Series: **A Work of Heart**

Sermon: **When Your Heart Needs Hope**

Scripture: **David’s Psalms**

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Last week I talked about circling around in prayer.

So many things come at us.

Hope – so absolutely indispensable. The audacity of hope. We crave it.

Optimism. That things can be better.

We are going to study David. He is the most comprehensive character in the bible next to Jesus himself.

The era changes but the human condition remains the same. Separated by 3000 years. We have love and war, injustice and peace.

David is a guy who faced some impossibly hopeless situations. It was life or death.

Unlike any other figure who we get the situation, sometimes the thoughts and dialogue. With David we get his journal – his diary. The psalms. He wrote out his prayers.

Illust: His diary. Chantal Hebert. Wrote a book where she gets the thoughts of the people involved in that event.

David was Open

Open: Andre Agassi – fascinating life. Goes off the idea of the US Open. I was a professional tennis player and I hate tennis. Shared openly what he was thinking – his hopes and dreams and his dark times and hopelessness. Fights with his Dad, feelings of hatred – went to tennis school just to get away from his dad. Tried to get kicked out. Image is everything campaign. Had the long hair and bad boy looks. Wore a hair piece – went clean and shaved his head. Marries Brooke Shields. Feels hopeless. Goes on a cocaine drug binge and tests positive for the next – desperate feelings. Lied and the tennis officials covered it up. Found a church in his home town of Las Vegas with whom he made a deep friendship connection and it seems he made some steps toward Jesus and his forgiveness. Gets back on track with tennis but not with his wife Brooke. Different worlds – divorce. Ends up falling in love with Steffi Graf – also a former tennis player who was forced into it by her dad and hates the game herself.

Andre – managing image and being real. Here is the guy with whom it became image is everything and now he is being open. I don’t care about the image – let me just be open and real. You never share those feelings of hopelessness if you are managing your image.

Our lives may not have the dramatic public and professional life but we all experience the ups and downs of feeling like we are winning or feeling like we are losing or sometimes the chaos of those feelings all in one day.

David was Open. He shared his dark thoughts and his dreams, his struggles and his victories.

It is God with whom I must deal.

David’s life was big and loud in front of a whole nation. But he wrote down his thoughts. He was a poet and a mystic and he just got real with himself and with God.

**When Your Heart Needs Hope – Pray a David Psalm**

David kept coming back to God. When reading Open you get a great picture into the heart of Andre Agassi. When you read the Psalms – you get both a great picture of the heart of David – what changes everything is that when you read the psalms you get the heart of God. So much tell all in our tabloids and memoirs is fascinating and there are morals and lessons to learn but it leaves us here on earth and it has limited hope. David’s psalms takes us to heaven and lifts us to a higher place of hope that can only come from God giving a picture beyond us. Here is the heart of God.

Story Introduction: Psalm 56 and 34 were the prayers of David written during the time that he fled from Saul and went to seek refuge among the Philistines. The story can be found in 1 Samuel 21:10- 15. Leading up to this story, David and Jonathan both become convinced that Saul is intent on killing him and David must disappear. David unwisely escapes to King Achish of Gath (it appears that Achish is sometimes called Abimelech because that was his dynastic title). Here David expects that Achish will receive him in friendship because they both have a common enemy in Saul but that is not the case. Achish and his officers believe that David may be an enemy and it appears to David that he may have escaped Saul’s spear but will be killed by the Philistines. David then pretends to be insane – scratching on doors and drooling in his beard. Achish buys into the act and sends him away because he believes he is a madman and of no use to him.

Psalm 56 is written by David when he is in that desperate place of not knowing what his fate would be while captured by Achish. Psalm 34 is written after David escapes what appeared to be certain death. These two psalms give us an incredible insight into David’s relationship with God in the midst of crises and his response to God after the crises is averted.

I got 4 points I want to make about writing your own Psalm. All four of the points are in these two psalms but they are not necessarily in order. They were not for David.

Writing a psalm is not about a nicely ordered literary piece. It is taking real thoughts which are often scrambled and random and writing them down.

**Psalm 56 (NLT)**

1. **Turn your real thoughts into a conversation with God.**

Psalm 56 is “Honest to God. I’ve lost hope.”

Written as a song to the tune “Dove on Distant Oaks”. It’s easy to imagine that David is just so wishing he could be a dove with wings and fly out of the reach of Achish. David’s imagination is always active, always looking toward what he hopes for the future. While keeping an active imagination, he also deals squarely with the reality that is before him. In the first two verses he laments that

**“My foes attack me all day long. I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me….They are always twisting what I say…don’t let them get away with their wickedness; in your anger, O God, bring them down.” Psalm 56:1, 2, 5, 7**

David, the golden child with the magic sling and the women singing his praises is finding out that there are many Saul’s and Achish’s in this world that can bring a sudden end to all that privilege. Going from hero to zero is a world shattering and terrifying experience. David’s first place to express himself is to lament that reality before his most intimate friend - Yahweh

It is God with whom I must deal.

1. **Keep circling back to what you know is true about God**

* **He’s Powerful**

**“I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?” Psalm 56:4 & 11**

* **He’s Personal**

**“You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.” Psalm 56:8**

* **He is FOR YOU**

**“This I know: God is on my side.” Psalm 56:9**

* **Praise Him for His Promises**

**“I praise God for what he has promised; yes I praise the Lord for what he has promised.” Psalm 56:10**

1. **Do the creative thing God puts in your mind**

**“David heard these comments and was very afraid of what King Achish of Gath might do to him. So he pretended to be insane, scratching on doors and drooling down his beard.” 1 Samuel 21:12-13**

1. **Give God the credit: Thank and Praise Him**

**Psalm 34:1-8 (New Living Translation)**