

Place: Lurgan Baptist 23:10:2005

Reading: Psalm 3:1-8

WHEN YOUR WORLD FALLS APART

This psalm that we have read this morning is unique in the fact that it is the first time that the word “*Psalm*,” occurs. The Hebrew word is “*Mizmor*,” which means a poem that is to be sung to musical accompaniment. This is the first Psalm that David is recorded as having written, and I believe that it is a Psalm for today, *because it speaks to us where many of us really do live day in and day out*. All of us live with a certain amount of tension and sometimes it get to us. Tense and tension have the idea of being stretched taut. Pulled. *Like a rubber band ready to snap*. Doctors tell us that prolonged tension can lead to insomnia, high blood pressure, hyper-tension, heart disease and so on. Now there are many strategies for coping with the pressures of life. Our bookshops are filled with books that teach us relaxation techniques. They tell to get us more exercise, especially walking, to simplify our lives, and so on.

Many of us feel like the little boy who was asked by his Mummy if he was sleeping. “*Well, Mum*,” replied the youngster, “*my body is lying down but my mind keeps sitting up*.” Now is there any help for us in the circumstances of life when we feel that everything is

caving in upon us ? When our world is falling apart ? Well, I think that Psalm 3 provides the answer ! *The background of this psalm is bad news*. Have you ever experienced a day or maybe a week or even a month or perhaps a year when bad news was good news because the next news was always worse news ? I heard of a Doctor who called a patient one time and said, “*John I’ve some bad news and some worse news*.” The man said, “*what is the bad news ?*” He said, “*You only have twenty fours to live ?*” The man said, “*Well, what is the worse news ?*” He said, “*I tried to call you yesterday*.” These were dark days in the life of King David. Not only had his son, Absalom rebelled against him, but he had taken the kingdom away from him, and was now pursuing him, trying to kill him.

The walls of David’s life were crumbling around him. The nation as a whole had been deceived into following Absalom and had turned against David. David had gone from being a king to a criminal on the run. He was even being ridiculed as a coward by people along the way. One morning when the armies of Absalom were closing in on him, and when it appeared that all was lost, the Lord gave David this psalm. (2 Sam 17:24) This is a morning psalm (3:5) Psalm 4 was written during the same events and it is an evening psalm. (4:8) Now can you identify with David here ? Are you under stress ? Do you have any problems ? Are you having relational difficulties with your family ? Are you going through a physical illness ? Are you being unjustly criticised ? If any of these things are happening to you or have happened to you stay tuned, if they haven’t they will.

This psalm, then is for you. Will you notice here that David speaks about,

(1) THE FOES THAT BRING US DOWN

Robert Orban said on one occasion, “ *sometimes I get the feeling the whole world is against me, but deep down I know that’s not true, some of the smaller countries are only neutral.*” That’s the way we feel at times don’t we ? The whole world is against us, everything is against us, nothing is going for us ! David must have felt like that for this psalm begin very abruptly, “ *Lord.*” Like Peter sinking into the sea (Matt 14:30) David didn’t have time to go through a long liturgy, for his own life was at stake and so was the future of the kingdom. He cries, “ *Lord how are they increased that trouble me*,” You see, if you are a follower of Christ, if you are determined that God is going to take first place in your life the world is a battlefield for you. War has been declared and you are public enemy number one. Any direction you go in, if you go with God you are going to meet the enemy. A Christian does not have to go looking for trouble. If you are a child of God trouble will come looking for you ! (Ps 119:157) Every day when you rise there are at least 3 enemies that are just waiting for you. I have an enemy around me, an enemy within me, and an enemy beneath me. The Bible calls these enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. And all three of these enemies work 24 hours a day to try and get you away from the Lord and cause you to lose your witness, your testimony, and your character. David speaks here about the foes that

sought to bring him down. He speaks about,

(a) *THEIR INCREASE:*

“ *Lord, how are they increased that trouble me,*” (3:1)
“ *Lord how many have my foes become.*” The word “ *foes,*” in the original mean those who cause him distress by crowding him into a narrow place. David was distressed, he was broken-hearted because of the increase of his enemies ! Do you remember how it all began ? It involved three of David’s children by two of his wives. Amnon was his son by one wife, and the beautiful Tamar and the handsome Absalom were his children by another wife. Amnon developed an infatuation for his half-sister Tamar and he actually raped her. As you might expect Absalom was furious and for two years he plotted revenge. Then he killed Amnon for raping Tamar. As a result he fled the country and lived in exile for two years. Then he returned to Jerusalem with some powerful political ambitions of his own. He began plotting the overthrow of his father’s government. He was handsome as a Hollywood hunk and he was cunning indeed the Bible says that Absalom “ *stole the hearts of the men of Israel.*” (2 Sam 15:6) The government was overthrown, David was running for his life. No wonder he cries, “ *Lord*,” Now David was facing crises here on multiple levels. It was a Family crisis. Is the storm through which you are passing family related ? It was also a Financial crisis. In essence David was evicted from his home and stripped of all his possessions. It was a Physical crisis. I mean the Israeli army were combing the hills of Judea

with instructions to kill him on sight. My is your world falling apart because of a physical crisis ? This was also *a Spiritual crisis* for David, for none of this would have happened but for his own adultery with Bathsheba.

(2 Sam 12:10) My before that adulterous act took place, there were no real problems in David's life, but after that happened it was just one problem after another.

Here is David and the storms are blowing in. “ *Lord how are they increased that trouble me.* ” (a)

(b) THEIR INSURRECTION:

“ *Many are they that rise up against me,* ” (3:1) The Bible says, “ *the conspiracy was strong for the people increased continually with Absalom.* ” (2 Sam 15:12) Absalom was handsome, smooth spoken, and a gifted liar who knew how to please the people and steal their hearts. The army, made up, no doubt, as most armies are, of the vigorous youth of the nation had opted for Absalom. The plot was laid, the revolt had taken place. Doesn't our trials come at times from unexpected sources ? I mean who would have suspected Absalom, this was David's own flesh and blood. Myhas your trial come from an unexpected source ? Is your world falling apart, because of the actions of someone that you loved dearly ? Someone within your own family, business, church ? (a) (b)

(c) INFERENCE:

Look at (3:2) if you will ! Not only were David's enemies increasing, but the news was getting worse. People were saying, “ *the king is beyond help.* ” The word “ *help,* ” in the Hebrew (yeshua) is translated “ *save,* ” in (3:7) and “ *salvation,* ” in (3:8) Do you see what they were saying, “ *David there's no salvation for you now.* ” David, “ *God has forsaken you.* ” David, “ *You're suffering for your sin.* ” “ *David, we thought you used to sing how great is our God ? Where is your great God now ?* ” They were not just mocking David, they were mocking God. They were laughing at David's faith and making fun of David's Father. One day a mother explained to her 5 year old daughter that if she chose to disobey her, she would have to live with the consequences. “ *Oh, Mummy,* ” she said with a terrified look on her face, “ *Don't make me live with the consequences, I want to live right here with you.* ” My we do have to live with the consequences of the choices that we have made. David's sin had far reaching ramifications, but this was a sin of which he had sincerely repented and for which God forgave him, but the enemy was still casting it in his face. “ *David, the Lord has left you.* ” Have you ever been in a spot in your life where it seemed you were stuck in a vicious cycle of trouble ? Trouble that turned into discouragement, that turned into more trouble, that turned into more discouragement ? On and on it goes and in this cycle people say to you, “ *Some God that would let you come down with cancer,* ” “ *Where is your God now ?* ” “ *the Lord must have forsook you.* ” Is that what the devil is whispering in your ear this ? “ *Where is your God ? Why does He allow you to suffer like this ? Why doesn't*

God come to your rescue ? Doesn't He care ? How will you survive ?" Maybe he's been reminding you of some sin you committed years ago, that's now under the blood and they are (1)

(2) THE FATHER THAT LIFTS US UP

By the way, do your trials drive you to God ? Surely one of the purposes of trials is to get us to focus on God ! David made the same error that many of us make when we are in the middle of trials, and troubles and difficulties. *We focus on our foes and focus on our fears and totally forget our Father.* Let me tell you what I have learned. When you focus on your foes and your fears your life will be one day after another of doubt, discouragement, depression, and defeat ! What we need to do is focus on our Father, who gives us,

(a) PROTECTION:

" But Thou O Lord art a shield for me," (3:3) the original conveys more than a shield. It means a protection which surrounds a man entirely. Do you remember the old Star Trek television series ? Sometimes the Starship Enterprise would come under attack by the Klingons, and Captain Kirk would order *" Activate shields."* Mr. Spock would fiddle at the controls and reply *" Shields up."* Somehow electromagnet deflector shields would surround the Enterprise and ward off the deadly attack. The word *" shield,"* is found twenty-two times in the Psalms. My David understood that in the middle of his trials and

troubles that God was a shield around him. Did you know that God surrounds us with His protection and love. The Psalmist says, *" The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."* (34:7) Think about that.

Wherever you go the angel of the Lord pitches His tent right beside you ! If you are in trouble, facing problems, difficulties and mountains you don't think you can climb, the Lord is right there with you. Do you remember when those three godly men were thrown into the fiery furnace ? The Son of God was standing right there with them ! Do you recall that when the disciples were in that boat tossed to and fro in the stormy sea that the Saviour came to them ? When Paul was sitting in a Roman court, with not a friendly face around, the Lord stood with him and strengthened him. In the midst of a crisis do you know any more effective tool than this ? That God is our shield and exceeding great reward ! (a)

(b) PERCEPTION:

Whenever problems and troubles come into our lives, do you know what we tend to do ? We use them as microscopes to focus on ourselves, when we ought to be using them as telescopes to focus on God. John Wesley was walking one day with a Christian friend who was perplexed, and who expressed doubts about the Lord's care of him. He said, *" I don't what I am going to with my worries and troubles."* Wesley noticed an old cow looking over a stone wall and he said to his friend.

“ *Why does that cow look over the wall ?*” His friend retorted, “ *Because it can't see through it.*” Wesley said, “ *Try looking over your trials and upward to God.*” It all depends on our perspective doesn't it ? The rebels had attacked David's person but God was his Shield. They had desired David's crown but God was his Glory. They had sought David's downfall but God was his Uplifter. You see, whenever we are discouraged or depressed what do we tend to do ? We “ *hang our heads.*” These troubles were weighing David down. His shoulders were drooping, his spirits were sagging, his head was hanging. You might be tempted to say, who could blame David under the circumstances. Well, that was the point, *David was not under the circumstances he was over them.* Think about this. You can never focus on God looking down. That is why your outlook is to be determined by your up-look. (Lk 21:28) When David focused on his foes, he forgot his Father, but when he focused on his Father he forgot his foes ! What about your perspective this ? Is the eye of your faith on your Father who gives us (a) (b)

(c) PEACE:

“ *Hey, David how did you sleep last night ?*” Do you see his reply ? “ *I laid down sustained me.*” (3:5) Think of it. David was no longer surrounded by the luxury of his palace, no longer had he the love of his people, no longer did he command the loyalty of his soldiers yet he said, “ *I had the best sleep I've had in years.*” He discovered that true security and true serenity is only found in God. There are some of you

who sleep well at night because you've got savings in the bank, a good job, and great health. But my a stock-market crash can away take your money, the economy can take your job, disease can take away your health, but nobody can take the Lord away from you. I don't care how much you have, how many title deeds your name is on, how great your job is. When you die, you're going to leave every bit of it behind, but the God in heaven says, “ *I will never leave you nor forsake you.*” (1) (2)

(3) THE FAITH WHICH CARRIES US THROUGH

For when we focus on God not only are our fears banished but our faith is strengthened ! I don't know what kind of problems you may be facing, what kind of difficulties you are swimming through, or what kind of kind of mountains you are trying to climb. But I can tell you that if you know God, that if your focus is on God your future is as bright as His promises. You see, David realised that with God there was no way he could lose.

(a) HIS COURAGE WAS BACK:

What he says in (3:6) is really kind of weird, “ *I will not be afraid,*” you would think anyone with common sense would be afraid of ten thousand people surrounding him, all wanting his scalp, but David said, “ *Bring them on ! I am not afraid of anybody no matter how big he is or any people no matter how numerous they are.*” Now how could David say that ? ***Because David understood that God plus one is a majority in***

any situation. Do you know something ? If God is on your side it doesn't matter who is not, but if God is not on your side it doesn't matter who is. We don't need to get on the biggest side, we need to get on God's side, because God's side is the best side whether it is the biggest side or not. Listen to these words of David, " *The Lord liveth and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation. It is God that avengeth me and that bringeth down the people under me. And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies, thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me, thou hast delivered me from the violent man.*" (2 Sam 22:47-49) (a)

(b) HIS CONFIDENCE WAS BACK:

" *Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,*" (3:8) As I have said that is the same word that is used for " *help,*" in (3:2) You could translate it " *victory.*" David finally figured it out. In any situation, victory belongs to the Lord. Now if victory belongs to the Lord, and if as child of God I belong to the Lord, that means that victory belongs to me. My any child of God who is living by the Word of God, and walking in the will of God, and filled with the Spirit of God, and committed to the work of God, can never lose. That is why our confidence should be totally unshaken ! (a) (b)

(c) HIS CONTENTMENT WAS BACK:

For he said, " *Thy blessing is upon Thy people.*" (3:8) David understood that even in the middle of your

deepest, darkest trials God's blessing is always upon you. I don't care how dark the thunder clouds are hanging over your life, they will contain showers of blessing. Do you realise that as a child of God as long as you are living for Him, you are never out from under His blessing ? *And when you get into the middle of a battle God will make you victorious !* Is that not what He did with David ? When Absalom had David in his sight and could have killed him, the Lord causes Absalom to listen to bad advice ! When he finally found his father, David was able to gather strength and was ready for the battle. He defeated his son and Absalom died in the process. My is your world falling apart ? *Are there foes seeking to bring you down ? Stacked against you ? Well, you remember that you have a Father who loves to lift up ? And as you focus on Him, you will have a faith that will carry you through ?*

***" Be not dismayed, what'er betide
God will take care of you
Beneath His wings of love abide
God will take care of you
No matter what may be the test
God will take care of you
Lean weary one upon His breast
God will take care of you."***

