



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Psalms 3

#### Handling life when fear strikes at you!

**Psalms 3:1-8**, *Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. <sup>2</sup>Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." Selah*

*<sup>3</sup>But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. <sup>4</sup>I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah*

*<sup>5</sup>I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me. <sup>6</sup>I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around. <sup>7</sup>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.*

*<sup>8</sup>Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah*

Faith in God will help us to order ourselves to meet the greatest challenges of life.

**President Richard Nixon.** Whether you agreed or not with the man politically, it was a sad spectacle to watch. It must have

been terrifically shocking, depressing, and humiliating for Mr. and Mrs. Nixon to endure.

One day, you are one of the most powerful men in the world. You are always the centre of attention.

You are always surrounded by a cadre of Secret Service agents whose job is to protect you at risk of their own lives. Your words are plastered on the front pages of newspapers around the world.

At press conferences, reporters try to parse the nuance of your every sentence.

What you say can make the stock market shoot up or down. When you give orders, a bunch of underlings jump to make it happen.

You live in a mansion with servants attending to your every need.

You have a private jet, helicopter, and limousine, plus a private retreat, at your disposal as you carry out the nation's business.

But the next day, you resign in disgrace, your presidency a shambles.

You leave the public eye.

You move out of the White House.

Nobody cares anymore what you say or think unless you're ready to confess your guilt in the scandal.

Life changed drastically on that fateful day for Mr. and Mrs. Nixon!

But the resignation of President Nixon was not nearly as traumatic and humiliating as the events that hit King David when his son Absalom led a revolt against him.

David had reigned for decades as one of the most powerful monarchs in the world. His military prowess was legendary. He had extended Israel's dominion far beyond its borders.

David had become fabulously wealthy, living in a palace of breath-taking splendour with his many wives and servants. He had absolute authority of life or death over everyone with whom he had dealings. No one dared to get on his bad side.

David's oldest son, Amnon, raped his half-sister, Tamar. Tamar's brother, Absalom, took revenge by murdering Amnon.

Absalom fled into exile for several years, but later was permitted to return. But after his return,

David refused to see his wayward son for two years. The resentment built and Absalom began to court the disgruntled people in the kingdom, offering himself as a more sympathetic leader than his powerful father was.

Absalom pieced together a strong conspiracy.

David realized that to survive, he had to flee the capital immediately with all his supporters and their families.

When David fled, Absalom's armies were coming to conquer Jerusalem.

All his servants and their little ones hastily grabbed what they could and took off towards the wilderness.

David followed them, weeping, and walking barefoot with his head covered in shame.

To add insult to injury, a man named Shimei, from the family of David's predecessor King Saul, came out as David passed by. He cursed at David, threw stones at him, and accused him of being a worthless man who had brought about his own downfall by being a man of bloodshed (**2 Samuel 15 & 16**).

It was David's most traumatic, humiliating experience in his entire life.

Everything that he had spent his life working for had suddenly unravelled.

Many whom he had thought were allies and friends had abandoned him and sided with his rebellious son.

Most painful wound of all was the treachery and betrayal of Absalom.

Can you imagine your own child seeking to take your life?  
Can you imagine your own child bringing an army to do it?

It brought home to David his own failure as a father.

- One son was murdered,
- A daughter was raped, and
- The murderer was now after his own father's life in addition to his kingdom.
- Life was falling apart for David.

### **What do you do when life falls apart?**

Few of us have gone through anything close to the trauma that David was experiencing.

But in lesser ways, you have probably had times when you could identify with David.

Perhaps you thought that things were fine at work, but you suddenly got called into the boss' office and were fired under false allegations brought against you by those you had trusted. You were out of work and the firing made the prospect of finding another job look bleak.

You didn't know how you would provide for your family. Life fell apart.

Or, perhaps one of your children turned against you and took up a lifestyle of drugs or sexual promiscuity that is totally opposed to your values. He levelled all sorts of false charges against you.

He resisted your every attempt to talk or be reconciled. Your many years of love and sacrifice on his behalf were met with scorn and anger.

Life fell apart.

**What do you do when life falls apart?**

**David wrote Psalm 3.**

He wrote a psalm!

Maybe that's why he is called a man after God's heart!

Some scholars call Psalm 3 a morning psalm, and

Psalm 4 (which may have been written at the same time) an evening psalm.

Perhaps David wrote Psalm 3 just after he crossed the Jordan, awaiting the inevitable battle with Absalom's forces. Verse 5 hints that he wrote it after waking up safely after a good night's sleep.

### **Psalm 3 shows**

**3:1-2**, reveals David's peril.

**3:3-4**, records his initial prayer.

**3:5-6**, shows the peace that results from his prayer.

**3:7-8**, gives a repeated prayer and an affirmation of faith that God alone can deliver and bless His people.

## **1. When life falls apart.**

*V 1-2, Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. <sup>2</sup>Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." Selah*

David begins by crying out to God.

David's adversaries were increasing in number. He always had enemies, but the ranks were growing daily. Things were snowballing against David. Like a dam that first leaks and then suddenly bursts, the raging torrent of the

rebellion was threatening to sweep David and his loyal followers to their deaths.

For years Absalom had been working behind David's back to take control of the kingdom.

Now Absalom has amassed an army at Hebron ready to conquer Jerusalem.

**2 Samuel 15:13**, *Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."*

Many rose up against him.

Among the many were **Ahithophel**, David's counsellor.

**Amasa** was David's nephew, and he commanded the armies of Absalom.

**2 Samuel 17:25**, *And Absalom made Amasa captain of the army instead of Joab. This Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Jithra, an Israelite, who had gone in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother.*

Shimei cursed David and threw stones at him as he left Jerusalem.

**2 Samuel 16:6**, *And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.*

David tells God what's going on. He is not informing God, but rather laying his burden on the Lord.

David is acknowledging to God that he is not able in himself to handle this overwhelming situation.

Many were saying about David, "There is no help for him in God."

This is a stinging allegation.

There were so many on Absalom's side that people were saying that not even God could help David.

The Bible teaches us that troubles are going to come, and we cannot avoid them.

**James 1:2-3**, *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*

**Acts 14:22**, *strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith,*

*and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*

**1 Peter 4:12**, *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

## **2. Lay hold of God in Prayer.**

**V 3-4**, *<sup>3</sup>But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. <sup>4</sup>I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah*

The Lord to be our shield, our glory, the restorer of our joy, and our prayer answering God.

### **a) The LORD is a shield.**

David was in a fight for his life; he needed a shield.

A shield is only relevant during battle.

A shield doesn't mean that arrows don't fly, and swords don't swing.

It means that when the shield is held, that they will not get through.

David's shield was the Lord. It did not prevent Absalom from attacking. It protected David from Absalom's attacks succeeding.

**b) The Lord is glory.**

David says the Lord is his glory.  
The Hebrew word literally means "weighty one."

It was the Lord to whom David gave significance/meaning for His life. David's faith was so great that nothing outweighed the significance of God, not even his own family and friends.

**c) The Lord is restorer of Joy.**

David says the Lord lifted his head.  
To have one's head lifted means that it must first be lowered.

We can either lower our heads before God or God will lower them for us.

"To lift up the head" is a Hebrew expression for restoring someone who is cast down to his dignity and position.

Joseph told the cupbearer.

**Genesis 40:13**, *Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler.*

God restoring to us the joy that we had before the crisis brought us low.

When we put our faith and trust in God, He will protect us in times of trouble, but we must humble ourselves before Him in faith.

**Psalms 34:19**, *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.*

**John 16:33**, *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

**James 4:10**, *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

God's grace and mercy is greater than our sin.

**Romans 5:20**, *"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"*.

#### **d) Prayer answering God.**

God's "holy mountain" (or hill) refers to Mount Zion in Jerusalem, where the ark of the covenant remained.

Zadok and the Levites were carrying the ark to join David in his escape. But David sent them back into the city.

**2 Samuel 15:25-26**, *Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. <sup>26</sup>But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."*

David's heart was humbled before God.

If the Lord restored him, David would worship Him.

If the Lord did not restore Him, David still would bow before His just and holy ways.

But even though now David was separated geographically from the symbol of God's dwelling place, the separation was no hindrance to his prayers.

But God gives more grace to the humble.

**James 4:6**, *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

### 3. Experience the Peace of God

**V 5-6**, *I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me. <sup>6</sup>I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around.*

#### a) David laid down and slept.

Sleep is a time of vulnerability.

The pursued find difficulty sleeping. David did not.

#### Why?

He put his faith and trust in God.

#### b) He woke because the Lord sustained him.

David credits his making it through the night to the Lord's providence.

No enemy had come to take his life.

No fear had come to deny his rest.

**Philippians 4:6-7**, *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup>and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

David would not be afraid if 10,000 people opposed to him.

Fear is a great enemy. If we permit it to go unchecked, it will destroy us.

David's fear is conquered by his faith.

The result is integrity that won't bow under pressure from others.

The result is a faith that will fight with courage in the face of great adversity.

Trust in God brings a sleep of peace.

**Psalms 4:8**, *I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

**Proverbs 3:24**, *When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.*

**Romans 8:31**, *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

**Psalms 46:1-2**, *God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*

#### **4. Lord provides action.**

David could have said, “Amen” after verse 6. But in the real world, when not only you, but also hundreds of loyal supporters and their families are depending on you, anxiety has a way of creeping back in.

So, David cries out to God again.

*V 7-8, 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. <sup>s</sup>Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah*

**David says, “Arise!” and “Save me!” to God.**

David calls upon the Lord to stand up for him.

In our most desperate hours, our cries to God take the form of simply ecstatic pleas.

**David says that God has already defeated his enemies.**

He says God has struck them on the cheek and broken their teeth. It is an image of a severe and mortal head wound.

**David recognizes the only source of salvation.**

Salvation is of the Lord.

Blessing is upon God's people.

Salvation and blessing are used synonymously here.

To be blessed is to be saved.

We are saved from our enemies by calling upon the Lord.

**Psalms 18:3**, *I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.*

David's final request, "*Your blessing be upon Your people,*" shows that David was not praying selfishly.

He was the anointed king of God's people. Absalom's rebellion negatively affected the entire nation.

So, when David asked God to deliver him, he saw it in terms of God's blessing His people.

Believing prayer always keeps this kingdom purpose in focus.

If your world has fallen apart because you have been wiped out financially, or your marriage is in trouble or your child has rebelled, don't just pray selfishly so that your happy world might be restored.

Pray in light of God's kingdom purposes.

Pray that God will act so that He will be glorified, and His people will be blessed and strengthened.

## **Conclusion**

David turned this horrible experience of betrayal, emotional pain, and nearly being killed into a song of praise.

This teaches us that God can use our worst trials to deepen our trust in Him and to produce praises that will encourage His people.

When life falls apart, you can experience God's peace by laying hold of Him in believing prayer.

When He answers, He gets the glory, you get the joy, and God's people get the blessing.

It is essential not just to pray for your problems, but also to pray for God's greater purpose and glory for His people.