

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adults Sunday School

PSALM 3 – A PSALM IN PERILOUS TIMES!

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the first psalm with a title. What title? It is written right at the top before verse 1. “A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.” Many have missed out the titles found on the psalms. Not every psalm has a title. And each psalm that has it, it must be taken as part of the psalm because they are also the inspired words of God.

From the title, we know that psalm 3 is written by David. The occasion was also made known: **when he fled from Absalom his son**. It was one of the most difficult and challenging times for David who was already the king of Israel. The reason why he has to flee from Absalom was because the throne was usurped and his life was in danger. His own son wanted to take his life so that he can become the next king. The whole account of events can be found in 2 Samuel 15-18. But it was in this psalm we see what is going on inside the heart of David.

Knowing the context of the psalm does help us in appreciating this psalm written by David. Indeed it is a psalm in perilous times. Its purpose is to encourage, comfort and strengthen believers not to give up easily but to learn to trust in God step by step, moment by moment, all the way to the end.

II. TROUBLE-MAKERS KEEP COMING

Verse 1, “LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many *are* they that rise up against me.”

It is bad enough to have one trouble-maker to make your life miserable. To have many of such people going against you is indeed a nightmare that you wish will come to an end immediately. And worse still, this trouble-maker is his very son, Absalom whom he knew and loved. Absalom seemed to have succeeded in winning the heart of the people and gaining control over those with power and authority. In the end, David had to flee for his life. What irony! Imagine the son seeks to take his father's life.

Verse 2, “Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is no help for him in God. Selah.*”

Those who said this are those who walk by sight and not by faith. When they saw that you are surrounded with all the trouble-makers and the troubles they brought with them, is evidence itself that God has abandoned you. Is this true? Do not be deceived. No doubt this is what they wanted you to think and believe so that you will be so disgusted with God that you will not want to follow Him anymore. Since there is no help for him in God, better protect himself and accept what the world has offered. But whatever the offer is, believers must never succumb to it, since it will be a trap to cause you to forsake your faith and end up as an unbeliever or false believer.

The word “selah” means to pause. This is commonly found in poetry literature, especially when there is music accompaniment. The reason for pausing can also be for reflection purposes. Should you read it out during responsive reading? There is no hard and fast rule for that. Since it is also part of the inspired writings, it is good to read it aloud. We do not wish the scenario to happen when the congregation does not know whether to read selah or not, that in the end, some read and some don't.

Are you be discouraged when trouble-makers keep coming against you? You will be easily discouraged when you do not have a good knowledge of God. This leads us to the next point. It is important for us to have a knowledge of God. However this knowledge is obtained not through the creation but from God's holy Word when we learnt of how God deals with His people.

III. HAVING A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Verse 3, “But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.”

The conjunction “but” shows to us the contrasting situation that you and I ought to realize we are really in. We can be easily discouraged when we are deceived by what men say. But we will not when we truly trust and believe who God is and what He will do to us. To David, he has a certain knowledge of God which was likely taught to him by his own father Jesse, or some spiritual teachers like the prophets or priests in his time. And with this precious knowledge of God, he experienced Him in his life for who He really is. The followings are what David has known God for who He is.

A. God is a shield

A shield is a strong and hard cover to protect and defend against the shooting arrows, swords or spears of the enemies. David, as the king of Israel, by now he should have learnt the fighting skills of a military soldier. And perhaps also by several years of experience since he has fought many wars and was victorious. David knew exactly what a shield can do for him. And now he is using that to describe God as a shield to protect and defend him. What humility!

B. God is his glory

David did not count himself, enjoying the honour and glory as the number one man in the land, having great power and authority as a king. He could have easily counted the number of battles he won and be proud about it. Or how many nations have submitted to Israel all because of him? No, but he counts God to be His glory, not the many wars he won or enemies he had captured. In other words, he is proud of God. God alone is enough for him. He needs no other but God alone.

C. God is the lifter of his head

David acknowledges God as the One who put David to the throne. He is also the One who gives David the power and authority and ability over the enemies. Without God, David could have done nothing. Again, David being a man after God's own heart, indeed experienced God for who He is in his life. And it is to this God who is a shield, glory and lifter of his head, that he is going to pour out his soul unto Him because of the troubles that he was facing. No one is able to help him except God. As such, he cried out to Him.

Verse 4, “I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.”

Imagine a king cried in his helplessness. No king will do that unless he is prepared to humble himself before the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. There is no king like David, who loves God so much and had an intimate relationship with Him. Even before David became king, as a shepherd boy, he was already drawing close to God. A strong relationship starts early. One is never too young to hear the gospel and to know the One living and true God.

David presented himself before God as one who is completely broken. He knew he can rely on God to hear his troubles. There is confidence in this God who will not turn His children away when they need Him. And David's confidence in the midst of trouble is that God heard his cry. He knew his cry was not made in vain. God bothers to hear him and is interested in him. This is the same God whom we believe today. We can also cry to Him and He wants us to know that He will also hear us as He did to David.

IV. EXPERIENCING THE PEACE OF GOD

What's next after the cry? The psalmist began to experience the peace of God within him. This is not a psychological method which the world employed that one must empty out his entire emotion or anguish, and then when the soul reached the point of emptiness, that is peace.

God's peace is far from what the world is offering. Peace is when the trouble is still there, and yet the soul is completely at rest. There is no sign of worry or fret. There is no anxiety that caused one to keep walking up and down. There is peace in the heart as if everything has come to a standstill. Let us study the manner in which it revealed that the psalmist is experiencing the peace of God.

Verse 5, “I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.”

The psalmist is lying down and going to sleep in the midst of trouble! Did he make himself drunk? Did he consume any drug or sleeping pills so that he will be 'forced' to sleep? He did none of these things and yet he was able to lie down and sleep in the night. And then he woke up the next morning. How can it be possible, especially when his life is in danger?

Without the second part of the verse, we might think the psalmist is able to use his own will power to make himself tired out and sleep as a result. No, it is the Lord who has sustained him. The word “sustain” means to uphold or secure. When there is security, there is peace. God's security gives the best protection. No wonder the psalmist was able to lie down and sleep peacefully. And each time he woke up, he was able to thank God and testified that He has sustained him.

Verse 6, “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.”

The peace of God not only gives us a good sleep but also takes away the fear of men from us. What can men do to us? The most they torture us and take away our life. But they can never harm our soul for it is rest assured in the hands of the Almighty God. In terms of numbers, we may be the minority. However, when we stand with God, we are always the majority.

We need not have to fear men anymore, for the God whom we believe, is far more powerful than all men combined together. Apostle Paul wrote, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). With God sustaining David, he could withstand against any foe.

V. TRUSTING GOD

Verse 7, “Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.”

David's mind was both on what he trusted God to do (save me, O my God) and on what God had done (Thou hast smitten all mine enemies; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly). Knowing what God had done gives David the confidence in what God would do.

Moses used to use this phrase “Arise, O LORD” as the children of Israel broke camp in the wilderness (see Numbers 10:35). It was a military phrase. It calls on God to go forth to both defend Israel and leads them to victory.

“Breaking the teeth of the ungodly” is a vivid metaphor that speaks of the total domination and defeat of the enemy. It is more than protection that David was looking for, it was victory. And only God can give him that. It is not enough for David to survive the threat, even from his own son. He had to be victorious over the threat, and only God can bless him.

Verse 8, “Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.”

What David meant in this verse was God is the source of life. This salvation speaks of that which is spiritual rather than physical. God is the One who gives life. What is salvation? We will not appreciate the meaning of salvation if sin is not mentioned. In fact, it is more than just obtaining a new life in Christ. Salvation speaks of a saved man or a forgiven man being delivered from all his sins. Salvation is the greatest blessing that God gives to men and it was due to the grace, mercy and love of God towards them.

David never forgets the people whom God loves. This shows his heart is filled with God's love that goes all out in order to love His people. David desires God's blessings to come upon His people. He desires nothing but good for them. This would include those who rebel against him. The rebellious group that was led by Absalom were actually their brothers, the Jews. Yet David calls for God's blessing upon His people and that would include those who go against him.

VI. CONCLUSION

Psalm 3 is a psalm in perilous times. We want to experience the peace of God. It is never an easy thing to go through perilous moments. We do not know how long it will take and last. We do not even know whether we will be delivered or not. And yet, as God's children, we can experience the peace of God that passeth all understanding that will guard our heart and mind through Christ Jesus (see Philippians 4:7).

Trouble-makers will keep coming, but do not give up easily. We help ourselves by looking up to God and trusting in Him to empower us to overcome whatever difficulties we faced. He may not take away our problems but He promises us to empower us to go through successfully. Will you do it? May God help us. Amen.