

Psalms 18-04-26

Now I'll say that it's Thursday, the 26th of April 2018, and we continue our study in the Book of Psalms. We're in Psalm 3, and I'm really looking forward to looking at this psalm with you this evening. It's really just a rip snorter.

Of course, as with quartet music, I tend to like whichever one I'm listening to at the time, but this really is an exceptional encouragement to us through the eyes and the heart of God's man, David. Let's take a moment as we approach our fellowship in the Word to go to the Lord in prayer and ask His blessing and recognize the importance of God's Holy Spirit in the delivery and in the receiving and in the remembering and in the applying. Pretty much everything having to do with the Word of God requires God's Holy Spirit, and there's no better time to remember that than as we begin.

Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is to address You as our Father, to know that we are secure in the Lord Jesus Christ, that we have been planted on a firm foundation. We have such great potential, so many wonderful provisions and resources available to us, and we thank You for the Lord Jesus and for His work on our behalf, not only in coming to this earth and living as we do and being sustained by Your Spirit and guided by Your Word, but also in His return to glory as He sits at Your right hand and represents us and intercedes on our behalf and is a constant reminder that the day is soon coming when He will rise from that seat and return to call us home, to meet Him in the air, and to ever be with Him, and if we qualify, to be even in Your very presence. We thank You for that wonderful hope and the sustaining grace that moves us daily toward it, and we pray that as we look at this portion of Your Word tonight that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart, overcome the limitations of the presentation, and take the ineffable and all-powerful truth from Your throne and make it real and living in our hearts and in our lives.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, let's first of all take a look at this psalm, the text of it.

It's always a good idea to read the psalm. I'm going to present it in the King James, slightly modified. This is not quite the New King James, but it's close.

Psalm 3, it has the superscription or the subtitle, a psalm of David when he fled from Av Shalom, his son. And there's a bit of a, not quite an irony, but certainly a significance, not only in giving us the circumstance in which David finds himself when he composes this psalm, but also the son who rose up in rebellion against him, his name Av Shalom. Av is the Hebrew from which Aramaic has the related word Abba, which means father.

And so there is a, let me do something right quick here. There is a double significance when he is talking about his son Absalom, because his name means father of peace, Av Shalom. And the idea of peace and of one's father is very much in view when you have this situation where there

is anything but peace.

There is rebellion. There is the complete breach of relationship. And of course, it is a reminder that we have a similar situation that can occur if we are out of sorts with our own heavenly father and wind up on opposite sides from him.

We have the privilege of calling God our father and to take that lightly or to actually be the opposite of that, to be estranged and to be separated is a terrible thing. So that's the superscription of Psalm 3, where we find David actually in something of an ironic situation. The son that he named for peace with the father is just the opposite.

So that's the superscription of Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom, his son. Lord, how they are increased that trouble me. Many are they that rise up against me.

Many there are who say of my soul, there is no help for him in God. Selah. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, my glory and the lifter up of mine head.

I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. I lay me 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 roundabout. Arise, O Lord, save me.

Oh my God, for thou has smitten all my enemies upon the cheekbone. Thou has broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs unto the Lord.

Thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah. Well, this breaks naturally into three sections.

You have the introduction in verses one and two. You have the center in verses three through six. And then you have the aftermath of the closing section in verses seven and eight.

The theme in the introduction is the problem. The center section is David's processing of that problem. And the conclusion centers on God's salvation.

It begins and ends. Lord, save me. Salvation belongs to the Lord and the blessing of God on his people.

But it's a fascinating song. This is, as we begin now to look at the text itself, when it says a psalm of David. Of course, this is not the Greek word psalm or psalmos, psalmoi.

This is the Hebrew word mizmor. We talked about this in the introduction to the book a couple of weeks ago. And the root verb from which this noun comes, you remember, you can put an M in front of a verb and make it a noun in Hebrew.

It's such an easy thing. I wish we all spoke Hebrew. It'd be a lot easier than English.

I could have probably finished my degree in two years instead of four if I was a Hebrew major

instead of English. Even Greek would have been better than English, I think. Both of them are much more organized languages.

But mizmor comes from the verb zamar. And this is going to help us understand some things that I think have been difficult to parse, because zamar means to pluck. Now, if this is a song and it is a plucking song, what would that suggest to you, knowing David and his biography? One of the first things we find out about David after he's anointed by Samuel and goes down and wins the great victory in the valley against Goliath is that he is a musician.

And remember King Saul, when he is going through his manic depression, calls and David comes and plays the harp for him. So we know that David is an accomplished instrumentalist. He's playing for the king.

This is like going and playing at the White House or Buckingham Palace. This is no small thing. There's many, many tens of thousands of people in Israel, and David is the one called upon to go and play for the king.

So he is no, as they used to say, no slouch of a musician. He's good on the instrument. And the instrument is what is in view here.

So this set of lyrics probably is designed to be and was originally part of a musical accompaniment specifically on the harp. It's not a trumpet song. It's not pipes or timbrels or any of the rest of the instruments in Israel.

This is what we would call a stringed instrument accompanied song. We have a lot of wonderful stringed instruments, your violin family, cellos and violas and the basses that are all basically on the same pattern. We have guitars, lutes, zithers, even pianos.

And so stringed instruments go back to probably before the flood. But this is designed to be accompanied with strings and hold that thought. Because we talked about that sometimes the superscriptions are not really held in quite as much esteem as the text of the psalm.

But I think there's good reason to believe that this is every bit as important as the rest of the song for reasons that will become evident. But this is the first mizmor that we have in the five books of songs, the five volume set of psalms. There are a total of 57 that are designated this way.

And so you figure that roughly a little over a third of the psalms are designed to be rendered with this stringed accompaniment, if we're understanding that correctly. Now, in addition to it being a mizmor or a stringed accompanied song, it says that it is on the occasion of fleeing from Absalom, his son, father of peace, his son. And there are numerous points of contact with that story, which is found in 2 Samuel, beginning in chapter 15 and extending through chapter 17, his flight from Jerusalem and Shimei, dust and rocks and curses and all of that.

But the fact that there are numerous opponents, which are mentioned here in the psalm, can

be found in 2 Samuel 15, 13. There was a huge popular uprising that Absalom led. He had subverted people at the gate, as you remember, and had basically gotten a hashtag and started something trending among the population.

And everybody jumped on that bandwagon and it gained a momentum of its own. And people who normally might not have thought of rebelling against David were sucked into this charisma that Absalom possessed. So 2 Samuel 15, 13, numerous opponents.

The notion that God is against David, there's no hope of divine aid that he mentions in the psalm, that's Shimei, 2 Samuel 16, verse 8, uh, raining down imprecations and saying, God's not going to help because he has done something bad. Um, David addresses this psalm as we saw when we read it. Uh, he says that God hears him from his holy hill.

How can David say that? You remember that he had the option of taking the ark of the covenant with him when he left Jerusalem, but he did not. And he had the priests take it to Zion and ensconce it there. And so when he says, God has heard me from his holy hill, that's where the ark is.

That's where the symbol of God's presence actually is. That's 2 Samuel 15, 25. Um, and in that same verse, 15, 25, David, uh, states his faith that this whole issue is in God's hands.

And this reflects the body of the psalm, the central idea of the psalm that, uh, God is committing this whole issue to God and recognizes that salvation is of the Lord and isn't going to come from any other place. Now, I think it's interesting and I, this is not original to me. I have a really good commentary on the psalms, very technical and very deep.

Don't buy it, but I like it for my own purposes. I got it years and years ago and I dug it out of the archives. Uh, it's by a man named Leopold L E U P O L D. And, uh, I disagree with him about 60% of the time.

And that's why I like to read it. But he did have a good thought about this psalm. And he points out that this is a morning psalm and not morning with a U morning as in early part of the day, it's a morning psalm.

And this pairs well with psalm four, which is going to be an evening psalm. And, uh, we'll see that as we go through. Um, and he suggests that this was probably composed in light of the superscription, not the first night after David left Jerusalem, because when you read a second Samuel 17, there, that first night is all involved in trying to get everybody across the Jordan.

Who's going to go, who's going to stay, uh, you know, go back and be my eyes and all of that. But that's the first night is a very busy one. And then in the second day, of course, he's, he's getting some distance between himself and perhaps a pursuing force.

And so Leopold suggests that this was composed after the second night. And you know how it is when, uh, something catastrophic takes place. A lot of times we're a little bit numb at first.

We don't fully process, we don't digest what has happened and all of its, its implications and ramifications, and it doesn't really sink in. Well, David has had two days and a night and then a second night. And I think Leopold's suggestion is probably on the Mark.

When you look at the content of this psalm as we're about to do that, this was probably composed on the second morning. When, when the full force of the situation has really begun to strike David. So with that in mind, um, let's take a look at the text here, beginning in verses one and two.

And this gives us the situation. There are people who are opposed to David and this is what they have done. He says, Lord, how they have increased who trouble me.

Now he's been King for some years and he's always had problems. You know, there, there's no situation that doesn't have its, its downs as well as its ups. And so there have been those who troubled him, but in this particular circumstance, it seems that they have suddenly multiplied.

Um, you know, some of us have experience with ants. It's one thing when you see one or two, something else, when you come down some morning and there are swarms and hordes, you can have a few ladybugs, but I remember last summer we, we had a locust swarm of, of what looked like ladybugs. I think we came to find out that they weren't actually, they were something that looks like them, but they're orange, but they're everywhere.

I'm still finding their little corpses and we cleared them out by the tens of thousands. They carpeted the outside walls. They got in through small cracks and got into the house.

They were all over the ceiling, both here and our house up the hill. And, uh, so you can have a thing that seems manageable and then suddenly it just multiplies and is a completely out of control circumstance. So how they have increased to trouble me, it's past a certain threshold and now there's, you know, too many second line says, and you know, are they are is in italics because what he literally says here is many, they who rise up against me.

So they trouble him. And that, that's one thing to cause trouble, but to rise up against this is an advanced, this is a more serious problem. And, uh, if you're one who, who marks or emphasizes things, I would circle where it says, rise up.

They who rise up against me. This is in my view, a little bit of a, a rye sense of humor on David's part, because this is a morning Psalm and we'll see the evidence as we go through. But when he has just arisen in the morning and he's thinking, it's not just, they rise up like they're taking up arms and standing on their feet.

This morning when he woke up, all of these swarms of foes woke up to many are they who have awakened and they're going to spend their day opposing me, pursuing me, trying to get rid of him. So it's, you can see this as sort of a tongue in cheek, you know, I just woke up and all of my troubles just woke up with me. And this put me in mind because, uh, I am married to a terrific, wonderful morning person.

And I am not people that get up, you know, with the dawn and are cheerful. Uh, and, and this is often an occasion for hope. There's been a lot of poems written, you know, you can look and find all kinds of examples.

Uh, the sun is up. The sky is blue. Today is beautiful.

And so are you, uh, you know, uh, morning brings hope a day, however, good or bad has gone by. Now it is the time to look at the bright blue sky, et cetera. I mean, there's just endless amounts of optimistic morning, bright, cheery, you know, it's a new day.

It's full of potential. And, uh, this is not the case for David. And you know what this is like if you've suffered, uh, or are in the midst of a real problem, or, or if you're under a lot of pressure, I can remember my favorite time of the day when I was a plebe, but the Naval Academy was at lights out because I thought, you know, right now I can't do anything and I can't be anywhere else, but in the rack in bed and nobody's requiring anything of me.

I've got a chance to get some rest here. And my most dismal part of the day was when I woke up and realized that I had, you know, 16 to 18 hours of challenge and stress and probable failure in my future. And waking up in the morning, you know, you open your eyes and then your situation and everything you face hits you.

And sometimes when you're in a challenging circumstance, morning is a big part of the challenge. You just think, Oh, can't I just go back to sleep and maybe I'll wake up and it'll be gone, but it isn't. And so as a morning song, this is particularly valuable to us because David wakes up and realizes that all of his troubles have waked up with him.

And now he's going to deal. He's going to cope. He's going to push back with what he's got in his soul.

And it's a wonderful example for us. Many are they who rise up against me, many, they who say of me. And if you have of me in your translation there, this is literally my nephesh, my soul.

Many are they who say of my soul, and it strikes a little closer to home. They're not just saying me in my bodily circumstances. They're saying you in your essential identity and being.

And then literally in Hebrew, it says nothing of help for him in God. So there's two groups. Now there's the opposing team on the field that woke up ready to do battle.

And then there's the people in the stands and the bleachers saying, well, he's going to lose. So of the, of the available factions, I'm sure he's got, you know, friends and confidants and loyal supporters, but he's got this, this swarm of multiplied foes. And then he's got people who are standing around saying, shaking their head and just saying, well, you know, that's it for him.

He's, he's done and giving all of the, all of the reasons why. And you can imagine how daunting this kind of thinking and awareness is just as you're trying to start your day and thinking, well,

you know, I used to wake up in the palace. I had servants, I had peace.

I had the blessing of God. I, you know, the prophet available to give me God's guidance and the army at my behest and hosts of people around me. And now here I am all on the run, how the mighty have fallen, you know, this looks bad.

And you notice that in these first four lines, the word many is repeated three times. And part of the challenge is not just that there are foes and that there are naysayers, but it's just the volume of it. It's blots out the sun almost literally there may be a rising sun, but the black storm cloud of trouble just seems to blacken all prospect.

Many, many, and many. David's situation is looked upon as being beyond hope and beyond help. Well, even God can't help him.

And what is doubly negative about this is David could potentially agree. They will bring some arguments. You know, his earlier sins have come home to roost.

If you remember in second Samuel 16.8, after the sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, there is a curse pronounced. Trouble is not going to leave the household of David. He mismanages the Amnon affair.

He mismanages Absalom. And now those chickens, I'm real sensitive to chicken aphorisms these days, but now the chickens have come home to roost. I think about hen-pecked.

I think about a lot of those. But they could say, well, see, this is just the judgment of God. God's not going to help him because this is God's judgment.

And David can look back and say, I did. I had a cataclysmically bad set of choices. I failed.

I erred. This is God against me and so on. And yet, that's not the tone of this psalm, is it? David doesn't say, well, this is me getting my just desserts for disobeying the Lord and not living as a man after his own heart and so forth.

But this is what all the naysayers are saying. Well, that's what happens when you disobey. Shimei is going to be up there telling him that the whole Saulide dynasty should have still been on the throne, and this is nothing more than what David deserves.

And the idea could easily creep into David's thinking, well, maybe my old failures are catching up with me. And this is so easy for us to do. And as Scripture says, we forget that we have been cleansed of our old sins.

And when we confess our sins and he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, separates our sins as far as the East is from the West, they are put away and remembered no more. If we're suddenly getting warning discipline or some sort of judgment, it's going to be for something current, not for something in the past. And if anything in the past does have consequences that come back and create a situation such as this, it is

suffering for testing, suffering for blessing, not suffering for judgment.

God does not always undo the fruit of our past failures, but what he will do when we are doing what we're supposed to is turn that potential cursing into blessing. And we need not sit there and go back and beat ourselves up and dig up old bones and worry over them and say, well, you know, oh, poor miserable me. And, you know, this is no more than I deserve.

Nonsense. David doesn't do that. He wakes up in the morning with, you know, he's ready to take up arms or let the Lord take up arms against a sea of troubles that he sees all about him.

But he's not beating himself up for his past failures. And you think about the Lord Jesus, what were they saying while he was on the cross? And they quote Psalm 22.8 when they do it. He trusts in God.

Let God deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, I am the Son of God. That's Psalm 22.8. And you don't see the full quote over in Matthew, chapter 27, verse 43, where the Pharisees and scribes and the elders are standing around mocking Jesus, saying, well, you know, why doesn't God deliver him if he's everything he said he was? But Psalm 22.8 says, let God deliver him now if he wants him.

He trusts in God. He said, I am the Son of God. And this is our connection back to Psalm 2. Remember we talked about how often the Psalms string together.

My brother Matthew pointed out last time that one of the links between Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 is that word that's translated to mutter or to sort of make unintelligible noises. And that's the man who meditates in the law of the Lord, who mutters and speaks it over to himself. That's the same verb that's used at the beginning of Psalm 2 when it says that these people are rising up against the Lord and against his anointed.

They're speaking these things under their breath, these vain things, and they're grumbling and mumbling under their breath, which I think will literally be true in the millennial kingdom. Why does God keep Satan under wraps in the bottomless pit for a thousand years and then release him? Because all of these people who are rejecters have been forced externally by the rod of iron to submit and to obey and to comply, but they're grumbling under their breath the whole time. Let's break these cords.

Let's cast these bonds asunder. And who's sitting on the throne of the world for those thousand years? The throne of Israel and subjugating the world, it's the sons of David. And when Satan is released, they're going to say, finally, it's going to be the same sort of reaction as when Darwin wrote The Origin of Species and all the I can justify not believing in God.

Look, there's a mechanical explanation for how life got here. And they were just pining and straining. Bertrand Russell and everybody since was just thrilled that they could dispense with God because they just chafed under it, but they had no alternative.

They could propose some other God that created life, but when they had this pseudo-mechanistic explanation, they felt freed from the cords and bonds, and they've been doing it ever since. So the attitude here of there is no help for him in God is very similar to that of Psalm 2, 1, and 2. Rejection of God and rejection of anybody who is identified with God. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great British Baptist pastor from the last half of the 19th century, said this about it, that first two verses, 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.

Isn't that a great picture? I'm going to read it again. 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.

If we feel that God is in judgment mode, and there is no recourse, and we listen to this voice, whether external or internal, saying, well, God's not going to help, you brought this on yourself. That's all the crosses in the earth, all the temptations in hell, and all of the trials from heaven mixed and pressed together. And thankfully, it is not so.

Then we have our famous little musical notation, Sila. I think I have finally figured this out. I worked on this when I was in seminary in Tulsa.

I worked on it again when I went through the Psalms twice in seminary in Dallas, and I read everything everybody's ever proposed. None of it ever convinced me. I have now convinced myself, and it's probably because I'm not as smart as I used to be, and I can't think of as many objections, but I now am going to tell you that for my own satisfaction, I have cracked what Sila means.

And I have my roommate, Ken Russell, to thank for largely having the insight to figure this out. But you remember, this is a mizmor. What does mizmor mean? Pluck the instrument.

So David is accompanying himself on the harp as he gives out with these first four lines. Then it says Sila. Sila comes from Sala, a verb which means, oddly enough, to rise up.

Remember I had you circle, rise up, many are they which rise up against me. My foes rise up against me. Well, Sila means to arise.

And what I have decided in my great musical wisdom here is, as with so much music in the past and in the present, you begin this song, you're singing, there is chord structure and perhaps a melody that is supported by the instrument. Then you stop singing and you have an instrumental break. The background, which has been quiet to allow you to hear the vocalist, rises up.

If you ever watch Jerry Reid playing solos, he's playing along, doing accompaniment, usually

Chet or somebody is over there playing. And then when it's time for Jerry to solo, in later years, he had a fancy guitar with a little sliding gain. And when it's time for him to be featured, he slides that button up to the top and you can really hear it.

Then he slides it back down when it's time to blend. So the accompaniment is blending and supporting the words. And then at the point that David wants us to stop and think about what he just said, he stopped singing and the harp rises up to fill in and continue the melody.

And there is an expression in the music of the mood, the emotion that has been communicated in those words. So this is my suggestion. This is my theory for what it's worth, is when you see Sila, this is where the words quit.

And a lot of other suggestions are harmonious with this, if I can make a slight pun there, but because people have said it's time to stop and reflect. And that's what this musical interlude would do. You're thinking back.

He might be repeating the tune that he's saying those words to, and you're remembering the words. But it is a time to reflect and to be impressed by what has just been said. And I think the musical notation here is, this is a harp solo.

So you reflect here on that first section. And the idea of rising up again is a little bit of an echo because the word used for rise up at the beginning of the Psalm, many are they that trouble me, many are they who rise up against me. This was a different word.

This was the word for to stand up and it's from Qum. And it's the same word used in Isaiah 40, verse eight, the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Well, it means to stand up.

The word of our God will stand like a monument. It will stand upright. It will be visible at eye level or above forever.

So it's Qum, Q-U-M. And so those who are standing or standing up is more the idea than the Salah idea in Selah. There is no help for him in God.

Let's reflect on that. And I would imagine that so much Jewish music today is set in a minor key. If you've heard any of that, it's very beautiful, but it's got a mournful tone.

And I suspect this goes all the way back to the earliest days. And this would certainly be something in a minor cast. So then you come to verse three, but had the whole depressing prospect and outlook, waking up in the morning and seeing manifold, multiplied troubles and people saying, God's not going to help you.

But then in verse three, but thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. And you just think about in the big idea here, if you step back and look at the big trees in this group, here's trouble on one side. And David turns from looking at all of these who have

multiplied and have stood up against him and all of the naysayers who are saying, there is no hope.

Then he says, but you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head. And this is three nouns that David applies to God. All three of them are nouns.

The first one is shield. And interestingly, have you ever heard of a wine called a Mogan David wine? Anybody that lived in California, that was one of the first, you know, non-French wines to kind of make it big, a Gallo and Mogan David and that. But Magane is the word for shield and Magane David is shield of David.

That's what that brand name derives from. It's not the wine of David, it's shield of David. Magane.

So, but you, oh Lord, and this is the Tetragrammaton, this is God's personal covenant name, Yahweh, but you, Yahweh, Magane, B'Adi. And this is for me. And so he is a shield for me, David says.

He doesn't say my shield, he could have said Magane, but he says you're a shield unto me. The preposition by there means usually in, by, or with, and it can also mean unto, kind of like ace with a view toward, or related to, or on behalf of. You are a shield for me.

Now he does use the possessive of kavod, my glory, kavodai, and the merim roshi, the lifter up. This is umarim, and it's, it is a plural, but of course, Elohim is plural. So he is the, this is a plural of majesty, so to speak, you know, we are not amused and that sort of thing.

The lifter up of my head, a shield, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. Now, this reminds me of all of the calls to Israel where God says return to me. You don't call to unbelievers and say return to God, because they've never been with God, right? Or any call to return can't be to unbelievers.

Return means you were there and you left, right? So how about lifting up your head? Now, if your head's already up, you can't lift it. So where is David's head, both literally and metaphorically? This weight of trouble is bowing down his head. He's bowing his head in prayer, and it is as though God reaches and lifts his head back up.

David says, you are a shield for me. However many of these are, God will keep them at a distance. That's what a shield does.

A shield stops a threat before it can harm you. My glory is at the center, and it isn't that David is glorious because of God, but that is where David looks and what he glories in. Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, which exercise righteousness, judgment, loving kindness.

You remember that? So David is going to glory remembering that God is not the one pushing

foes at him. God is a shield that is going to stop the foes. What did the previous verse say? What are people alleging? No help for God, no help for David in God.

David says, but you, oh Lord, are my help. You are my shield. And this is a confidence David has.

Now, how can he claim this when he's had so many past failures? Well, we've often resorted to Psalm 51 as a Psalm of penitence, against thee and the only have I sinned, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. You can put with that Psalm 32. This is another penitential Psalm.

You have the repentance and cleansing that we know from 1 John 1.9 and 1.7. And because of that, we can, like David, have confidence. So he says, I cried to the Lord with my voice. I cried to the Lord with my voice.

And I've mentioned Psalm 55.17, evening and morning and at noon while I pray and cry aloud, and he will hear my voice. Here he says, I cried aloud. And I've mentioned before, but I'll give you a few additional passages.

The Bible is pretty outspoken about this, shall we say. Daniel chapter six, verse 10, when all the other competing rulers got the king to sign a document and got Daniel in trouble for praying when they had made this edict. Daniel knew the document was signed.

He entered his house in his roof chamber. He had windows that opened toward Jerusalem. And he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

Now they are able to bring an indictment because Daniel isn't just in his window striking a noble pose. They can hear what he's saying. They are able to indict, convict, and get him sentenced to the den of lions because he's praying out loud.

That's Daniel 6.10. David has a lot to say about this. Psalm 5, verse 3, in the morning, O Lord, you will hear my voice. That's just two Psalms hints.

In the morning, you will hear my voice. In the morning, I will order my prayer to you and then eagerly watch. So when you first wake up and this sea of troubles comes flooding in, what is the response? Go to the Lord in prayer.

And the Bible suggests vocal prayer. Talk so that your voice is heard. David knows nothing of silent prayer.

He says, I cried out to the Lord and he heard me. I lift up my voice. In the morning, I will order my prayer to you and eagerly watch.

Psalm 77, verse 1. If you want emphasis on this, Psalm 77 begins, I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. In my day of trouble, I sought the Lord. My hands were lifted up all night long.

I refused to be comforted. But in the morning, he orders his prayer in that direction. Psalm 88.13, but I, O Lord, have cried out to you for help.

And in the morning, my prayer comes before you. So he wrestles with these things through the night, but when he gets up in the morning and has to face the day, sends a prayer up to God, commits it to God and moves out. Psalm 142, verse 1. I cry aloud to the Lord.

I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. Modern day, we've kind of gotten away from this, but as I said before, we wouldn't have John chapter 17 if Jesus had not prayed out loud so that John could hear it and write it down for us. And David apparently is not bashful about speaking out because he says, he heard me from his holy hill.

And David is across the Jordan and miles away by now. But when he cries out, he knows that God hears his voice from his holy hill. And he knows God's there because that's where he sent the ark.

These naysayers say that God will not be his help, that God's not going to reply, that this may even be from God. And you think about who the naysayers would allege is ruling on the hill. Who do they think the king is on the hill? Avshalom, who is the king on the hill? It's God himself.

So they may be looking to Absalom. David's looking a little bit higher up the hill and God hears him from his holy hill. So even though David's been driven off the hill and out into the wilderness, he knows that God is still there and God is still above even Absalom.

Well, quickly now, David says, I lay down and slept. I awoke, for the Lord sustained me. And of course, we have our memory verse Psalm 4.8, I will both lay me down in peace and sleep for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Sleep is a blessing, even under this pressure. And as the reality of it slips in to his consciousness, he lays down and sleeps. And you can see the difference between the nervous and sleepless Peter on the night that Jesus was arrested versus when he is in chains in the dungeon and the angel has to come and kick him in the side to wake him up, even though he's going to be executed the next day.

This confidence in God is the foundation for peace. You find this also in Proverbs 3 verses 21 through 26. Proverbs 3, 21 through 26.

My son, let God's wisdom not depart from your eyes. Keep sound wisdom and discretion. They shall be life unto your soul and grace to your neck.

Then you will walk in your way safely and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid. Yea, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.

Don't be afraid of sudden fear or of the desolation of the wicked when it comes for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being taken. So, even Solomon got this

message probably from his father David in Proverbs 3, 21 through 26. So, David answers the challenge with God as his salvation.

He lays down and sleeps, he awakes, for the Lord sustained me. Sustained him in sleep and sustained him in rising. And of course, there's a larger view here where David even now and the Old Testament saints sleep in the dust of the earth in the confidence that God is going to awaken them.

You remember in Daniel chapter 12, the day is coming when many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake. Jesus said the same thing. They'll hear the voice of the Son of Man and they will rise.

And based on that hope, David says, I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people. I woke up this morning and I had ten times as many enemies as I had last night when I went to sleep. But you know what? I don't care how they multiply who have set themselves against me all around.

There is a dimensionality to David's view here. God is up on his holy hill. David is on the ground surrounded by these many enemies.

But how does he conclude here? It's kind of like Romans 8, 31. If God be for us, who can be against us? And David says, here I am. I'm not on the hill anymore.

I'm not in the palace. I'm not at Zion, but God is. And I am surrounded by ten thousand foes.

But what does he say in verse 7? Arise, O Lord. And there's a symmetry here. Who was rising at the beginning of the song? Many are they who rise up against me.

David says, well, if they're rising, God can rise higher. It's kind of like Paul, you know, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Well, where foes abound, God will much more abound.

He is a shield around David when he's in the valley. And God is going to rise above this situation. God is listening from his holy hill to David's prayer.

And David says, arise, O Lord. Deliver me, O my God. For you have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone.

Now, if Leopold is right and David is still out in the wilderness, this current batch of enemies have not been struck anywhere yet. So what is David thinking of? How many past victories? How many past deliverances? How many times has God been David's salvation prior to this day? And God's past deliverance. You have struck all my previous enemies on the cheekbone.

I saw one translation that says you've slapped all my enemies in the face, but this is more than a slap because this blow breaks the teeth of the ungodly. And this arise, O Lord. If you look at Numbers chapter 10, verse 35, David here is virtually quoting Moses.

Whenever they would set out in the wilderness and the priest would get the Ark of the Covenant on its poles and with its covers and move out, Moses would say, rise up, Lord. May your enemies be scattered. May your foes flee before you.

Every time God's Ark moved Moses, this was his move out prayer. And he would say, rise up, Lord. May your enemies be scattered.

May your foes flee before you. And this also sort of alludes back to the Lord and his anointed in Psalm 2. So when David sees all these enemies encompassing him about and he says, arise, O Lord. Well, he's thinking.

He's thinking back because where is the Ark? It's on God's holy hill. What did Moses say when the Ark would move out? Rise up, O Lord. And so David makes that call and says, rise, O Lord.

And you have struck my enemies on the cheekbone. And remember, combat in those days wasn't typically hand-to-hand. This is not a slugging match.

This is not a well-delivered boxing blow. When you struck somebody like Joab struck Abner or when they struck one another in battle, it was either with slings and stones like Goliath went down or with a sword or a spear. And if you get struck in the cheekbone with a big heavy sword and it smashes the teeth, what is it they are no longer going to be saying? There is no help for him in God.

It's pretty hard to talk when all your teeth are broken. I can't remember now. There's some line where a guy says it's going to be pretty hard for him to say that with his jaw wired shut.

And David imagines that not only is there going to be deliverance for his circumstance and his foes are going to be disabled, you can't fight when your face is smashed. But it also silences their blasphemous claims. So, arise, O Lord.

You have struck my enemies on the cheekbone. You have smashed their teeth. And there's a great parallel where the other place where this phrase is used is over in Psalm 58, verse 6. It's a very vivid picture of smashed teeth.

And he talks about smashing the teeth of the young lions, the very same figure. And this is total defeat. This is complete elimination of the effectiveness and the talking and roaring of the enemy.

And this is not just protection. This is not just a shield keeping them at arm's length. This is basically destruction.

They're not coming back. So, then he summarizes. And you notice that there's not any specific allusion to Absalom in the Psalm itself because David is applying principle.

And this Psalm is useful to the people of Israel in any similar circumstance. You wake up in the morning and you realize that you're surrounded by a sea of troubles and you're tempted to be

discouraged. And people are trying to discourage you or saying discouraging things.

This is the remedy. This is the thought process. But you, O Lord, are my shield, my glory, the one who lifts up my head.

You have delivered me in the past. You're going to deliver me this time. So, he concludes salvation belongs to the Lord and it is only in him and only from him.

And the only deliverance worth having isn't gotten by compromise. It isn't gotten by submission. It is from God.

And then finally, your blessing is upon your people. And of course, David expects God's blessing because David views himself as God's people, God's person. But he has raised our view a little bit to see that this is true for all of God's people.

David basically says, as you hear me singing this song and as you sing this song along with me, just remember, if you're God's people, you can do what I've done. You can face calamity as I have done. You can rely on the Lord because salvation belongs to him and he will bless all of his people.

Remember Psalm 100, make a joyful noise to the Lord. All you land, serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the Lord, he is God. It's he that made us and not we ourselves. We're his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise. Be thankful and bless his name because the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting and his truth endures to all generations.

We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. We are his people. We can lay claim to his salvation.

We can expect the fulfillment of these promises. We know that it's not because of our sins and past failures. We know that whatever the reason is for the calamities we face, and they're never more discouraging than when you wake up in the morning and, oh yeah, I remember now, bad times.

I'm not in the prosperity I once enjoyed. I'm not in the great circumstance I once enjoyed. This is the drill.

This is how we meet it. This is how we end up on a note of uplift and rejoice. Troubles may rise up.

God's going to rise up higher and he's going to lift us up. We will mount up with wings as eagles and it is all due to the grace of God, his faithfulness and his grace on those of us who belong to him. So it's a wonderful uplifting psalm.

This is the morning psalm. Next time we're going to look at the evening psalm, Psalm 4. But this is a wonderful rotating carousel of perspective. We had Psalm 1, tending to one's personal spiritual priorities and being planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth our fruit in our season.

We saw the relationship with God and viewing his promises and the close personal relationship we have with him in Psalm 2. Here, how that is leveraged into current circumstances, current problems, and we're going to see a similar perspective shift when we get to Psalm 4 next time. But let's close here for tonight in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the wonderful truth of your word, how powerfully it encourages us.

The example of David so vividly reminds us that whatever our checkered past may be, however we may have failed in days gone by, if we are living as your people, if we are trusting in you, even when the days are dark and our troubles are multiplied against us, you are our salvation, you are our glory, you're our shield, you are the one who lifts our head up. And when our head is lifted, we can see those things that pertain to you, the things that are elevated above whatever plane or whatever valley we may currently be traveling through. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will remind us of these things as we endeavor to live our lives in a way that pleases you and brings glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we pray it in his name. Amen.