someone doesn't.

By the way, when someone has it, it had better promote and provoke a fear of God in that person's life, because the anointing is not promised to stay. If you get prideful or arrogant, or you abuse the gift that God has given you, He can take that anointing away.

When I'm preaching, I'm praying, "God, You've got to anoint me. Anoint this message." It's the fear of God. When we look at these worship leaders in Israel, they had the anointing of God on their lives.

Three Themes in the Psalms of Jeduthun

When we read these psalms that give attribution to Jeduthun, there are three psalms that include his name: Psalm 39, Psalm 62, the one that we're studying today, and Psalm 77.

It's very interesting when you study the psalms that are attributed to Jeduthun. David or Asaph would write them, and it's believed that Jeduthun would put them to music. There are three themes that occur in the psalms attributed to Jeduthun.

The first theme is the brevity of life. Let me show you this in Psalm 39, verses 4 and 5:

> O Lord, make me know my end > and what is the measure of my days; > let me know how fleeting I am! > Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, > and my lifetime is as nothing before you. > Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath!

In Psalm 62, verse 9, we read:

> 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.

David writes, and Jeduthun puts it to music, that whatever a person thinks of himself, whether he's a big deal or not a big deal at all, at the end of the day, life is a vapor - here today and gone tomorrow. Like James says, we are but a mist. The psalms attributed to Jeduthun all carry this idea of the brevity of life.

A second theme they have in common is this idea of a person in distress. Listen to Psalm 39, verse 2, and the first part of verse 12:

> I was mute and silent; > I held my peace to no avail, > and my distress grew worse. > > Hear my prayer, O Lord, > and give ear to my cry; > hold not your peace at my tears!

He's in distress. He's in trouble.

Psalm 77, verses 1 through 4, says:

> I cry aloud to God, > aloud to God, and he will hear me. > In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; > in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; > my soul refuses to be comforted. > When I remember God, I moan; > when I meditate, my spirit faints. > You hold my eyelids open; > I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

It's this idea of a person in distress.

Verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 62 say:

> 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.

Evidently, in Psalm 62, some people are causing David distress. They're trying to pull him down from his high position. He was the king of Israel. They're blessing with their mouths, but inwardly they're cursing. They're falsely accusing him, attacking him, and causing him great personal distress.

A third theme that you see in these psalms that Jeduthun puts to music is the silence of God. You see it in every one of the psalms - Psalm 39, Psalm 62, and Psalm 77.

Listen to Psalm 77, verses 7 through 9:

> Will the Lord spurn forever, > and never again be favorable? > Has his steadfast love forever ceased? > Are his promises at an end for all time? > Has God forgotten to be gracious? > Has he in anger shut up his compassion?

"God, where are You?"

Psalm 39, verses 7 and 8:

> And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? > My hope is in you. > Deliver me from all my transgressions. >

Do not make me the scorn of the fool!

"God, come through. Answer me. Answer my critics."

Psalms 62, verses 1 and 5:

> For God alone my soul waits in silence.

David is waiting on God in silence because God is being silent toward him. People are coming against him, cursing him, and causing him distress. The only thing he's getting in return as he pours his heart out to God is the silence of God.

I submit to you this morning that when the ground shakes beneath you, it's typically one of these three themes being played out in the present tense. Isn't that true?

The brevity of life. Someone dies. Maybe there's a major transition in your life. You become a parent or a grandparent, and the brevity of life just kind of sobers you. Maybe, like me, you're taking two kids to college in the next month. That major transition is just like, "How did this happen?"

Maybe you're taking care of a parent. You're putting them in a retirement home or a nursing facility. These brevity-of-life moments, when they happen, have a way of unsettling us. It feels like the ground beneath us is shaking.

Or what about the person in distress? That will feel like the ground beneath you is shaking. It could be for any number of reasons. Again, for David, it was people coming against him, attacking him, deceiving him, and betraying him. But whatever is causing you distress, doesn't that feel like shaky ground?

What about the silence of God? You've been crying out to God to answer your prayer, to come through, and like David, you're getting nothing in return.

"God, have You forgotten about me? Do You not see what I'm having to endure? Do You not see what I'm going through or what my loved one is experiencing?"

If we're not careful, when we experience the silence of God, it'll feel like the ground beneath us is shaking.

So the question is, what do you do when the ground beneath you shakes?

What Doesn't Help

There are a number of options.

During this past break, I went and spent a day with a great friend of mine. His name is Johnson Ellis. I've known Johnson for years. I've been on the mission field with him numerous times.

Johnson is a successful businessman. He's the son of missionaries from Brazil. He started an incredible ministry called Amazon Outreach that takes groups into the Amazon jungle areas of Brazil, shares the gospel, plants churches, and raises up new believers. I've baptized with Johnson in the Amazon River, and I just knew an anaconda was going to get me and take me home.

I love Johnson Ellis. He was married to his sweet wife, Beth, for 36 years. When Beth was 59, she was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia. If you're familiar with Bruce Willis, it's the same disease he has. To put it in a term, it's devastating.

Beth was Johnson's college sweetheart. This was not in their life plan. They had three beautiful kids. When she was diagnosed at 59, they believed she had probably had it going on for two years before then. The disease is brutal. Before it ever takes the physical body, it takes away the person little by little, bit by bit.

For the last two years of their marriage, Johnson took two dozen roses to Beth every single week and never got a verbalized or articulated response from her. He just wanted to show her his love.

She died earlier in the spring. I went back and was able to speak at her funeral, and then I went to see Johnson.

I'm working on this book project that's due on the 22nd of August. It's what I've been working on while I've been away. I'm taking apart Christian cliches that sound really good, and we say them sometimes and maybe even believe them, but I'm holding them up to biblical Christianity and asking, "Does this hold water?"

For example, "You're never safer than when you're in the will of God." Tell that to John the Baptist, who got beheaded.

"Everything happens for a reason." Is that true?

"God helps those who help themselves."

I'm writing this chapter, "She's in a better place." We say that sometimes, don't we? Somebody passes away, and it's not the saying that I have a problem with. It's usually the timing of the saying, because we usually say it to try to rush people past their grief. We don't want to sit in it. We don't want to think about it.

Talking to Johnson as he's been walking through the passing of his wife - that's something you never get over, something you never forget. He's the son of a missionary. He started a mission that plants churches. Yet he lost the love of his life, and the ground beneath him has totally been shaken.

So what do you do?

You can do a number of things. Some people choose to try to deaden their pain, so they go to the bottle and they drink. Prescription medications. Whatever it is, they try to take away the sting of grief so they

don't have to feel it.

Others choose escapism of some kind. "I can't control the situation that I'm in, so I'll control my eating. I'll escape through pornography, shopping, whatever it may be."

Or, "I'll just dive into work. If I can just go to work, I'll work before the sun comes up, and I won't come back until the sun's down. I will throw myself into work because I don't have to think about that thing that's causing me emotional distress and pain."

"I'll just doomscroll. I'll just veg out on entertainment." Anything that will numb and drown out the sorrow that I may be feeling.

We know that none of these things are the answer. None of that stuff helps when the ground beneath us is shaking. Avoidance, pretending like nothing's wrong, escapism of any kind - that doesn't lead to security. That doesn't lead to steady ground. Those of us who have tried it know it to be true. That leads to more shaky ground, more depressing days, and more dark days.

When the ground beneath us shakes, none of those things help.

David points out in Psalm 62 something else that doesn't help. It's a good word for all of us in the room: riches and wealth. He says, "When the ground beneath you shakes, money doesn't help either."

Look at verse 10:

> Put no trust in extortion.

It's also translated as the word "oppression." It has to do with gaining money by exploitation or in an unjust way of some kind.

> Set no vain hopes on robbery.

Money, however you get it, doesn't help when the ground beneath you shakes. So David says, "Don't put your trust in it." That's why he says in the last part of verse 10:

> If riches increase, set not your heart on them.

Money is not the answer.

The richest man to ever live was King Solomon. I mean, he was Elon Musk rich. Remember what he says in Proverbs 23:4 and 5?

> Do not toil to acquire wealth; > be discerning enough to desist. > When your eyes light on it, it is gone, > for suddenly it sprouts wings, > flying like an eagle toward heaven.

Do you think money helped Johnson Ellis when his wife was dying, when personal distress was at an all-time high and the silence of God was the only thing filling the room?

Do you think money is going to solve your problems or fix your issues? Come on. Every single one of us

in here has a roof over our head. We have clothes on our backs. There's not a person here who's going to go without eating lunch or dinner today.

What's the point? We are all wealthy. And when the ground beneath us shakes, isn't it true that not one of us is reaching for our wallet? Why? Because it's not steady ground. It doesn't offer security.

We need something that's not just going to fly away and disappear. We need something that gives us strength and stability that are not our own. In the words of David, put to music by Jeduthun, we need, in verse 2, a rock and fortress. We need, in verse 7, a mighty rock and a refuge.

What do we do when the ground beneath us shakes? David, in this psalm, gives three points of action.

Wait on God

First, we are to wait on God.

Look at Psalm 62, verses 1 and 5:

> For God alone my soul waits in silence; > from him comes my salvation.

Verse 5:

> For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, > for my hope is from him.

When the ground beneath you shakes, sometimes it's because God is silent. You know what you do in those moments? David says on two occasions that when God is silent, you wait on Him in silence.

Now, notice the progression here. You've got to highlight this. Verse 1 says, "My soul waits in silence." Verse 5 says, "O my soul, wait in silence."

Verse 1 is a description. Verse 5 is a command.

There are going to be times in life when waiting in silence on the Lord is just what we do. It's the regular rhythm of our life - at least it should be. That's why I'm so excited about this series next week, Pray Like Jesus.

The very first week, we're going to look at what Jesus did. My New Testament reading this morning, Mark chapter 1, says it. Jesus, early in the morning, went to a desolate place to pray, to wait in silence on God, to commune with His Father.

Sometimes, in the regular routine of life, we're going to be able to say, just as David did here, "My soul waits in silence."

This waiting isn't passive. This is waiting with expectancy. "I know God is going to speak. I know He's going to come through." This is just stilling our souls before Him. This is Psalm 46:10:

> Be still, and know that I am God.

It's in waiting on Him in silence that all the other voices of the world around us are silenced.

Depression? Discouragement? They're drowned out in silence before God.

Enemies beating at your door, trying to take you down, assaulting you with false charges? They get silenced in your silent waiting before the Lord.

Sometimes it's going to be easy because you're walking with the Lord, and it's just the regular routine of what you do. But sometimes you're going to have to coach yourself up. You're going to have to do what verse 5 says: command yourself and preach to yourself, "O my soul, wait in silence."

You're going to want to go before God. You're going to want to act before God tells you to. You're going to want to get somebody back. You're going to want to get out from underneath the pain. And you've got to preach to yourself, "O my soul, wait in silence."

Here's what's beautiful about waiting in silence before the Lord: It prepares you for when the ground shakes beneath you in the future, because the ground is going to shake beneath you in the future.

Brevity-of-life issues are going to come. Waiting in silence before the Lord gets you ready for them.

We're all going to experience personal distress. Waiting on the Lord in silence right now prepares us for it.

Sometime in the future, God is going to seem silent. So we silently wait on Him right now so we can be prepared for it.

Silently waiting before the Lord - that's what prayer is, to a degree. It's just sitting and reflecting on who He is, letting His Word wash over your mind so that your mind can be renewed in truth and you're not led away by your feelings.

It prepares you for those future ground-beneath-you-shaking moments. When they come - this is the frailty of human life; this is who we are as sinners - they're still going to shake us a little bit. But we're just going to be reminded, even when we're rattled, "O my soul, wait in silence."

Notice six times in this passage the word "alone" or "only" is used - verses 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9. It's translated in other places as "surely" or "truly."

What's the point? God alone is the one we're waiting on. God only. He is all we need when the ground shakes beneath us - Him and nothing else. It isn't God plus something else. We need God and God only. God alone.

Trust in God

When the ground shakes beneath you, we wait on God. Number two, we trust in God.

Look at the first part of verse 8:

> Trust in him at all times, O people.

The emphasis is "at all times." You know what that means? At all times.

Whatever is causing the ground beneath you to shake, you can trust in God. The psalmist will say elsewhere, in Psalm 26:1, that we are to trust in Him without wavering. I love that.

I almost preached Proverbs 3:5 and 6 this morning. I thought that might be a good passage to preach. We know those verses, right?

> Trust in the Lord with all your heart, > and do not lean on your own understanding. > In all your ways acknowledge him, > and he will make straight your paths.

God requires trust of us.

I posted this week - if you're not following your pastor on social media, I mean, you're doing it wrong, all right? - a picture of the cafeteria at the preteen camp where I trusted Jesus. I went back there several years ago. It's just kind of my own Ebenezer moment.

They had torn down the chapel where I asked Jesus to be my Lord and Savior. I was brokenhearted, but they kept the cafeteria, all right?

The reason this picture is so special to me is because, after the counselor led me to the Lord, I remember praying and asking Jesus to live in my heart. She said, "Would you like to tell your parents?"

I said, "I think I would."

She led me into the cafeteria. I remember walking through that door on the right, and in the middle of the wall on the inside, there was a phone hanging on the wall. You remember those times when you had phones in places, you know?

I took it and dialed my number, and my dad answered. I can remember, as an 11-year-old boy, saying, "Dad, I just asked Jesus to be in my heart."

I can remember like it was yesterday hearing his voice crack as he told me how proud he was of me. That day, I trusted Him for my salvation.

I've learned a life principle as it relates to trust: If we can trust God for eternal salvation, we can trust Him for daily direction.

When the ground beneath us shakes, no matter what we're up against, God can be trusted.

Proverbs says He will make straight our paths. It's the idea that He will actually cut a path for us. If you travel and see roads being cut out, they're digging up the dirt before they lay the concrete. That's the picture here. They're paving a way where there is no way.

As we trust the Lord, as we lean on Him and not on our own understanding, as we acknowledge Him, and as we seek to know Him experientially, that's what the Bible promises: He will cut a path for us

where there is no path.

It doesn't mean it's going to be an easy path. It doesn't mean it's going to be a smooth path. But He will be with us on the path that He cuts.

So I just say that when the ground beneath us shakes, in faith, we ought to bring glory to God and say, "I just know that the ground beneath me shaking is paving a way. You're cutting a path where there is no path."

That's what we're to operate in.

Pray to God

When the ground beneath us shakes, we wait on God, we trust in God, and then, third and finally, we pray to God.

Verse 8, the second part:

> Pour out your heart before him.

When the ground beneath us shakes, that's the time to, by faith, start looking above.

Prayer should be our first response, not our last alternative. We cry out to God. We pour out our hearts to Him. In prayer, we still our souls before Him, and He puts steel in our faith.

Prayer gives us perspective. It's why I'm so excited about this prayer series that begins next week. Prayer helps us reinforce that God alone is our rock, our fortress, and our refuge.

David was very purposeful when he used these words: rock, refuge, fortress. The Hebrew word picture here is what David had in his mind - the mountains in the Judean wilderness.

You remember, this is where David would flee from town to town when he was being chased. He'd go to the mountains of the Judean wilderness. When Saul was after him, he went to the cave of Adullam. He went to En Gedi.

When we go on our trips to Israel, we go to these places, and you can see with your own eyes these massive cliffs and rocks. I brought a picture of the cave of Adullam, where David, along with 300 or 400 of his fellow soldiers, hid out from Saul.

This is what David had in mind when he said, "God, You are my rock. You are my refuge. You are my fortress."

When the ground beneath him was shaking, he needed to go somewhere that was strong and stable. He went to God. This was the picture he had in his mind, because the ground may shake, but he's going to be just fine when he's standing on the rock and in the rock.

This is what it means to pray to our God. He is immovable - a fortress we can run to, a rock we can

stand on.

Power and Steadfast Love

One final word. Verses 11 and 12 are the climax and end of this psalm. In these verses, we see why we can continue to wait, trust, and pray to God. It's because He has the power to act on our behalf, and He has the desire to do so.

Look at verses 11 and 12:

> Once God has spoken; > twice have I heard this.

This is a Hebrew idiom. It just means it's certain. It's going to happen. Take it to the bank.

What's certain?

> That power belongs to God, > and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.

What a combination. God has the power to do anything, and His love for us is forever.

This is why we can wait in silence. This is why we can trust in Him without wavering. This is why we can keep praying and pouring our hearts out to Him in prayer. He's not just able to help - He's willing.

Listen, I don't know what this fall has for you as an individual or as a family. I don't know what it has for us as a church.

What I do know is that we need to be walking with the Lord right now in such a way - waiting on Him, trusting in Him, and praying to Him - that we're able to say by faith the same thing David said in the second part of verse 2 and the second part of verse 6:

> I shall not be greatly shaken.

Even though the ground shakes beneath me, I shall not be greatly shaken because of the God we serve.

Amen.