

The Lord Is My Shield

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You will go ahead and turn with me in your Bible to Psalm 3. Psalm 3.

To truly grasp this particular psalm, one must first recognize its title as an inspired key. And if you have a particular Bible, it will have the inspired key and for this book Psalm 3, it is psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son. That's what it says. Now, ignoring this contextual key is like playing music in the wrong key. It fundamentally alters the author's intended meaning.

So to get this wrong right at the beginning is absolutely a mistake. And so it's extremely crucial that when we read the book of Psalms to make note of those keys notations and this to this psalm is notable for being the very first instance of the word psalm. This is the first instance in the Bible. Now in Hebrew it is pronounced mizmor which denotes a song of praise especially when accompanied by string instruments particularly plucking instruments like the harp or the lyre. So furthermore is derived even deeper. This meaning goes to a root verb zamar meaning to prune trim or cut away. This connects the psalms purpose to spiritual discipline to spiritual discipline.

And just as a gardener prunes a vine for greater fruitfulness. Think of the Lord Jesus Christ saying in verse two of John 15 he said every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth that it may bring forth more fruit. So mizmor acts as a tool to purge or prune a believer by removing hindrances namely sin, distractions or unhealthy attachments to make the believer more fruitful. And that word fruitful is essentially what? Holiness. To make us more holy and not only more holy but more spiritual in our growth in our walk with Christ.

Other times this is also involves in many ways trials challenges or refining experiences that draw us to have deeper dependence on God. This is often interpreted as God's corrective discipline. We see this in Hebrews 12 beginning in verse 11 says this. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous present pain. Nevertheless, after it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. So present pain for future joy. Present pain for future joy. That's God's design and chastening.

And what is the purpose of it all? It's not to punish us. Jesus Christ paid the full punishment for our sins on the cross. Amen. What he's doing here is for maturity, specifically to become more Christlike.

So this text reveals that in times of significant pain, distress, difficulty, God desires our prayers, namely we see David's prayer as an example that is focused and direct. He's not looking, God is not looking for elaborate or lengthy speeches, but a prayer that has been pruned of all unnecessary baggage as it were going straight to the core of the crisis. Have you ever had those

moments? Those crisis moments or I just too many words. I need to just get to the heart of the issue. That's God working on your hearts.

The historical backdrop is one of the most painful in David's life. We're going to see here in this book, he was not just fleeing a foreign enemy. No, he was fleeing his own son, Absalom. In the dead of the night, crossing the brook Kidron with a few faithful followers, we see David fleeing from his son. Why did David flee from Absalom? Well, I'm going to go into that to introduce us into this prayer.

So, David was forced to flee Jerusalem to save his life when his son Absalom, which is his third son, leading a rebellion to take power from his father's throne, not the right way, without a rebellion, to raise an army and declare himself as king. We see that in 2 Samuel 15. The seeds of this rebellion were sown in deep family conflict.

First, David's affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah led to a cascade of tragedies after tragedies, including the rape of David's daughter Tamar by his son Amnon, which is his eldest son, King David, which Absalom later avenged by killing Amnon. We see that in 2 Samuel chapters 11-13.

Then we see a connection with Bathsheba which is the prophet Nathan warned David that because of his sin with Bathsheba 2 Samuel 12:10 he says this about him the sword shall never depart from thine house because thou hast despised me and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

So the chaos including Absalom's death and the rebelling was interpreted as the direct consequence for his sin. the fulfillment of prophecy stemming from David's sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. See, David has demonstrated humility by acknowledging God's hand in his current suffering. He knew this was just suffering for sin. And viewing his flight from Jerusalem, weeping and walking barefoot in 2 Samuel 15:30 puts this narrative. David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet and wept as he went up and had his head covered and he went barefoot and all the people that was with him covered every man his head and they went up weeping as they went up.

See this was divine chastening of God towards David discipline for previous transgressions particularly those involving Bathsheba.

Now, David's flight from Absalom parallels Jesus's passion in several ways including themes of betrayal by loved ones. We see Absalom David compared to Judas and Jesus. And then we see shared suffering. Both journeys involve sorrow, humiliation and leaving Jerusalem in distress. Similarly, they both cross the valley of Kidron finding refuge.

However, key differences exist here. namely the roles and authority. The roles and authority. First, atonement versus consequence. Jesus fully embodied sacrificial death for what? Dying for the sins of others willingly. Contrast, David was fleeing as a king whose suffering was a consequence of his own sin. Bathsheba.

How about authority and control? Jesus maintained divine authority and control throughout his passion. David, however, was forced upon him by rebellion, highlighting his human weakness compared to Jesus' divine power.

So Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of Old Testament promises which is a greater king, a greater prophet, a greater priest than King David who was Israel's greatest human king but flawed, a flawed figure because of sin. However, Jesus, Amen, the greater David, brings perfect righteousness, triumphing over sin and death and establish an everlasting kingdom, fulfilling the royalties and blessings promised to David in a way no human king could.

So, while David's sin is part of the story, the main focus should be on the greatness of God. What do I mean by that? How God demonstrated his power by saving a person like him. Can you put yourself in there, too? how God is so great to us. If you know yourself as a sinner today, saved by grace through faith alone, through Christ alone, you know it was not of you. So in that way, we can relate to David.

Now let's look at verses 1 and two. Verses one and two. Lord, how are they increased that trouble me? Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, there is no help for him in God. Selah.

David opens up an expression of profound sorrow. Despite his faithful service as a king to his people, their loyalty was fragile. Almost instantly, the masses abandoned him to follow his son Absalom. But the most devastating attack is detailed in verse two was a strike against his relationship with God. His enemies maliciously claimed these words. There is no help for him in God.

This was calculated to drive David to despair. That was their purpose. The suggestion that a child of God is beyond God's power is like the expression used in Lamentations 3:19 which says this. Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall which is bitterness.

Faced with these bitter insults, David responded as we should. He took these verbal attacks and laid them before the Lord because he is the only one to help. Imagine if he would have just went on and devised an attack on his own son. So notice the note the phrase Selah this is important. He doesn't just move on in his prayer, but he takes a pause and he goes, "They're attacking me. They're saying vicious things about me. Let me take note of this. Let me not take this personally."

You see, he takes it to the next level. Not by his flesh and by his wisdom and his own strength, but by God's wisdom and God's strength. He is the only one that's at help in time of need.

And so here we find the first appearance of Selah here in this chapter prompts a moment for reflection. Though its exact meaning is debated among scholars, it is commonly understood as a musical directive to pause and perhaps increase the vocal emphasis. It serves as an instruction to halt, become still and deeply contemplate the preceding words.

The psalm, this pause, reminds us that our inner disposition, much like the strings of a harp, frequently drifts off of harmony and requires being screwed up again or retuned to the correct spiritual pitch through dedicated prayer.

Just as silence is a powerful element in music, intentional pausing is vital for spiritual health. For us as believers, this practice involves combining meditating on scripture as encouraged in Psalm 1. Meditate day and night with prayer such as the plea in Psalm 119:18. Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

And then involving the word Psalm 46:10, be still and know that I am God.

So this enables a person to depend on God. There's nothing good in David, nothing good in me as a sinner, but it all depends on God's strength and God's power to rescue us. It allows us a new creature in Christ Jesus to deeply savor the word of God and breathe healthily as your inner man by praying biblically.

That's the open my eyes behold wondrous things out of thy law. You see when you keep studying the scriptures over and over again the words of your prayers become more and more biblical.

And that's why the importance of combining scripture reading and prayers is vital for the Christian life.

Let's look at verses three and four now. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, my glory and the lifter of mine head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

Here David encounters the many who are against him with the one who is for him. Let me repeat that again. David counters the many enemies who are against him with the one who is for him because that's all that matters isn't it? Is the one who is for you that is God.

He calls God a shield. But the Hebrew word implies a buckler that surrounds a man entirely. It's not the same armor of God that we went through in Ephesians 6. No, this is different. This is the shield of God, which is this that he is above us, beneath us, around us, without and within.

He then calls God the lifter of my head. He's the only one that can lift us up out of sorrow. Amen.

This is a beautiful divine trio of mercy. Mercy after mercy after mercy. It's dependent on God's mercy to come through. So we wait upon his mercy. Selah.

God provides defense for the defenseless. Glory for the despised and joy for the comfortless. Whether you are bowed down by shame, sickness or sorrow, tonight God is the one who restores your dignity. Amen.

Notice that David cried with his voice, his own voice. While God hears silent prayers, vocalizing our distress can help our cry outsoar the clamor of our enemies.

The economy of heaven, God hears us, is the same meaning as God answers us. So whenever you hear God hears, it implies he also answers us. Amen.

Verses 5 and six. I laid me down and slept. I awaked for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about.

This passage, often called a morning hymn, reflects David's faith. He found this profound peace not in the safety of a palace. He had one. No, no, no. But likely David at this time was sleeping in an open field pursued by a rebellious army.

Nevertheless, his faith served as it were a pillow. He was able to rest despite all this happening around him. You see what prayer does? It clears our conscience. When we're praying aright biblically, clears our conscience and is compared as a large fortification.

You know when you have a large fortification, if you have good security, what does that security give you? A peace of mind, doesn't it? It's the same concept in prayer. When you're praying through, it's like a large fortification. It gives you peace.

That's the level of where we should get to when we are praying in our sorrows and our sicknesses and our trials. It allows one to rest securely even under the threat as it were heavy artillery coming at you. One bombardment after one and another because you're fortified as God is your shield.

As one commentator put it during difficult times, people who rely on sight rather than faith, which is what the opposite of what Apostle Paul describes, right? 2 Corinthians 5:7 for we walk by faith not by sight may find it understandable for a Christian to feel fear when you don't do what Paul says in 2 Corinthians when you walk don't walk by faith what happens when you walk by sight during this situation when you're going through all these circumstances what comes first fear.

So that's why this is so important to reverse that walk by faith not by sight because when you do that even a weak believer are often quick to excuse this fear in themselves and others. When he seeks his refuge in the Lord, his weakness turns into strength because God is his strength. He is the shield. He is the protector.

So by doing this, we rise above our flesh and we take our eyes off ourselves and put our faith in the Lord. For all things, all circumstances, all situations, he takes care of his children. Amen.

True faith is not limited to favorable circumstances. Just continuing on with this passage. See, true faith is not limited to favorable circumstances. What do I mean by that? Meaning trusting only when appearances are good. It's like visualize a sail that's set out in the sea that only goes because the wind favors the sails and the tides.

Believing only when we can see as it were. We should instead follow the psalmist example and strive for an unreserved faith that enables us to trust God regardless of the situation. This allows us to declare as he did, I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about.

Think of it like the bridge, okay? and people that are living on that bridge as it were, they can sleep soundly as long as they're on the bridge, but they go down below. There's just water.

And by you staying on that bridge, the water can't hurt you. Furthermore, we see God sustaining power even in the physics of sleep. He keeps our blood flowing and lungs heaving while we are unconscious.

See, God is in control of everything whether we're sleeping or awake.

This verse also points directly to all the things that relates to 1 John 4:4. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Romans 8:31, if God is for us, who can be against us?

Verses 7 to 8. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God, for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheekbone. Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord. Thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

Here we see David calls on God to arise, viewing his enemies as wild beasts by breaking of their teeth that only God can ultimately disarm the cutting words and calamities that would devour the innocent.

You see, by getting to the cheek bone in verse seven, it's referring to disarming the very place that a wild beast can attack. And he's saying only God can do it. God, you must arise and you must take care of this situation. I must not go before you.

The ultimate truth, the sum and substance of sound theology is that verse eight, salvation belongeth unto the Lord. Amen.

This foundational truth is the staff and support as it were sustaining both heaven and earth. The one who beholdeth everything in the palm of his hand.

Salvation is not achieved through human will or merit. Rather, it is God who chooses, who calls, and keeps his people. David concludes by asserting that God's blessing is upon his people. Not only when they are crowned in heaven, meaning they're already there, but also out here while we're traveling on this earth.

We remain a child of God. Even when you face trials, even when you are mournful or persecuted, you are a child of God.

You see this kind of peace that surpasses all understanding as the New Testament puts it in these kind of trials of your life. Remember that the word Selah is just as important as the song.

When you feel surrounded, pause and meditate on the fact that your salvation belongs to the Lord alone. You may be maligned. You may be chased from your palace as it were. And you may be forced to sleep in the open field of uncertainty. But if you are in Christ tonight, you are as safe as a bee in a hive or a dove in the ark. We can rest over the floods of trouble because the Lord who sustains our breath will also sustain our soul.

See, trusting God in a crisis is like being a passenger on a sturdy ship during a massive storm. You may feel the toss and turn of the waves and you may even hear the wind howling against the waves, but because you are inside the vessel and the captain is at the helm, you can lie down and sleep.

And it made me think of a passage in Luke 8. I'm going to read it for you. And this is how the Lord Jesus Christ as for us as believers keeps us inside.

Says this verse 22. Now it came to pass on a certain day that he went into a ship with his disciples. And he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake and they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep and there came down a storm of wind on the lake and they were filled with water and were in jeopardy. And they came to him and awoke him saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water and they ceased and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

The storm is real, but your safety is more real because it depends on the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who speaks the waves to calmness.

You see, as human beings, we're flawed in this way. When we say something, we have to back it up with doing it, right? The Lord Jesus, he just needs to speak and the action is done.

I want you to be comforted by the words of Jesus here. Whatever he says he will do. Whatever he says he will do, you can trust in the Lord Jesus Christ through all situations.

You just need to be knowing that you are in his hands.

And you know it's a wonder that as a Christian I often think how many times pausing is important. How many times pausing is important? I don't think God ever wants us to go ahead of him. Amen.

I often put in my prayer list, before you do anything, pray. Before you do anything, pray. Because I can always mess things up. But God never messes anything up. You can trust in him that way. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, you are so good to us. You give such clear instructions and we just want to thank you for it. We thank you for the example of David because many of us can feel where he is at.

And in many ways, Lord, there's some similarities but others are not. But Lord, you put these words in the heart of David to write down for us to meditate on.

And I just ask that this will be a help to the people of Calvary Road. Help them, Lord, through whatever circumstances they are in to know that you are the Lord that provides the shield in their lives. That you are the God of salvation. the salvation belongeth unto the Lord.

So whatever they need to be saved from Lord right now in whatever circumstances God we know that if it's in your will you will make it happen. We just need to wait on your timing. So help us to be patient reminding ourselves this as word Selah to pause to pray before we do anything and that we'll trust you Lord to do what will please you in our lives and we will thank

you for it whether you give or take Lord blessed be the name of the Lord Jesus in Jesus name.
Amen.