

**Psalm 3: 1-8; “The Lifter of My Head”, A Devotional for the Mid-Week Zoom
Fellowship & Prayer Meeting of our church on May 20th, 2020,
By Pastor Paul Rendall.**

Sometimes, I think that we think that David was a man for whom everything went smoothly at all times. We have memorized some of his words of faith such as “surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”, and we think – Boy, David had such a rich experience of the Lord blessing him, and helping him at every point. I sure would like to have a life like his was; everything always going so smoothly for him. But, was this really true concerning David, that everything always went smoothly for him? Well, no, not exactly. I want you to see that it most certainly was true that David did have a rich experience of the Lord blessing him, at many points. But sometimes that blessing would come to him in the midst of troubling circumstances. This evening I want to bring to you this thought; that your knowing experientially, God’s rich blessings and help to you, can, and it will, come to you day by day because He is faithful to be a shield around you. He is your glory and the One who lifts your head.

1st of all – I want you to see that God will shield your soul from people who trouble you.

David says – “Lord, how they have increased who trouble me!” “Many are they who rise up against me.” “Many are they who say of me, ‘there is no help for him in God.’” “Selah.” “But You, O Lord, are a shield for me...or, as it says in the margin – You are a shield around me....” Now, you will notice that it says in the inspired heading of this Psalm that David penned it when he fled from Absalom his son. That was the occasion. His own son, who should have loved him and sympathized with him in his trials, found occasion to take advantage of him in those trials. In his pride, he wanted to take away the kingdom from his father. He wanted to have all the people follow him instead of his father. He had actually gone so far as to win many of the hearts of the principle men who had before supported David, to cause them to think that he could do a much better job of becoming king than David could.

This is what David means we he says – How they have increased who trouble me! Sometimes people looking on at you think that they can trouble you and take sides against you, because they believe that God will not help you. They can say wicked things about you, and they think that they can do wicked things to you because they believe that there is no help for you in God. We should also remember that this trouble came upon David, the Lord permitting it, even ordaining it, because of his sin with Bathsheba. When he confessed that sin before the Lord, Nathan the prophet did say to him – The Lord has forgiven your sin. But he also said – The sword will not depart from your house forever. That was part of the disciplinary consequences that came to David because of his sin, from God.

His own son would turn against him! Many people, looking at David, rose up against him, he says in verse 2, because they thought that there was no help for him in God! How could David have any confidence that God would be his shield for him in these circumstances? You would think that all that he could expect was judgment. Well, David had confidence because He knew the Lord, and he knew the rich blessing of being justified by faith in Christ. He had no way that he could boast in himself, but he had every reason to boast in God. God is so faithful to His people. He will be a shield to them in their weakest, their most vulnerable moments; even in their most guilt-ridden moments. Turn with me over to Romans chapter 4, verse 1.

The apostle Paul says here – ““What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?” “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.” “For what does the Scripture say?” “Abraham believed God, and it

was accounted to him for righteousness.” “Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.” “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.’” You see, Paul is saying that if salvation is by your works, then you would have something to boast about before God. If salvation were by your works, God would owe it to you as a debt to you. You have worked hard at being spiritually-minded. You have worked hard at keeping His commandments, and now He owes you eternal life, you think.

But if you see yourself this way, you really don’t understand how much sin has affected you in your inmost being. You may know yourself to be a sinner, but you don’t see yourself as God sees you; so weak in doing righteousness perfectly, and so needing His help and grace. Have you come to the place where you says – “But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts my head? Sometimes even Christians have a superficial view of their own remaining corruption. But both Abraham and David will reprove you and say to you; “No, this cannot be; that you can be saved by just trying to be a pretty good person; because God justifies “the ungodly” by faith. He justifies those who do not work, but trust in God for what He will do for them, and how He will help them.

Some will say to me then, “Well, how about that!” “I can sin, and even practice sin, and if I trust in God, He will save me. No, I do not want you to think that way. If you think that way you have not understood. And if you live that way, you will end up in hell. Listen to what it says in Proverbs 17: 15. “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.” The verses that I just read to you in Romans 4 are not saying that God justifies the wicked. They are saying that God justifies the ungodly. There is a difference. God justifies the person who up until the time that they believe, they did not really know Him as He is; the holy and righteous Judge of all men. The wicked person is the person who willfully and deliberately practices sin and lawlessness. They despise all of God’s offers of mercy in the gospel, which would result in his salvation. The wicked man, when God calls to him in the gospel, will not repent.

God does not justify the wicked. And further, we must understand the truth that Christ did not come to call the righteous; that is, those who are self-righteous. He came to call sinners; the ungodly, to repentance, and to learn the way of the Lord. This does not mean that God cannot change a wicked person and make them willing to repent and trust in Him for His great salvation. God can save the vilest of sinners who truly believe. It simply means that when God saves any person, whatever their background, He does so by His sovereign, omnipotent, merciful grace. He forgives all their sins and He imputes to them the righteousness of Christ. And this righteous covers them as a spiritual robe, when they believe the gospel. Their lawless deeds are forgiven, and their sins are all covered in the blood of Christ. And that covering is spiritually there upon them all through their life.

So, people may trouble you, if you are a true Christian. Many may rise up against you thinking that there is no help for you in God. This is what they actually might be saying to each other. But you know by faith, that God is a shield for you. He is your glory and the One who lifts your head. That is, there is every good and excellent thing in Him; to give to you and to teach and lead you by His Spirit. He will give you the wisdom that you need. He will give you the calmness of heart that you need, when people around you think that there is no help for you that is going to come to you from Him. It just isn’t so, and God will prove it to you and He will prove it to them. He is the One who will lift your head. You are ashamed of yourself; ashamed of sins that you have committed, even as a Christian. But He will take away your reproach; the dread of what people around you might say about you. They may be correct about your sin, but their

conclusion about God in relation to you will not be. For He is faithful through Christ to forgive you, cleanse you, and help you to stand in the middle of all unrighteous oppositions against you. **2nd – God will shield you by sustaining your soul during times when you could be tempted to be afraid.**

Verse 4 says – “I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill.” “I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me” “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.” “Arise O Lord; save me, O my God!” “For you have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.” “Salvation belongs to the Lord.” “Your blessing is upon Your people.” I want you to take notice of the fact that when you pray, when you cry to the Lord with your voice, that the Lord will hear you and answer you favorably. You will say to me – Well, God answered David favorably, but how can I know that He will answer me favorably? Well, The apostle John says in 1st 3: 21 – “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.” “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” The real issue is whether you are sincerely trying to please God.

Verse 5 show us that we ought to pray, committing all that concerns us to the Lord, and then lie down and sleep. Rest in the arms of Jesus. Sometimes we just need to stop fretting and worrying about things which are outside of our control, and remember the One who is in perfect control with regard to all the issues that concern you. Remember, it does not do any good to fret. As it says in Psalm 37, verses 7 and 8 – “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.” “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret – it only causes harm.” You know, David could have become a very angry man with all of the wicked people around him scheming against him. He could have become very fretful and frustrated and even angry. But he says here, that you should not do it. It will only cause harm.

Why is that? Because fretfulness is just the opposite of trust and committing your way to the Lord. David committed his way to the Lord and lay down and slept. And he said that when he awoke and knew that the Lord was sustaining him. Sustaining him in what way? He was sustaining him by delivering him from his fears; giving him moral, spiritual, and physical courage not to be afraid. “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.” If he had to face all of those people, he knew that he could. But the reason that he could was because he knew that once he had committed the matter to God in prayer, that the Lord would help him to deal with his enemies, whether through his own efforts, or through other fighting men who were with him.

We ought to have this same kind of attitude; that our God is stronger than all of our enemies, and greater than all who oppose us, even when they are gathered together against us. David says that God had in the past struck all of his enemies on the cheekbone, and broken the teeth of the ungodly. He describes his enemies as wild beasts who had these sharp teeth which could really hurt him, by which they could bite and tear at him. He was asking God to do what He had done for him in the past; disarm them, knock their teeth out, and remove them so that they could not hurt him again. He knew that deliverances were from the Lord. Salvation belongs to the Lord. And so, you and I ought to see it that way. Our God is the One who watches over us continually, and His blessing is and will be upon His people. Let us rejoice that it is, and that it will be so.