

Psalm 3-4

I have discovered (perhaps you have to) that every now and then life has this way of just hitting you hard. and You think to yourself or perhaps even utter out loud, “It just can’t get any worse than this,” and then it does. You only thought you were at the bottom of the barrel, you didn’t know there was a new low that you could be brought to but now you’re there. and As we approach the 3rd Ch in the book of Psalms the context surrounding David’s life has him right there, at the bottom of life’s barrel; fleeing from his own son for his very life.

Now the question naturally arises (due to the note above this Ps that states that this is a Ps of David when he fled from Absalom his son), “Why was David fleeing from his son?” Well, you find the account recorded in 2nd Samuel Ch 15 and it’s sort of a long story but to keep it as brief as possible it was ultimately part of the reaping in David’s life that he’d come into due to the sin that he’d sown. You recall that he was supposed to be at war but instead he stayed home and because of that he was where he shouldn’t have been when he shouldn’t have been there. But he saw Bathsheba bathing (Uriah’s wife) and he took her, had relations with her and she became pregnant. and You know the story ultimately he had her husband killed in battle, made a widow out of her and then tried to appear all noble by taking her to be his wife so that she wouldn’t have to be alone. and From all outward appearances it looked like he was going to get away with it, however the bible is clear that the things we do in the dark will be brought into the light, the things whispered in the ear will be shouted from the rooftops. The idea there being that God knows what’s going on in your life even if nobody else does. So God sent Nathan the prophet to him and busted him out. and David repented, so God forgave him. But here’s the deal, even though God in His grace will forgive us, in His government we still reap the consequences of our sin. We can’t sow the seed with out reaping the harvest. and While the Lord was reproofing David through Nathan He said to him, “Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’” 2 Sam 12:9-12

So this is apart of the adversity that was raised up against him from his own house. Absalom began to wait at the city gates and when people would seek the king for some sort of resolve regarding a problem he’d be all, “Hey the kings awfully busy he doesn’t really have time for you, what’s your problem perhaps I can help.” and As he would hear them out he’d say, “Man, you’re getting a raw deal but there’s no king to help you, oh if I were only king, then you would get justice, but because my dad is busy, you’re just outa luck.” and He began to persuade the hearts of the people in the nation to follow after him, and just like people do when he finally got enough people to follow after him and see things his way he made his move.

When David realized the hearts of the men of Israel were with Absalom and the trumpet had sounded and they were making their way to Jerusalem to give Absalom the throne and take David off of it (by form of execution) he fled. Such is the scenario that surrounds this Ps. and Again what happened to David is recorded in 2nd Sam 15-18, the heart of David is recorded here in Ps 3.

When life has you at the bottom of the barrel, you're in a situation, or a circumstance that's desperate, you don't have time for flowery introductions, man you just cry out to the Lord. It's like when that storm was rocking Peter's life (literally) there he was walking on the water; and as long as he kept his focus upon Christ he did alright. But as soon as he lost sight of the Lord, began to notice all the waves around him, that he was in a place that was way over his head (no pun intended) he began to sink. and When he began to sink he didn't mix words, he just cried out, "Lord, save me."

and That's the sort of sense that I get with the way David begins this Ps. He just breaks out of the silence with a desperate cry, "Lord,"

Vs1-2

Or another way to understand all of that, "I've got problems, I'm sensing an overwhelming amount of pressure." If you're one who takes notes I've basically broken this Ps down into 4 sections. # 1 Vs 1-2 what's the word here, "Problems" or "Pressures." "How they have increased who trouble me, many are they who've come against me; many are they who are talking about me, who've given up on me." # 2 Vs 3-4 his problems turn him to "Prayer" I cried to the Lord, and He heard. # 3 Vs 5-6 His prayer resulted in his "Peace" "I lay down and slept, I will not be afraid" and # 4 From prayer and peace he's brought into that conscious awareness of "Power" and "Protection" "Arise O Lord and save me, salvation belongs to the Lord." So this Psalm moves from a sense of desperation to an assured sense of God's salvation and in the midst of it all is his supplication, his prayer. and It's through prayer that he's able to gain peace, to remember who it is that he has in the Lord, or perhaps I should say Who it is that has a hold on him. and Proper perspective is critical in times of crisis. But 1st of all he (as do we all) takes notice of his problems, the pressure that's mounting upon him.

Vs1-2

"Selah" meaning (most likely) to stop, pause, and reflect, it leads us into a moment of meditation upon what's being said. and There are times that we feel just like this isn't there? It's like we can't catch a break, everyone seems to be trouble for you, people continually rising up against you, they're ready to cut you off, and cast you out. and When we read here that they're saying, "There is no help for him in God." It's not that people are saying that God can't help him, but that God won't help him, he's gone too far, sinned too badly, God's "turned His back" so to speak on David and has just cast him out and cut him off. They've written David off as far as God is concerned in their opinion.

Charles Spurgeon said concerning this, “If all the trials which come from heaven, all the temptations which ascend from hell, and all the crosses which arise from the earth, could be mixed and pressed together, they would not make a trial so terrible as that which is contained in this verse. It is the most bitter of all afflictions to be led to fear that there is no help for us in God.” Because the fact is that if God be for us who can be against us, right? But should the situation arise whereby we (in our own minds) have blown it so bad, we’ve sinned so immensely that God is actually no longer for us, He has as it were turned His back on us, and refuses to be a help unto us, we’re sunk, there’s literally no hope for us in the midst of such a scenario. That’s what people were saying about David, that he was simply getting what he had coming to him, that God was fed up and finished with him.

That’s why it’s so important to not be one who seeks the affirmation or approval of men. How many times we look to what people say, or what people think to affirm or approve of us when in reality we’re to look only to the Lord.

We can’t let what other people think dictate our course of action, we’d be all over the charts be that the case. It’s amazing how that when someone “approves” of me, or they “like” me they’ll commend the ministry, speak of God’s blessing and all the rest. But then as soon as I do something that perhaps inadvertently offends them, or they can’t see why and don’t agree with suddenly I’m not as spiritual anymore. As a matter of fact should they get all embittered and leave the fellowship they’re pretty positive that God’s not about this place anymore and has taken his blessing from our midst. Why? Because things didn’t go their way. I had a lady one time (yrs ago in our previous facility) (and I can’t even remember why she left) but prior to that she was all about what God was doing there but when she left she told me that she had to go and that the Lord told her that He was going to judge me, judge the work and all the rest. I mean, there was no hope for me in God, as far as she was concerned He’d forsaken me and she was going to go to another place He’d shown her where the man had a real shepherd’s heart and would look after her and tend to the sheep. My point is that if we’re all the time trying to navigate in such a way as to make sure we’re doing what everyone else thinks we should or trying to reconcile everything that’s ever misunderstood we’d never have time to simply follow the Lord. We’re to be God pleasers, not man pleasers.

When you set your sights to please the Lord there are going to be times that people simply don’t understand what’s going on or why. The bible says, “A man's steps are of the LORD; How then can a man understand his own way?” Prov 20:24 Which is to say that God’s ways aren’t our ways, so if I don’t always get it even and it’s in regards to my own life, how can I expect everyone else to understand the decisions I make or the direction I take?

I have found through the course of life that there are always those people who are all too ready to go ahead and kick you while you’re down. Here’s David at the end of his rope, he’s beat down and so people are adding insult to his injury. His name was Shimei, David was on route, fleeing for his life and here comes Shimei of the tribe of Benjamin from which Saul came (Israel’s 1st king).

He's all throwing rocks at David, saying he got what he had coming since he took Saul's place as king now God was doing this to him as retribution for the house of Saul. He didn't even know what was going on, David didn't take the kingdom, God gave it to him, and what was happening had nothing to do with that at all. But he was so eager to kick David while he was down. Every David has a Shimei, every Moses has a Korah, every Joseph has a "band of brothers" who just hate him and want to see the end of him. Every Daniel has someone who wants to see him thrown to the lions, every Shadrach; Meshach and Abed-Nego has someone or some group who wants to see them flung into the fire. If you're serving the Lord and God is using your life there's always someone eager to see you fall, even Jesus had Judas willing to sell Him out for the right price, Job had a mob of miserable comforters. David had "many" who were rising up against him, speaking ill of him saying that God had forsaken him; he had problems, he had pressures; so what is he to do? Pray.

Vs3-4

"From His holy hill," being a reference to Jerusalem, David may've been fleeing for his life but God was still upon the throne (that's the idea there). and Trials or troubled times in life are in no way, shape, or form an indication, or an implication that God has left you. In this world we will have tribulation, Jesus made it real clear. But we're to look to and trust in Him because He's overcome the world. David says in essence, "Lord I know You haven't left me, You're a shield about me, my glory, the lifter of my head."

He's not asking God to be a shield for him, or a source of encouragement to him; he's simply acknowledging the fact that God is these things. He is his shield; He is his glory, the lifter of his head. Meaning, "The One who refreshes and restores him into his proper place." There were all kinds of people making various assaults on David, but David simply trusted in the Lord to be a shield for him, his defense, the one who would vindicate him in His time. He says here, "You, O Lord are my glory," what a heart probing statement. We can glory in so many things; so many different things so often make for our glory. Be it beauty, fame or fortune, power or prestige, perhaps possessions or abilities. But for David, though he had all those things, none of those things had him, the Lord was his glory. God help us to come to that point whereby in the pit of our being, from the deep recess of all that we are, that He is our glory, that we find in Him what so many find in those other things. That He would be our all consuming goal and ambition in life, laying hold of that for which He's laid hold of us.

David says, "I cried to the Lord with my voice and He heard me." Couple of things quickly here, I think it's important to note that he doesn't talk about crying out to his friends, or his counselors, or any other # of resources. No doubt he talked to people about his problems, that's only human. But he knew where his help would come from ultimately, and that was the Lord. and Notice he cried out "with his voice" that means he didn't silently petition God but that he prayed out loud. It's not a legalistic thing we don't always need to pray out loud nor is it always appropriate. But I have found that I'm able to stay much more focused and am much less likely to lose my concentration when I pray out loud, even when it's just me by myself.

When you cry out to the Lord you can do that with your mind, but I find it to be better that when at all possible to do so with my voice.

Vs5-6

What was the result of his prayer, his petition to the Lord, he had peace. He says, "I lay down and slept, I awoke for the Lord sustained me." The fact that God kept him through the night just reaffirmed to him that God wasn't finished with him, had a further plan for him. How many times can we be robbed of sleep at night through worry, or stress, problems and pressure? David didn't have anyone to help him sleep at night, he laid his head down against the pillow of prayer and God gave him peace. This is a picture of the principle we find in Phil 4:6-7 whereby the apostle Paul exhorts us, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." David came to know that peace that allowed Jesus to sleep in the midst of the storm, or that peace that allowed Peter to sleep in prison though in his mind he was to be executed the next morning. He cast his cares upon the Lord knowing that the Lord cares for him and he left it with the Lord and went to sleep. and He declares, "I will not be afraid of 10,000's of people who set themselves against me all around." Why? Because he trusts in the Lord, not in a fatalistic kind of way, but in a "I know the Lord has my back and until He's finished with me I won't be moved" kind of way.

Again this is why we can never seek to lead our lives by the affirmation of the crowd. There was a time when the people were singing David's praises, "Hey Saul has slain his thousands, but David has slain his 10,000's" now he has 10's of thousands of these people gathering against him who in earlier yrs were singing praises about him.

Notice it wasn't that God delivered him from his trial at this time, but David had peace simply because he knew God was with him in the midst of his trial, God would sustain him and see him through. Often times the Lord's peace doesn't come to us by delivering us out of the trial but rather by undergirding and strengthening us through the trial.

Vs7-8

Of course we see here a picture of the power of God on behalf of His own. David recalls to mind the times in the past that God has been there for him to be a reassurance to himself that God is going to continue to be there for him in the present. "You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone, You have broken the teeth of the ungodly." "You've saved me out of every dilemma in the past, I'm trusting You to continue to do so in the present. You've never given me a reason to doubt the fact that You're there for me so I'm trusting You in my crisis presently."

We serve a God who gives us victory through our Lord JESUS CHRIST So whatever our trouble; or our trial may be the bible is quick to reassure us, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Rom 8:37 “Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah”

Ps 4

Ps 4 to the Chief Musician. WITH stringed instruments. A Psalm of David. and Here in Ch 4 David makes another passionate plea to the Lord. Perhaps the reason why there seems at times to be a lack of power in our prayer lives is that there’s at times a real lack of passion in our prayer lives. and It’s not that God wants this emotional display before He can respond but that He desires that our hearts care deeply for the things that He cares deeply about. Isaiah wrote in the 64th Ch of the book of Isaiah and said, “...there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;” Isa 64:7 and Here in Ps Ch 4 we find David “stirring himself up” to take hold of the Lord.

Vs1

Again he recounts God’s past faithfulness for his present time of need, “You’ve relieved me in the past, now hear my prayer in the present.” It’s so healthy for us to remember God’s faithfulness, it helps us set that proper perspective of knowing God is there for us, and that He won’t leave us nor forsake us in our hour of need.

and We note that David refers to God as His righteousness, he didn’t have the misunderstanding that his righteousness was about what he did, or perhaps what he didn’t do, his righteousness wasn’t of the law, it was of the Lord. Paul told the Corinthians, “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--” 1 Cor 1:30 In another place Paul said, “I don’t set aside the grace of God because if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” Or for nothing, if I could be made righteous apart from Christ then the death of Christ was pointless, so David is very clear about the fact that God is his source or his supply, God is his righteousness.

Vs2

Obviously some similar type situations happening with David here as with in the 3rd Ps as well. People speaking ill of him, speaking lies and slander about him, seeking to destroy his integrity. and Again unfortunately these are things that have a tendency to happen to godly people, it happened to Jesus, it happened to Paul. We have an enemy and if he can take your integrity he can render you dead in the water. Because no one will trust you, or give ear to you, this was happening to David. But David realized that God was greater than his trial, His ability to vindicate is greater than anyone else’s ability to teardown.

Vs3

Translation: “God’s got my back.” God has your back, He’s set you apart for a purpose, He’s not going to turn a deaf ear to you.

As long as you're seeking Him, abiding in Him, walking with Him and trusting Him He's going to hear you when you call out to Him. He didn't bring you this far to abandon you now.

Vs4-5

David had been the victim of a great injustice, he had a reason to be angry. But he didn't have a reason to sin. Vs 4 reminds us that not all anger is sinful, there is a "holy anger" against sin, against evil that ought to burn in the heart of every believer. But 2 wrongs don't make a "right." In other words fighting fire with fire isn't a biblical notion, sinning against someone else because I've been sinned against isn't in anyway justifiable. So though there are times that anger may be even biblical it's important to safeguard that line that slips into sin. David says here that he finds solace in meditating upon his bed in the night. Just focusing on the Lord, thinking about and focusing on His word, praising Him, praying to Him.

He says, "Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and put your trust in the Lord." That's where it's at, not avenging yourself, but allowing the Lord to take care of you, to take care of me. Just be apart of serving the Lord, and trust in Him.

Vs6-7

Or to put this a way we could relate, "God You've put more gladness in My heart than if I were to get a massive raise, strike oil or win the lottery. People want to know who will show them any good, Lord I'm looking to You to lift up Your countenance upon us, to demonstrate Your goodness to us." and The idea is that the joy God gives us is greater than anything that any material thing might do for us.

Vs8

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. and So David winds up at that same resolve of peace having prayed, having turned to, and trusted in the Lord. He could've tossed and turned all night worried about what people thought, wondering what people were saying, but he put His trust in the Lord and received the peace of the Lord.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You that You're eager to dispense Your peace into the otherwise turbulent and tossed about ocean of our heart. Teach us to truly turn our troubles over to You and receive Your rest. We thank You that You are our shield, our glory, and the One who lifts our head when we're just down and out. We thank You that as we call to You we can trust that You'll hear us, and You'll strengthen and sustain us in our time of need, and in that we give You praise.