

Psalm 4, New International Version Translation:

1 For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of David. Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer. **2** How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? **3** Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him. **4** Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. **5** Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD. **6** Many, LORD, are asking, 'Who will bring us prosperity?' Let the light of your face shine on us. **7** Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. **8** In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Pause

If you tuned into last week's prayer on Psalm 3, you will understand the quite dire situation David was in. If you haven't, here is a quick synopsis. David has fled his kingdom because his son, Absalom, whose name means "my father is peace," and has formed a coup and has taken his kingdom away. To add more insult to injuries, Absalom is trying to kill him and had formed a planned to send 12,000-man army; however, this was foiled by one of David's ally. But in real talk, it was God who foiled his plans. 2 Samuel 17:14 "...For the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom." So without David's knowledge, God's timing, appointment, and, quite literally, his hands were all over, watching over David and covering him from all sides. Sounds like a Game of Thrones plot, but more astonishing.

We are in Psalm 4, The director of music, or choirmaster in other translations, is quite that, the minister of music in the tabernacle or temple. This role is mentioned 55 times in the titles of the Psalms.

David starts by crying out, lamenting, praying for grace. New Living Translation translates this as such, "Answer me when I call to you, O God who declares me innocent. Free me from my troubles. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer." From David's innocence to declaring guilt, we move to verse 2. Again, the New Living Translation expands upon this stating, "How long will you people ruin my reputation? How long will you make groundless accusations? How long will you continue your lies?" This may be in reference to 2 Samuel 15, of Absalom's manipulation to the people, the coup, and the priests. They named Absalom king, not God. David again sets himself as God's chosen king in verse 3.

However, David quickly lashes out on anger, which seems like anger on anger. But this is the best of lashing out in anger on anger. David believes that one should not allow their feelings to override their faith. New Living Translation translates it as “Don’t sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent.”

The Hebrew word referring to anger here refers to trembling, shaking, or agitation. It's important to honor God in humility and faith, rather than letting anger—even righteous anger—lead you into sin. Paul refers to this verse in Ephesians 4:26 and continues in verse 27. ““In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.” This is part of Paul’s Christian Living. David’s psalm continues in verse five in the same fashion in reference to the manner and spirit of sacrificing and trusting in the Lord.

The end of this psalm praises God for His encouragement. David notes that he has immense joy, thanks to the Lord. Joy is not always the same as happiness, nor does it always come from happy circumstances. For example, Luke 6: 22-23, “Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.” James 1:2-4 says, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” The joy isn’t your surroundings, the improvements, or progress that is seen. It is not what you see with your earthly eyes and your external environment, but what is happening on the inside. It’s the building of trust and reassurance, faith, knowing that God is in complete control and that his plans for you are good.

After breaking down Psalm 4, lets re-read it together.

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Long Pause

Although Absalom was David's enemy, David ordered him to be spared and cried when he heard that he had died. David was chastised for his grief as it affected his troops who had won the victory, but grieved and felt shame over the loss of the king's son. Sorry, too late for a spoiler alert now, David remained king. Absalom was riding a mule and his thick hair got tangled in the branches and Absalom was killed by Joab, who later rebuked David for wailing and crying over Absalom's death. 2 Samuel 19: 5-7, Joab rebukes David saying, "You oppose those who love you and support those who hate you! You have made it clear that your officers and men mean nothing to you. I can see that you would be quite happy if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. 7 Now go and reassure your men..." It's a pretty good read in 2 Samuel 18 and 19. So although in Psalm 3, David speaks of slapping of his enemies and shattering of their teeth, in Psalm 4, he does not let his anger lead to sin and to remain silent and lie down in peace.

Pause

As we close, I wish for us to focus on the last three verses. Who will bring us prosperity? God shine down upon us. You have given me greater joy than those who have an abundance of earthly possessions. Moreover, when I lay down to sleep, I do so in peace for I have complete faith that you will keep me safe. That is a mighty statement coming from David, hiding from a coup and danger imminent.

Are you able to state these three statements? God wants and will give you prosperity. God wants and will give you great joy, despite your circumstances and challenges. And that God wants you to lie down in peace knowing you are safely in His hands. Let us take a few moments to pray on these three statements.

Long Pause

Thank you for taking the time to read and pray over God's words. I pray that you find Psalms 4, and 3 from last week, help you find comfort in your emotions of your trials and tribulations, Build faith upon David's faith. To find and use David's wisdom. And most importantly, to know your God loves you for the wonderful creation he created and he has great plans for you.