

07.13.25: Help Through the Darkness

Title: Help Through the Darkness

Scripture: Psalm 3

Main Idea: The Lord responds to the cries of his people in their darkest hours.

Psalm 3 Introduction:

- From the generic introductory axioms in Ps 1 and 2 to the reality of the specific mess that we wake up to all too often and thus we are trying to live out our faith in and through
- As Ps 1 and 2 are considered literary pairs, so too are Ps 3 and 4
- P3 traditionally read as a morning prayer with Ps 4 as an evening prayer
 - In P3, vs 1 says...

LORD, how my foes increase! There are many who attack me.

2 Sam 15:12 says...

So, the conspiracy grew strong, and the people supporting Absalom continued to increase.

- The vs 2 mentions the taunting of “many” . And 2 Sam 16:5-13 tells of Shimei, who cursed, threw rocks and kicked up dust on David and his followers as they fled Jerusalem in haste
- Vs 3 mentions God as the one who lifts the psalmist’s head and 2 Sam 15:30 describes David leaving Jerusalem and ascending the Mt of Olives with his head covered in shame
- In no case is there any reason to doubt that the psalm could very well have applied to the circumstances of David as he fled from Absalom
- The truth is that more than once in David’s life he was surrounded by an enemy whose strength seemed to be growing and thus, he needed God’s deliverance

As the Psalm opens, vs 1-2 paint us a picture of a man who wakes up in the morning, grateful to be alive, but facing truly desperate circumstances!

- Vs 1 – surrounded and the situation is deteriorating by the minute
 - An adversary is present
 - An adversary is surrounding him
 - An adversary is growing in strength
- Vs 2 - The taunting of the adversary does x2 things
 - Gives a theological context to the situation
 - Leaves the question hanging – are they right? Will God hear? Will he respond? Is He even there?
 - Or perhaps the question should be framed a different way... will God’s faithful remain faithful when all seems lost?
- APPLICATION:
 - **Primary:** the psalmist is describing his circumstances to the Lord! Why? God already knows.
 - Helps us recognize and admit our state of affairs – pretending things are not so is no help to anyone; truth is that to be a human and to be alive is to be

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acquainted with pain and suffering; these are common human experiences; we must recognize the reality of suffering and not try to hide from it

- Brings God into the picture in our processing of our situation
- Connects us to God's understanding and provision – in the midst of the storm
- **Secondary:** taunting of the adversary brings to recollection the words of Job's friends in his darkest hours; be careful what you say to those who are struggling, especially when you claim to be speaking from or on behalf of God!!

As we get through vs 2, the dim picture is painted for us:

- The presence of enemies
- The increase of enemies – the trend is that they are growing (in number or strength or both?)
- The taunting of enemies – where is your God? There is no help for you in him!
- The feeling of being outnumbered and abandoned
- The beginning of the poem seems to **set the stage for God to do the unexpected**

***In the midst / when surrounded,
When trouble surrounds us and we cry out to him...***

1) The First Response is - The Lord Shields

EXPLANATION:

- Vs 3-4
- He is our protector – he is a shield about us: over, under, in front of, beside, and behind!!
- While we are surrounded by our enemies, so too does his protection surround us
- Illustration – think of a “force shield” in science fiction movies
- As we come under his protective shield, we experience further benefits of God's grace
 - He brings us to glory from shame
 - He lifts our head

APPLICATION:

- I cry aloud (NAS I cried out *with my voice*)
- Goldingay - Lit., “[with] my voice I would call” (cf. GKC 144m). Such occurrences are hardly just a grammatically odd way of saying “My voice would call” (so JM 151c); they often draw attention to the out-loud-ness of the prayer or praise, and thus to its fervency
- It's not that God cannot hear our silent prayers, but there are sometimes when we need to cry aloud with our voices

***And God hears and answers
When trouble surrounds us and we cry out to him...***

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2) The Second Response is - The Lord Sustains

EXPLANATION:

- Vs 5-6
- Here we see that even in the midst of the turmoil, David is able to go to sleep and trust that the Lord will wake him in the morning
- Situation in 2 Sam 15 – David fled at night or early in the morning. David fled all day to the Jordan and arrived exhausted; then received word by his informants not to sleep but to ford the river immediately and got up and crossed in the night.
- So the question was not just sleeping but whether he would awake or be overrun while he slept
- What is it that keeps us from sleeping? Fear

ILLUSTRATION:

- Corrie Ten Boom – “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.” You may say that’s easy for her to say, but let’s not forget that she was a Dutch Christian who was thrown in a concentration camp for helping the Jews hide from the Nazis.
- Reminds me of the time in Jesus’ earthly ministry when he was with his disciples in a boat. They were crossing the sea of Galilee and a great storm came up. The waves were washing over the sides of the boat, and they were threatened with being swamped. Jesus was asleep at the back of the boat on a cushion. Matt 8:23-27/ Mk 4:36-41

3) The Third Response is - The Lord Saves

EXPLANATION:

- Vs 7-8
- Deliverance – the main theme of the Psalm
- A final outburst of faith and trust in the Lord –not just a plea for deliverance but a statement of confidence in God’s ability to deliver
- Probably based on past experience
- Salvation comes from the Lord
- Salvation comes through victory over the enemy – and with righteous judgment
- Salvation comes not only for our good, but for the good of others – the Psalm takes an unexpected turn in its final statement; one would be understood to expect the psalm to end with “salvation is from the Lord.” but it does not - movement from the individual to the corporate
- Sure, David was a king and understood that his fate was in many ways tied to the fate of Israel. But I think in this David understood that the fate of Israel was more important than his own fate.

ILLUSTRATION:

- George Whitefield and John Wesley – The plaque over Whitefield’s grave "I am content to wait till the day of judgement for the clearing up of my character: and after I am dead I desire no other epitaph than this, 'Here lies G.W. What sort of a man he was the great day will discover.'"

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APPLICATION:

- Focus outwardly in the midst of the storm vs “cocooning”
- I have determined to let God sort
- Cry out to God for salvation

Conclusion:

- Surrounded by our sin – rise up lord and save me!