

- ***Read Psalm 3/Prayer*** Last week, as we studied to prepare ourselves for our reading of the Psalms I made mention about the fact that we should read the Psalms a little differently than other books of the Bible. Firstly, they are structured differently. The book of the Psalms is divided into the different Psalms and not chapters. They Psalms can stand on their own, meaning the context isn't the same as the rest of the Bible. The way we would examine context in the rest of the Bible is to see what is written before and after the verse(s) of our focus. In the Psalms, our context is less about what is written in the Psalms before or after, but what is happening during the writing of the Psalm can help us to better understand the words that are recorded for us. Some of the Psalms are credited to certain events, and **Psalm 3** is one of the Psalms that is credited to a particular moment in the life of David. Matthew Henry says this concerning this Psalm and others, "The title of this Psalm and many others is a key hung ready at the door, to open it, and let us into the entertainments of it; when we know upon what occasion a Psalm was penned we know better how to expound it."
- In my Bible, at the beginning of the Psalm "A Psalm of David, when He fled from Absalom his son." We all can hopefully remember back to the account of David having to deal with the uprising of his son Absalom. His son gave great efforts to overthrow the throne of his father and take the kingdom as his own. In fact, as you read through that story that is contained in **II Samuel 13-18**, it is very easy to see how David would've been in a place to pin the words that we read just a few moments ago. Let's take a few moments to consider this Psalm and a few lessons that come from it.

I. At times in this life, we will feel helpless.

- A. This is the place that David finds himself in as the Psalm opens up. If we can go back and think about the things that have transpired in the life of David recently then we can quickly come to realize why he is so hopeless in his thoughts and why he says that "my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me."
- B. In **II Samuel 15:10-16**, after the planning of Absalom and other insurrectionists, David is forced to flee from his palace and and Jerusalem. He is forced to do so because the heart of many of the men of Israel had been turned from loyalty to David to becoming loyal to Absalom and his regime. David and those faithful to him are not quickly becoming outnumbered and the enemies of David seemingly multiplied suddenly out of nowhere. It's true that life comes at you fast, and David came to realize that very quickly.
- C. Some thousands of years later, and life continues to come at us very furiously and fast at times. As the saying goes sometimes, "when it rains it pours." The struggles of this life can come out nowhere. A terrible health diagnosis. A major cutback at work. A betrayal by a close friend or family member. Constant peer pressure from those who you work or go to school with. The sudden death of someone you love. It is at times like this when we truly can feel as if the situation is hopeless.
- D. And it gets even worse when things seem to compound themselves on top of other things. David's issues didn't stop with his being kicked off of his throne. But he was forced to flee into the wilderness and up the mountain bare footed with his head covered while he sobbed. (**II Samuel 15:30**) Then he runs into a relative of Saul who curses him incessantly as he passes by. (**II Samuel 16:5-8**) Then adding insult to injury is Absalom violating the concubines of David in such a lewd manner up on top of his house for all the people to see. (**II Samuel 16:20-22**) David was in the pits of hopelessness, and we very well might find ourselves in that same place at different points in our lives.

II. There will be those will mock our faith in times of tribulation.

- A. Back in our Psalm of study, we see that not only did the enemies simply grow and rise up against him, but there were some who said that God was not there to help the one who was after His own heart. (**Psalm 3:2**)
- B. I couldn't find any specific instances where some discouraged David by saying that God wasn't with him, but you can understandably see why David would feel as if this was the case. Think of the place that David had fallen from. He was the king of Israel. He was a blessed man with no need whatsoever. But now his kingdom has been taken from him and by no one else but his own son. The people have abandoned him for their new ruler. His life is on the line, and people are putting two and two together. This mighty king and man of God has obviously been abandoned by his God in the eyes of many.
- C. This type of thinking is prevalent among people of the world when they see the religious suffer in this life. They would use the problem of earthly suffering as a proof that God isn't real and/or doesn't care for His children. They would say we are foolish for serving a God that allows us to suffer as we do in this life. They would tell us to curse God and go on about our way suffering because God has obviously abandoned us, or He was never there to begin with.

- D. However, we must recognize that even the most righteous suffer. Sure David was a righteous man, but he was suffering at this time and honestly it was by his own doing through his sin with Bathsheba that brought about this cursing of God that was prophesied of by Nathan back in **II Samuel 12:11,12**. He was suffering as a consequence of sin. However, suffering can occur even when we have done nothing wrong. Consider the blameless and righteous man Job. He suffered through no fault of his own. Does that mean that God wasn't with Him. While others might have said that there was no deliverance or comfort from God, did David see this as being the case? I think the rest of the Psalm shows the answer.

III. In times of tribulation, we must seek out help and comfort from our God.

- A. David responds to the critics by stating that even though all things look devastating hopeless He was still going to cry out to the Lord with his voice. **(Psalm 3:4)**
- B. David very well could've given in to the voices of the critics. He could've abandoned his faith when his own son sought his throne, threatened his life, and even took the women of his house. But instead, he continued to put his trust and faith in God. He continued to request that God would be with him. He was confident that His God could turn this terrible situation into something good. He trusted that God was in control. He trusted to the extent that he wrote this Psalm. **(II Samuel 16:11,12)**
- C. What about us? When we are in a situation where we feel helpless...when we are in a place where our heart is broken...when we are in a situation where it feels as if our enemies are innumerable...when we are being told that there is no deliverance in our Lord...where do we turn? Do we give up hope and give in to the situation? Do we seek to rely upon ourselves as our own deliverers?
- D. Let me suggest that we would do well to emulate the example of David in this text. He never read the writings of Peter, but he knew that it **I Peter 5:7** is true. He knew that God wants His people to cast their cares upon Him because He does care for us. In fact, in another one of his Psalms, David says, "Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the writhes to be shaken." **(Psalm 55:22)** Finally, David knew that his God was the God of the broken hearted and that He would save those who are crushed in spirit. We must seek out God and beg that He help and comfort us in our greatest times of need.

IV. Our God is faithful to bless and comfort those who put their trust in Him.

- A. David was willing to go to God during the great time of tribulation because He knew that God was faithful. Time and time again, God had been with David and had lifted him through the difficulties he faced. Whether it be when he went up against Goliath, when he was pursued by Saul, or any other number of times...David knew that his God was truly as shield about him and he could continue on.
- B. Few times in life are more difficult than when we lay our heads down at night and we know that the day coming will bring strife and difficulty in our lives, but David implores us in **vv.3-6** to remember that it is the Lord who will lift the head of those who seek Him during strife. He laid his head down at night and knew that if he awoke the next day that it was thought the love and care of the Lord. Even when all of the people were with Absalom and coming up against him **(II Samuel 17:24)**, David was not afraid of the thousands that were round about him. He knew that God would defeat his enemies and that ultimately salvation would belong to him. **(vv.7,8)**
- C. This is exactly what happened. Eventually, Absalom and the insurrectionists were defeated in battle. At the end of the day David was delivered through his tribulations. **(II Samuel 18:31)** Just as David had predicted, the Lord was faithful and salvation was given through His grace. Salvation continues to be made available to those who seek the face of God during their darkest days. Certainly other Biblical figures recognized that God was faithful to deliver His people when they seek His help in the face of adversity. **(Romans 8:31-38)**
- D. David never read the words of Paul, but he knew them to be true. He knew that nothing could touch what was most important. He knew that in a variety of ways God would be with him. He could be strengthened through the knowledge that God was his shield. He could be strengthened by those around him who encouraged him. He could be strengthened by know that even if everything went wrong in this life, that he had something better for him in the next life. David knew that God was his shield, and may we remember the faithfulness of God.

Hallelujah! "Praise be to God" that though we suffer tribulations in this life, we know that our God is faithful to be with us during such times. David's life wasn't easy at times, and even though the difficulties were sometimes self-inflicted, David still sought out the comfort and strength that only God can supply. May we have the confidence of David that our Lord is a shield about us. He is our glory and He is the lifter of our heads. May God be praised for His love and comfort to His children when this life hits us hard.