

Booklet ~Series, Stand Firm, Pray Fiercely, Praying in Fear

Message Outline

Praying in Fear, The Story of David

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us.

Psalm 3

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

¹ Lord, how many are my foes!

How many rise up against me!

² Many are saying of me,

"God will not deliver him."

*³ But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.*

*⁴ I call out to the Lord,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.*

*⁵ I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.*

*⁶ I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.*

⁷ Arise, Lord!

Deliver me, my God!

*Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.*

⁸ From the Lord comes deliverance.

May your blessing be on your people.

The D_____ C_____ is set at 1_____

because of C_____ C_____ and N_____ W_____

Fear may P_____ but only God D_____ U_____

Fear P_____

Healthy fear P_____ unhealthy fear C_____

Thomas Aquinas states that F_____ is born out of L_____

G_____ means, W_____ W_____ S_____

The G_____ fear comes from the L_____ of God

God D_____

The F_____ of G_____ drives out fear of M_____

The G_____ I_____ is greater than the dangers O_____

1 John 4:18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

There is N___ F_____ in L_____, but there is L_____ in F_____

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us.

Application

P_____ for P_____

R_____ God's D_____

Soul Food Day 1

Psalm 3

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

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Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
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Morning Prayer

This Psalm is called a morning prayer in some translations. In Jewish Tradition Psalm 3 was prayed in the morning for protection while Psalm 4 was prayed in the evening. In Psalm 3 it says, "I wake up because the Lord sustains me" (v5) while in Psalm 4 it says, "In peace I will lie down and sleep for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety" (v8). Like David, we need daily protection. Unlike David, our enemies are not humans trying to take the throne. The New testament is made clear that our true enemies are not flesh and bone by spiritual forces of evil. In Ephesians 6 it says, "¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." God himself becomes our armour and shield for us through his Son, Jesus.

When God became flesh in the incarnation Jesus, he did not come to destroy the mortal enemies of the Roman Empire. He came to break the jaw of that which causes a human to enslave and murder his own brother: what the Bible calls Sin and Death. These are the enemies. Jesus defeated these enemies not by force, but through loving sacrifice. Colossians 2:15 summarizes the work of Christ: "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." This is why Paul can say in 1 Corinthians 15:55-56, "⁵⁵ Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Praise be to Jesus!

I think David, at least in part, recognized some of this in the final verse of Psalm 3. David says may your blessing be on your people. What is interesting is that David's foes are not another nation at war. At this time, he was actually being overthrown by his own people and even his own son! Yet, he wants God's people, his enemies, to be blessed! What David may be intending is that when the true enemies of God are defeated, only then will his people find true blessing from the Lord. Until that day comes, David prays a blessing and protection on the people of God.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
 2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
 3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
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Soul Food Day 2

Psalm 3

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

*¹ Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!*

*² Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."*

*³ But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.*

*⁴ I call out to the Lord,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.*

*⁵ I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.*

*⁶ I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.*

*⁷ Arise, Lord!
Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.*

*⁸ From the Lord comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.*

Honest Cries

Have you ever felt like punching someone in the face? Honestly? I sure have. In this Psalm, to strike someone on the jaw is painful but it also implies a gross insult – like giving someone the finger. To break the teeth of the wicked inspires an image of a deadly beast with broken useless teeth or someone being left speechless. When these thoughts and feelings come what do you do with it? Tim Keller has observed that there are at least two ways we can deal with our violent emotions. One Christian way is to stuff them down: to will them down as a way to please God. That is why many Christians don't know what to do with these types of verses. They make many of us feel comfortable. One secular way is to completely affirm and vent our emotions without restraint. The Psalms, however, offer us another way. Instead of stuffing or venting our emotions we should be praying them.

This is called Lament: honest crying out to God, in faith, knowing that he will still love us if we truly revealed how we felt and trusting that he is able to transform lament into praise. We should not just stuff our emotions down. That is simply lying to God and telling him that we don't need his help. We certainly do! Also we don't just vent it all out into the void. We vent in the context of a God who will hear our plea in love and correct us in love. Only then are we able to face ourselves and the fears which trap us.

Michael Card is professor who studies laments. Once him and his wife were very hurt by someone Michael knew. His wife decided to deal with the hurt the Christian way: stuffing. Michael to read the Psalms. He would read Psalm 3:7 with vigor against the man who had wronged him. The result was Michael was able to forgive this person faster and more fully than his wife was. When you feel like David pray this Psalm honestly trusting God hears you and will help you.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
 2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
 3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
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Soul Food Day 3

Psalm 3

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

*¹ Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!*

*² Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."*

1 Samuel 15:22-31

²² But Samuel replied:

*"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the Lord?*

*To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*

*²³ For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.*

*Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
he has rejected you as king."*

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. ²⁵ Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord."

²⁶ But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!"

²⁷ As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸ Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. ²⁹ He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind."

³⁰ Saul replied, "I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God." ³¹ So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

The Living Word

The Bible is a book of knowledge but it is also a living word. This means that the Bible not only enriches our minds, but it also penetrates our hearts (see Hebrews 4:12). Sometimes when we focus so much on what the Bible says we sometimes miss what God is trying to say to us right now. That is why sometimes we just need to carve our space, often in silence, to mediate on scripture. That is what we will do today: mediate and rest in scripture. We will be there to guide you. Read the scripture slowly and then sit in still silence for one-minute resting in God. We will give you questions you can ask to God, however, allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart what he wants in this time. Let's pray, *Father God guide as we find you in your word.*

Read Psalm 3

Was there a word or phrase that stood out?

Sit and listen in silence for 1 minute

Read Psalm 3

What fears are you facing in your life now?

Sit and listen in silence for 1 minute

Read Psalm 3

Imagine God as a shield around you. How has he protected you in the past?

Sit and listen in silence for 1 minute

Pray to God

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
 2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
 3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
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Soul Food Day 4

Psalm 3:1-4

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

¹ *Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!*

² *Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."*

³ *But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.*

⁴ *I call out to the Lord,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.*

1 Samuel 15:22-31

²² *But Samuel replied:*

*"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the Lord?*

*To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*

*23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
he has rejected you as king."*

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. 25 Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord."

26 But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!"

27 As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. 28 Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. 29 He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind."

30 Saul replied, "I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God." 31 So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

The Lord is With You

In this Psalm David faces many fear. There is the threat of physical harm to be feared. There is the threat of societal collapse to be feared. Most of all, however, there is the spiritual danger to be feared. David's predecessor, Saul, disobeyed the command of God and God rejected him as King of Israel. 1 Samuel says the Saul was afraid of the men so he gave into their demands instead of God (verse 24). Now all these terrible things were happening to David and some in this company were saying, "God will not deliver him; God has rejected him as King".

God promises us the he will never leave us, but he also encourages us to not be afraid (see Deuteronomy 31:6). God desires us to stand firm and through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, he has given us everything we need to stand firm in fear. God is our shield around us – why should we fear?!

If we are unable to stand firm and are gripped by fear, it may be the case that our glory is not set in God. The word glory means weight, worth or significance. When God is the one from whom we get our worth and significance we will not fear no matter what situation comes our way. If our glory is something else like Saul's regard for the people, then we will fail. The good news is that Jesus Christ came to be our glory. He wants to be our significance and worth because he is worthy. Even if we fail, Jesus offers us forgiveness. However, our mistakes do have consequences. The Lord will always be with you, but he may lead you elsewhere. If God told David not to be King, chances are David would have obeyed. He knew however that this was not God's plan so he stood firm in the face of adversity. The critics were wrong. God had not left David. God was David's shield, glory and guide.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

Soul Food Day 5

Psalm 3:5-8

⁵ I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.
⁶ I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.

⁷ Arise, Lord!
Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸ From the Lord comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.

Luke 12:2-7

26 So do not be afraid of them. For there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the housetops.

28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Fear God Alone

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said something like this: *fear of God drives our fear of man*. Think of the largest threat to your life imaginable: terrorist attack; tornado; nuclear war. God is much greater and more terrifying than these! These things that take away the body, God can destroy the soul. Not matter what danger is out there God is greater.

David grasped this knowledge and he was able to sleep during a siege. Could you imagine taking a peaceful nap during a zombie apocalypse or threat of nuclear war? I don't think so! David could even if there were tens of thousands of men out to get him. He could because he knew God was greater! The Israelites believed that one could only win a battle if God was on their side. God is unstoppable. In a sense the Lord already has the victory which means all enemies past, present, and future are already toast. If this was so than victory now is guaranteed regardless of the odds.

One example is of 2 Kings 6. A prophet named Elisha was on a hit list to be assassinated. When he awoke one morning, there was a complete army around him and his servant. His servant was afraid and asked Elisha what they should do. Elisha replies in verse 16-17 "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." That day God won the victory and he will for you.

The God inside you is stronger and more terrifying than the enemy outside. Fear him, not anything else.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

houseChurch Material

**Have different readers share the verse from 2 or more translations
Reflect between each reading**

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² Many are saying of me,

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*³ But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.*

*⁴ I call out to the Lord,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.*

*⁵ I lie down and sleep;
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⁷ Arise, Lord!

Deliver me, my God!

*Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.*

*⁸ From the Lord comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.*

Application

1. What did you hear during the reading? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?

2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged from the reading?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
4. Share any of the above discoveries with your houseChurch. Ask each other, "What is your nugget?"

Discussion Questions

1. What enemies or fears are you experiencing now?
2. Tim Keller writes: "The Psalms do not say we should be under-aware of our emotions or over-awed by our emotions. We shouldn't be stuffing our emotions or bowing to them. We shouldn't be denying them or venting them. We should be *praying* them. We don't mean by praying them that you put them in nicely manicured and managed little theologically correct confessional prayers, **but you pre-reflectively pour them out into the presence of God and you process them there.**" How does verse 7 make you feel? How can you pray it correctly today?
3. How has God answered your prayers in the past? How will he bring peace to your situation today?

Now talk to Jesus