

Triumph through Trials

Text: Psalm 3:1-8

Introduction:

1. The Occasion: This Psalm was written during a deep trial in David's life when he fled for his life from Absalom his son. 2 Samuel 15:12 *"And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for **the people increased continually with Absalom.**"* Note the word 'increased' and compare with Verse 1.
2. Brief Summary of events:
 - Absalom was bitter towards David over how he handled the situation with Amnon and his sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13).
 - Absalom murders Amnon and then flees. It is 5 years before he is restored to David (2 Sam. 13-14).
 - Absalom subverts the heart of the nation behind David's back and prepares to steal the throne and destroy David (2 Samuel 15).
 - David flees Jerusalem for his life. In the midst of this searing trial, David composes this Psalm.

I. David's Problem (Vs. 1-2)

A. David was Distressed (Vs. 1a)

1. David was facing the multiplication of enemies. Notice the exclamation point in with the first sentence. These are the exclamation points of the Christian life. The times of peak strain and stress when we feel at our wits end.
2. 'troubled' = literally "a narrow, tight place". Refers to one who is afflicted and in anguish. The sense is of one who is being hemmed and crowded in. It is similar to the N.T. word 'tribulation' (e.g. Rom. 5:3) which comes from the root word to press (as in the pressing of grapes), to press hard upon.
3. What do you do when you are in a difficult place like this? You take it to the Lord in prayer. David was pouring out his heart to God about his situation. He "cried unto the LORD" with his voice (Vs. 4).
 - a. Psalm 62:8 *"Trust in him at all times; ye people, **pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.**"*
 - b. Psalm 142:2 *"**I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.**"*
 - c. Phil. 4:6-7 *"Be careful for nothing; but in **every thing** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. **And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**"*
 - d. Song 2:3 – There is comfort and shade in "his shadow".

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B. David was Opposed (Vs. 1b)

1. Note the word '**many**'. Many are the enemies of godly leaders like David. Many are the enemies of the godly believer.
2. David is facing an intense period of opposition in his walk with God at this time. What makes this trial so much harder is the fact that the opposition is coming from those closest to him (e.g. his own son Absalom & Ahithophel his counsellor).

C. David was Mocked (Vs. 2)

1. It was not just David's physical life that was under attack, but also his faith.
2. The word 'help' means deliverance. In essence they were saying, "God is finished with you David, he has abandoned you!"
3. Illustration: Satan, the accuser of the brethren is never far away in your trial to whisper such things (Rev. 12:10).

II. David's Perspective (Vs. 3-6)

David's heart and mind turn from the "wind and the waves" that surround him to the hope and solace he has in his God. Notice the word '**but**'. His faith was attacked but he now expresses his faith with great confidence! God was David's hope in 5 areas:

A. God was his Protection (Vs. 3a)

1. 'shield' = a defensive weapon
2. Psalm 91:1-2 "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my **refuge and my fortress**: my God; in him will I trust."
3. Psalm 27:1 "A Psalm of David. The LORD is **my light and my salvation**; whom shall I fear? the LORD is **the strength of my life**; of whom shall I be afraid?"

B. God was his Comfort (Vs. 3b)

1. 'glory' = This word is commonly used to describe God as the most important person in existence. (Ross) God was the object of David's delight. (Wigram)
2. "lifter up of mine head" = Comfort given to one who is dejected and discouraged. 2 Samuel 15:30 – David 'wept', had his head 'covered' and was 'barefoot'.
3. Illustration: The king of Babylon "lifted up the head" of Jehoiachin king of Judah (Jer. 52:31).
4. The Holy Spirit ministers comfort to us in trials as our Comforter (Jn. 14).

C. God was his Help (Vs. 4)

1. "I cried...he heard" – observed the blessed sequence.
2. God heard David's prayer.
3. God answered David's prayer

D. God was his Rest (Vs. 5)

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1. David rested – significant considering the threat to his life. David knew God was in control. He trusted in Him.
2. David woke – God enabled David to face the next day.
3. David was strengthened – “the LORD sustained me.” The word ‘sustained’ means to be upheld; it means to take hold of (with the hands), to bear up. The word is often used in the Book of Leviticus to describe the priests putting/laying their hands upon a sacrifice (e.g. Lev. 1:4; 3:2; 3:13; 4:4). In Psalms it often describes being upheld. Psalm 145:14 “The LORD **upholdeth** all that fall, and raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down.”
4. “The praise would have been given spontaneously as he awoke and realized that God had answered his prayer for deliverance by sustaining him through the night. God was truly his shield; but he still was faced with adversaries, and so prayed that God would utterly destroy them. In other words, the immediate deliverance became a sign of the complete deliverance desired.” (Ross. Pg. 224)

E. God was his Security (Vs. 6)

III. David's Plea (Vs. 7-8)

A. A prayer for help (7a)

1. ‘arise’ = the same root word as ‘rise’ in Vs. 1.
2. Picture: David's enemies were rising up so David pleads with God to rise up and intervene.

B. A prayer of faith (Vs. 7b-8)

1. David anticipates victory (7b)
 - a. Note the past tense. “The psalmist is so confident of the outcome that he writes it as if it had happened already.” (Ross)
 - b. Illustration: The conquests of the Israelites. God often told them that he had ‘delivered’ the land into their hands. They then had to go and fight for it but God had already guaranteed the outcome!
2. David knows the character of God (Vs. 8)
 - a. God is the source of deliverance (8a)
 - i. ‘salvation’ = deliverance
 - ii. Same root word as ‘help’ in Verse 2.
 - iii. God would provide the very thing his enemies said He would not.
 - b. God's favour & blessing is upon His people (8b)

Conclusion: Are you going through a trial? Look to the Lord in faith. He will sustain and keep you.