

Preaching the Psalms Series

(12)

Psalm 3

How to Be Victorious Over Distress and Enemies,

Psalm 3:1-8

Psalm 3:1-8 (NASB)

¹“O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me.

²Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God." Selah.

³But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head.

⁴I was crying to the LORD with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.

⁵I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me.

⁶I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me round about.

⁷Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God! For You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked.

⁸Salvation belongs to the LORD; Your blessing *be* upon Your people! Selah.”

1. (Psalm 3:1-2) Lay your distress before God.

Psalm 3:1-2 (NASB)

¹“O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me.

²Many are saying of my soul, “There is no deliverance for him in God.” Selah.”

The pressure of David’s situation was on the verge of crushing his spirit. Note the words *many* (v. 1), *increased* (v. 1), and *many* again (v. 2). David was outnumbered; he was in the minority. Additionally, this was not an attack from an enemy nation: this was an internal problem. His own nation and family were divided against him. Internal problems are always the most grievous and dangerous, whether in a family, business, church, or nation (Mark 3:24-25). David had no place to turn, except to the Lord. He released the stress in his spirit before the throne of the omnipotent God. All the hurt in his heart was poured out at the feet of his Heavenly Father.

a. When enemies oppose and rise up against you (v. 1).

Psalm 3:1 (NASB)

¹“O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me.”

As believers, we face many foes in our lives. Our enemies are often human, as were David’s enemies. Additionally, we encounter other types of adversaries. Physical problems such as fatigue, illness, and disease work against us. Problems of the soul and spirit—fear, discouragement, depression, frustration,

anger, hatred—oppose us. We are in an ongoing war with the temptations that arise from our own sinful desires, such as greed, pride, and lust.

God's Word instructs us, however, that all attacks are directed from one source. Satan, the great enemy of God and humanity, is behind all attempts to destroy us. He also seeks to destroy those whom the Father longs to save—all who have not received Christ. Scripture unmasks our true enemy:

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NASB)

¹⁰ **“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.**

¹¹ **Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.**

¹² **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”**

One of the sobering truths of the Christian life is this: as we grow in the Lord, our trials and troubles will increase, both in number and in severity. The carnal believer, a person who continues to walk after the flesh rather than the Spirit, is of little concern to Satan and his demonic forces. He or she is virtually no threat to Satan's evil agenda. This person will be largely ignored by Satan, for Satan has little need to waste his resources where they are not needed.

The spiritual believer, in contrast, is a great threat to the advancement of Satan's cause. The devil will direct his sharpest attacks and his shrewdest, most effective demons toward the destruction of Christ's mightiest soldiers. If we are walking with the Lord, we must expect to be opposed. We must constantly watch for Satan's attacks, his seductions and enticements.

b. When friends say that God has forsaken you and will not deliver you ([v. 2](#)).

Psalms 3:2 (NASB)

² **“Many are saying of my soul, “There is no deliverance for him in God.” Selah.”**

David's false friends defended their disloyalty by claiming that God was on Absalom's side and that David had lost the Lord's favor. This false assumption satisfied their corrupt consciences and, to their minds, justified their treason against their king. And, sadly, the opinion that God was judging David was spreading. Note the words of Shimei, a relative of Saul's, who cursed David as he fled Jerusalem:

2 Samuel 16:8 (NASB)

⁸“The LORD has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. And behold, you are taken in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed!”

When sincere believers face trouble, some carnal Christians and unbelievers usually question their relationship with the Lord. They wrongly conclude that God is judging those who are afflicted, perhaps repaying them for sins they have committed. This is what many in Israel concluded against David. It is the same way Job’s friends responded in his dark hours of distress. We must remember that accusations and rumors are not always true. In fact, they usually spring from hearts that are not right with the Lord. If people’s hearts are in tune with God, they do not gloat or rejoice when the chastening hand of God comes upon another. Neither do they assume the place of God in passing judgment. If we are truly spiritual, we understand God’s Word and purposes, and we dare not assume that trouble in the life of a righteous person is God’s punishment.

After describing his desperate situation to the Lord, David inserts the word “*selah*” (see [Deeper Study # 2](#)). This may seem to be an unusual place for a pause, but it has a strategic purpose. When we are facing a desperate situation and turn to this psalm, the psalmist suggests that we pause here and meditate on the distress and, perhaps, the hopelessness of our situation. This interlude dramatically sets the stage for the full impact of David’s triumphant statement in the next verse.

Thought 1. American President Abraham Lincoln said, “I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.” We must realize that we cannot handle life’s burdens and troubles by ourselves. And God does not want us to. There is no special blessing for dealing with trials on our own and in our own strength. The Lord does not favor us for not troubling Him with our problems. In fact, the very opposite is true. He invites us to bring our problems to Him. He wants to work them out for our good and His glory. Our Heavenly Father desires that we depend totally upon Him and that we trust Him to do what we cannot do. Turning to the Lord for help should be our first resort, not our last.

Matthew 11:28 (NASB)

²⁸“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

1 Peter 5:7 (NASB)

⁷“Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Psalm 55:22 (NASB)

²²“Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.”

DEEPER STUDY # 2

(**Psalm 3:2**) *Selah*: the term *selah* occurs 71 times in 39 psalms. It occurs elsewhere in Scripture only in **Habakkuk 3**. *Selah* is derived from a root word which means to *lift or raise up*. Its exact meaning in Hebrew music, however, is not certain. Of all the opinions about its meaning and usage, two primary views emerge:

1. It is an instrumental instruction to play louder or stronger, the equivalent of *forte* in modern music. Bible teacher John Phillips explains, “...it is thought to be a kind of crescendo mark in the music...There is a roar of music to draw attention to the sentence being sung, a kind of musical punctuation mark.”[5] **John Phillips. *Exploring Psalms, Volume 1. WORDsearch CROSS e-book.***
2. It is the instruction for an instrumental interlude, for all singing to cease. It is a pause for reflection or meditation upon what has been immediately sung, a time to *lift up* silent praise or petition to God in response to the previous verse or stanza of verses.