

A PILLOW FOR OUR SOULS  
Psalm 3

Intro: The first Psalm contrasts the way of the ungodly with the way of the righteous. The second Psalm shows the opposition of the kings of the earth to the Lord and His Anointed One, Christ. The third Psalm shows not only that the people of God have troubles, but that they have multiplied troubles.

Some feel that all three Psalms speak of Christ--and undoubtedly they do. (Explain.)

This is the first psalm where we come across the word, "Selah." It is found 73 times in the Psalms, and only elsewhere in the prophecy of Habbakuk (3:3, 9, 13). It seems to have been a musical marking, probably for a pause, or rest, indicating the end of a stanza. Its use would be to indicate an emphasis, too.

Thus in Psalm 3 where "selah" is used three times, we have three main divisions: Vv. 1, 2; 3, 4; 5-8.

The superscription gives the historical background of the Psalm.

Remember that this was after David's sin with Bathsheba, and after David had had Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, killed in battle. He could easily have felt that these circumstances were a part of God's judgment, which they were, and that there was no point in looking to the Lord for help. We often feel that way about our sins: we have sinned against the Lord; there is no need to look to Him for help! Perhaps this Psalm will help us in that regard.

Sometimes this Psalm is referred to as a morning Psalm. Note that that seems to be the emphasis in v. 5. Contrast it with Psalm 4, verse 8, which seems to be an evening Psalm.

As a morning Psalm, vv. 1-4 would have had to do with the night before; vv. 5-8 with the morning after. Let us look at the Psalm in that way:

I. THE NIGHT BEFORE (Psalm 3:1-4).

The use of "Selah" gives us two stanzas here.

A. David's trials (vv. 1, 2).

There were really two that bothered him.

1. Not only the trials, but the number of them (v. 1).

Do you remember the circumstances? It seemed like

the whole nation had turned against him. Absalom was the leader; Ahithophel was with Absalom. The situation could hardly have been worse.

But, if anything, the second trial to which he referred was worse than the first:

2. "Many" (again) were saying that God would not help him (v. 2).

So often we are impressed by how many people are doing something, or how many of them are saying a certain thing, instead of whether or not it is true.

Truly David's life was in danger; his soul was in great distress.

But what did David do? He turned to the Lord. This is usually one of the major reasons for our trials--to remind us of our need for the Lord, and to get us to cry unto Him for help.

- B. David and the Lord (vv. 3, 4).

Pause before you get to this to note carefully the content of vv. 1, 2.

The two verses constitute a prayer--with two parts.

1. What David told the Lord about Himself (v. 3). There are three things here.
  - a. The Lord was his shield, or better, buckler. The Lord was his defense from all side--front and behind; above and below. So David was safe.
  - b. The Lord was his glory.
 

He had been stripped of his throne. He had been run out of Jerusalem. His glory as king was in shambles. BUT THE GREATEST GLORY OF HIS LIFE WAS THE LORD, AND NEITHER ABSALOM NOR ANYONE ELSE COULD TAKE THE LORD FROM HIM.
  - c. The Lord was the lifter up of his head.

Sibbes, quoted by Spurgeon, said that the body partakes with the soul in matters of grief, but also in matters of joy. David's time with the Lord had a good effect physically upon him.

2. David's first petition (v. 4).

We are not told what he said at this time, but we are told that he was assured that the Lord had heard him. David had been chased from his holy hill, but the Lord was still on His. There seems to be the recognition of God's authority and sovereignty, and David's submission to God and His will. Cf. 1 John 5:14, 15.

Spurgeon did not like to hear people say that God is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, because, he said, that if God hears, He answers.

Now let us look at the second part of the Psalm.

## II. THE NIGHT AND THE MORNING AFTER (Psalm 3:5-8).

### A. David's peace (vv. 5, 6).

He slept like a baby! And remember that the danger was still there. What an illustration of Phil. 4:6, 7!

And he knew that if matters had been far worse than they were, he still would have had a pillow for his soul.

This shows the sufficiency of God, not just after the trial is over, but while it is at its worst.

### B. David's prayer (v. 7)--his second one.

Perhaps we should call this, David's faith. His hope was in the Lord alone, and, in spite of the way he had failed the Lord, he knew that the Lord would not fail him. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:13. Oh, never let past sins keep you from praying about your present trials!

Finally we have

### C. David's praise (v. 8).

Again it is twofold:

1. Deliverance comes from the Lord, if it is to come at all.
2. God's purpose is always to bring blessing, and He is always on the side of His people. "Selah"-- pause, and think about that!

Concl: What lessons are we to learn from this?

Let me mention three:

- 1) David's experience is meant to encourage us.

- 2) In present trials, never forget past deliverances. David was reminiscing in v. 7.
- 3) Remember that the schemings of men can never nullify God's purposes. "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Cor. 13:8). Remember also the wise words of Gamaliel in Acts 5:38, 39:

And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men,  
and let them alone:  
for if this counsel or this work be of men,  
it will come to nought:  
But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it;  
lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

David was the winner; Absalom and Ahithophel were the losers. They learned to late that you cannot fight against God and be a winner.