

SBC – Sept. 17, 2023

Psalm 3:1-8 (NKJV)

“Help For The Troubled Soul”

Intro:

There is a Psalm that can relate and apply to whatever you are going through in life. The Psalms were known as the “Song Book” for God’s people Israel but it is also a “Prayer Book”. To pray through the Psalms is as spiritually enriching as singing them. Even Jesus prayed in reference to the Psalms when He cried out, ***“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me”*** which is a quote from Psalm 22:1 (cf. Mt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34).

There all manner of categories in classifying the Psalms and often there is overlap. There are Wisdom Psalms, Royal Psalms, Imprecatory Psalms, Thanksgiving Psalms, Pilgrimage Psalms, Enthronement Psalms, and Messianic Psalms. However, the largest category Psalm are called LAMENT Psalms. Psalm 3 is one of these lament Psalms as David finds himself in dire straits.

This is the first Psalm that comes with an inspired title.

Psalm 3 (NKJV)

A Psalm of David When He Fled from Absalom His Son.

This tells us that David was the author and gives the occasion as being when he fled from his son absolute who formed a coup against him. David is credited with at least 75 of the 150 Psalms. The occasion of Absalom’s revolt is found in 2 Sam. 15-18.

In the superscription of Psalm 3 we have the first reference to the Hebrew word that is translated as “Psalm”. It is the word “mizmor” and literally means “to pluck strings”. Hence, you can see the musical connotation to the Psalms.

Slide # 1

Psalm 3

Help For The Troubled Soul

Outline:

A. vv. 1-2 – David’s Trouble

- B. vv. 3-4 David's Focus on the LORD
- C. vv. 5-6 God Blesses David
- D. vv. 7-8 David Blesses God

1 LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me.

David immediately pours out his soul to the LORD. The title LORD here is YHWH, the covenant name for God that emphasizes His unchanging faithfulness.

This was an overwhelming situation with SO MANY that had risen up against David. There were so many that he was forced to retreat from the throne in Jerusalem and run for his life. It seems you often have a few that are against you, but when it turns into a MULTITUDE that is alarming.

And not only that these were fellow Israelites. If it had been the Philistines or some other outside enemy, but these were fellow Jews. When your own rise up against you in mass that is very troublesome.

Slide # 2

2 Samuel 15:13 (NKJV)

13 Now a messenger came to David, saying, "**The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.**"

Absalom's advisor Hushai spoke in these terms...

Slide # 3

2 Samuel 17:11 (NKJV)

11 Therefore I advise that **all Israel** be fully gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, **like the sand that is by the sea for multitude**, and that you go to battle in person.

Footnote: David was clearly the Lord's Anointed and to take on the Lord's Anointed was a major thing. David had been anointed to be the next king after Saul's failure, but he refused to force the issue in the flesh. In fact, David had to wait 10 long years for God to sovereignly put Saul aside in death before he could assume the throne. But many under the leadership of wicked Absalom were so bold and brazen as to take on the Lord's anointed. Of course, God is sovereign, but proper reverence for God allows God to move instead of taking matters into your own hands.

2 Many are they who say of me, “There is no help for him in God.” Selah

Many were saying, God had abandoned David, evidently because of his great sin with Bathsheba. They were saying, “It’s over for David – he is beyond God’s help. God is no longer with David.” That had to hurt more than anything.

I mean, if God is not with you, then you are done. It is truly over! What a horrible thought. They evidently looked at David’s past sin and figured he was getting his just deserts – he is now reaping what he has sown. God will not come to his rescue. These kinds of whispers were going through the land.

Shimei was an example of this...

Slide # 4

2 Samuel 16:7–8 (NKJV)

7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: “Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue!

8 **The LORD has brought upon you** all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and **the LORD** has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So **now you are caught in your own evil**, because you are a bloodthirsty man!”

David had confessed his sin of adultery and murder as seen in 2 Sam. 12:13-14 and Ps. 32 and 51 and he was forgiven. Still, it is true that the disciplinary consequences followed him as God said they would.

Slide # 5

2 Samuel 12:9–11 (NKJV)

9 Why have you **despised the commandment of the LORD**, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

10 Now therefore, **the sword shall never depart from your house**, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’

11 Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, **I will raise up adversity against you from your own house**; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.

And this is exactly what has happened. You can see how this would have given great ammunition to the enemies of David. They had a point, but they took it further than what God had said. God never said, He was going to remove David from the throne, but his enemies were all about it.

This is a good lesson. In our humanness sometimes we connect some of the dots but take things further than God ever does. We can see in this why David on another occasion when he messed up said...

Slide # 6

2 Samuel 24:14 (NKJV)

14 And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. **Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great;** but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

In the matter of discipline God's mercies are still great in comparison to the dealings of men.

Note these "MANY" were not saying God couldn't help David, but rather that He wouldn't help him – evidently because of his past sin. Job's friends like to come out of the woodwork when the things are looking bleak!

Verse 2 concludes with the first of three "Selah's" in the Psalm. And this the first mention of it in the Bible.

Slide # 7

Selah: The idea in the Hebrew for this word (occurring 74 times in the Old Testament) is for a *pause*. Most people think it speaks of a reflective pause, a pause to meditate on the words just spoken. It may also be a musical instruction, for a musical interlude of some kind. – **David Guzik**

In response to the MANY David then turned his FOCUS to the LORD!

3 But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

"But" is a contrast word. Although David's enemies thought God was done with him, David kept the faith. In contrast He knew YHWH was a shield for Him – that is His protector.

Sometimes in the middle of the storm we just need to STOP and remind ourselves that God is our PROTECTOR. He is our “shield”. Nothing can get to us unless it first passes through Him. What a comforting thought!

Furthermore, David says, the LORD is His “glory”. The word “glory” (Heb. “kavod”) literally means “heavy”. It was often used in reference to a person’s reputation signifying significance. It is often used in the sense of “honor”. The sense here seems to be that David’s significance and honor are wrapped up in his relationship with the LORD.

Your glory is your basis for boasting. David didn’t boast in himself but in His God. He didn’t put his stock in his own strength or ability. Rather God was His glory.

And then he says the LORD is the One “who lifts up my head.” I love that idea. It is the idea that he finds his encouragement in the LORD. When he is down in the mouth – the LORD lifts up his head. It could also be the idea that God is the One Who RESTORES him when he is down.

We all have “down times”. Just remember it is God Who lifts up your head. An old saying is, “Knees down – chin up”. Let God lift your head up.

Now David recounts how the LORD did it...

4 I cried to the LORD with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah

David prayed! He cried to the LORD! The old song, “Where could I go but to the Lord” often rings in the ears. David cried out in prayer and God heard him from His holy hill.

This is interesting because as David was fleeing from Absalom initially they were taking the Ark of the Covenant with them which was representative of God’s presence. But then David said to take it back to where it belonged on the holy hill of Jerusalem.

Slide # 8

2 Samuel 15:25 (NKJV)

25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place.

We see here in our text that David realized he could pray from anywhere – that God is omniscient – even though His special dwelling place was at the tabernacle on the holy hill in Jerusalem. David did not treat the Ark like some kind of magical fetish.

And then we have the second “Selah” – loosely translated means “stop and soak this in”.

Many were saying God will not help David – Selah!

David cried to the Lord and He heard – Selah!

Indeed, God answered David’s prayer. “Heard” is often the idea of God not only hearing but answering in a positive way.

5 I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.

One of the sweetest answers to prayer is found in a good nights sleep. Life looks different after a time of refreshing rest.

David had been overwhelmed by the sheer numbers allied against him. But he took it to the LORD. In the shadows of the night overwhelming pressures can be very frightening. David models what to do – you take it to the LORD in prayer. And then God gave him a good nights rest.

Slide # 9

Psalm 127:2 (NKJV)

2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; **For so He gives His beloved sleep.**

When Elijah was running for his life from Jezebel God sent an angel to feed him which was followed by sleep (1 Kings 19:5-8). Don’t underestimate the blessing and importance of proper SLEEP.

And when David arose in the morning he said, “I awoke, for the LORD has sustained me.” Evidently the pressures were so great with the enemy closing in that David had wondered if he would make it through the night. In the context he was in you never know when a hostile enemy might burst through with a sword and kill you. It’s hard to sleep under that kind of stress.

But God answered his prayer and gave him sleep and David recognized that it was the LORD Who sustained him.

To lie down and sleep are poetic and tangible ways to describe a state of security. Only a person who feels secure will be able to sleep undisturbed by troubling thoughts. - **HCSB**

Note David gave all the credit to God for giving Him sleep and security! David's dependence was clearly in the LORD!

After God bringing him through the night, David's confidence was strengthened. Again, things look different after God brings you through the night! Hang on morning is coming!

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around.

David is very bold in the LORD at this point. With the LORD sustaining him through the night David felt he could withstand any number of foes. All fear was gone. He was very confident that God was with him and would preserve him.

Someone said, "David knew the truth of Romans 8:31 before it was written.

Slide # 10

Romans 8:31 (NKJV)

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

What is interesting about Romans 8:31 is that just a few verses later Paul says...

Slide # 11

Romans 8:36–37 (NKJV)

36 As it is written: "For Your sake **we are killed all day long**; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Even in DEATH the believer in Christ is victorious, even in DEATH we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. As Paul goes on to say absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39).

David prayed and then was refreshed and then came forth with great assurance.

7 Arise, O LORD; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.

This is now the 4th time in the Psalm that David uses the name “LORD” (YHWH) in referring to God. And here he calls on God to come to his defense and SAVE him.

Note David was very confident and yet he continued to pray. Life is a prayer walk. Every step of the journey is to be steeped in prayer.

In picturesque language David calls on his FAITHFUL God to in effect ARISE and go before him and bring about his deliverance. This idea of “Arise” recalls Moses back in Numbers 10:35 where he would in effect say this as Israel broke camp in the wilderness. It was a “military phrase” looking to God to go before them and give them victory as they continued on their journey.

Slide # 12

Numbers 10:35 (NKJV)

35 So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: **“Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You.”**

It seems this call for God to “Arise” is also a play on words tying back to the opening verse where many have risen up against David.

Slide # 13

v. 1 “Many are they who rise up against me.”

v. 7 “Arise O LORD; save me, O my God!”

Many have risen up against David, but David’s recourse is to ask God to arise and go before him. It is the multitude of these enemies versus the covenant God of David. God is always the victor. As they often say, “One with God is a majority” and in truth God doesn’t even need the one. God alone is the victor as David will go on to emphasize.

No sooner had David prayed for God to save him than immediately he said, “For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.”

David is so sure God is going to deliver him that he speaks in past tense as though it has already happened.

Striking upon the cheekbone and the breaking of teeth are vivid metaphors portraying the complete defeat of the enemy (cf. 1 Kg. 22:24). Note David very clearly labels the enemy as being the “ungodly”.

8 Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah

David here gives all glory and credit to God. Salvation is all God’s doing! In Jonah 2:9 Jonah said essentially the same thing saying, “Salvation belongs to the LORD!” Indeed it does!

David concludes the Psalm by affirming that God’s blessing is upon His people. Selah!

Slide # 14

- v. 2 Many were saying God will not help David – **Selah!**
- v. 4 David cried to the Lord and He heard – **Selah!**
- v. 8 Salvation belongs to the Lord and His blessing is upon His people – **Selah!**

Our God is a God of deliverance! Fellow believer when all the world seems against you LOOK to God in prayer and remember God is your shield, your glory, the One Who lifts up your head, your sustainer, and your Savior!

This is indeed HELP FOR THE TROUBLED SOUL!

Selah!