

# Rise and Deliver Me

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Date: 20 July 2025

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[ 0 : 00 ] Great. If you could try to make sure that you have sight of a Bible, that would be helpful. We're looking together at that psalm that we read at the beginning of the service, Psalm 3.

So do turn that up in the pages of the Bible and have it open. And let's just pray, shall we? Lord, as Andy prayed, we thank you for your word. We thank you that you've not left us in darkness or without guidance.

Lord, we thank you that your word reminds us of your presence with us, that you speak to us day by day. We thank you for the psalms. We thank you for the way that it expresses the heart of Jesus. We thank you that it gives words to us when we have none of our own. Lord, we thank you that it teaches us truth. In the medium of song, it prints that truth on our hearts.

So we pray that this morning, that we would hear the voice of Jesus. And as he speaks truth to our hearts, that that truth would be imprinted there forever to remain.

[ 0 : 59 ] We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. If you've been on the internet at all this week, then you probably know what this photo is about.

So there's a Coldplay tour going on at the moment. If you don't know who Coldplay are, that means you're even less cool than me. So you'd better come and see me afterwards and I'll explain.

So there's a Coldplay tour. And Coldplay do this KissCam thing where they see someone, you know, doing a bit of PDA in the crowd. They pan round and zoom in on them. And this couple were featured on KissCam.

The trouble is that these folks aren't married. And bigger trouble still, they're actually married to other people. So the internet, as you can imagine, has exploded, has gone mad about this, with a million funny memes about this situation.

But of course, if you think about it for a moment, it's deeply sad, isn't it? It reflects what the Bible would call sin and what sin does.

[ 2 : 09 ] Because what you don't see from this still is that moments later, these guys turned away from each other, weren't embracing anymore and hid. It's very much like what Adam and Eve did in the garden, when of course they sinned against God in the first place.

They turned away from each other and they hid. So they know what sin does to them. But also think about what this represents. The sadness, the damage that it has done to relationships, children who are involved.

Would you agree that of all of the kind of relational pain that we can endure, family pain is probably the worst? I think it is. Families where our faith hits the hardest patches, isn't it?

Whether it's because others in the family don't follow Jesus the way that we do as Christians, or because of illness, or because of things done by us or done to us in the past or in the present, or maybe just normal growing pains, but that's where the rubber hits the road, isn't it?

That's where things get hard. I don't think anything's impacted me like living in close relationship with people that are related to me. For good and bad. That situation reveals all my faults and tests my faith.

[ 3 : 34 ] And Jesus said that it would. He says so in the New Testament. He says here is the pattern and the power for a healthy family life. And then adoption besides, which is just amazing, isn't it?

But also, he's honest with us and he says that if you follow me, folks, that will make things complicated. Matthew 10 verse 21, if you're looking for a reference. Here we are in Psalm 3, written by David.

If you know David, you know that his marriages were pretty rocky and his kids were rebellious. And he's supposed to be one of God's best, isn't he?

And this Psalm, Psalm 3, is a song really born out of broken family. The Psalm also speaks of being in a shrinking minority, if you look at verse 1.

He's surrounded by his enemies. That's Christians today, surrounded. Still, aren't we? By the majority who reject God and his appointed king. The one we learned about, Psalm 2, last week.

[ 4 : 40 ] So here is David, the hero who killed Goliath. The singer-songwriter who has probably had the most enduring appeal for people. 2,000 years of it. If he fails, how can we succeed?

Some of you are thinking at this point, hey, this is a bit of an odd thing to be talking about at a dedication service. Isn't it? Well, my answer would be no, it's not. Because at a dedication, just as always, actually, we need to see, don't we, a hope that goes beyond our family's strength and our wisdom.

Because you don't have to look very far in our world to find things that break our family's strength and go beyond our wisdom. And in this psalm, God gives us exactly that hope.

And there are two big signposts here as we walk through this psalm that I want you to look out for.

Okay, two things to look out for. One is the idea of rising up or arising.

And the other is the idea of saving or delivering. Okay? Uprising and deliverance. So let's look first at verses one and two. And we get a situation where there are uprisings and deliverance is being mocked or derided.

[ 5 : 58 ] Here we go. A psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom. Lord, how many are my foes? How many rise up against me? So here's David caught in one of the uprisings that we learned about last week in Psalm 2.

And worse, he's betrayed in that uprising by his own favourite son, Absalom. David loves Absalom. But he refused to correct him when he was growing up.

And now, when Absalom's grown up, he refuses to recognise the one that God has appointed king. Coincidence? I wonder if you ever feel like God has broken his promise to you.

You ever feel like that? I think David must have felt like that here. He must be thinking, David must be thinking, God, you promised me an empire. You only have to look back to Psalm 2 to see that God's appointed king has promised an empire.

You promised me that, God, and now even the little kingdom that I've got is being stolen from me. By my own son. Must feel like a broken promise.

[ 7 : 08 ] Verse 2. Many are saying of me, God will not deliver him. See, now those who are standing around, his enemies surrounding him, pile in.

God isn't with you. He can't save you. And in the middle of the Absalom story, if you read that back in 2 Samuel, David's faith is mocked by a man called Shimei, who kind of gives voice to exactly these thoughts.

Here's what he says. He's playing on all David's worst fears about his faith. You're an imposter. What do you think you're doing following God? He hasn't called you to anything.

And the fact that your own son betrayed you, well, that just demonstrates it. It's karma. Your faith is in vain. If you ever hear the voice that whispers that kind of thoughts to you as a believer, maybe people even have said it to you.

You say this Christianity works. Well, why is your family a mess then? See, there's no such thing as a God who loves us and shows us how to do family.

[ 8 : 16 ] He can't help you. He can't save you. Your faith is useless. You should just face up to reality. That's what you should do. And into that comes the truth of this psalm at the beginning of verse 3.

Just think about what David is doing in his circumstances. The truth is that it is not about us making faith work. It's about whether there is still a God who we can come to, who will hear us, who will help us, even when we've stuffed up our faith, or even when sin has made a mess of all of our efforts.

And David singing to his Lord in Psalm 3 tells us, yes, there is. David is still calling on the Lord. And if you know the story of Absalom, you know that God answers and saves David.

So the truth is, friends, that this is about grace. When we're at the bottom, when it hasn't worked, when we've failed and the repercussions come back on us, there is still a God who hears us, who we can bring our hearts to, who will help us.

So here's the first word of grace. And it won't be over.

[ 9 : 47 ] Blood is thicker than water. Jesus' blood is thickest of all. But secondly, we can draw from this that Jesus knows. Jesus knows what this is like, what David feels like.

Because he was opposed and surrounded, wasn't he? And alone at the end, on the cross. He knows just how lonely we can feel as a Christian at home, at school, at work, wherever it is. He was surrounded, just like the church is surrounded on every side. And these verses are Jesus' prayer. Because he's the high priest who represents us and ministers to us all.

So he prays the words of Psalm 3 for us. When we don't have the words, he knows. As we read further, we find that the king rises again.

What are you looking for protection in this world? As you walk the difficult paths of relationships, family, friends, other relationships, how can you sleep peacefully when the baby's screaming again?

[ 11 : 02 ] Or when they're grown up, but now they're giving you heartache? The answer is, by faith in God as your shield.

Let's look at verse 3. But you, Lord, are a shield around me. My glory, the one who lifts my head high. This isn't the small round shield that David's men would have been carrying.

That's not what the picture is, because it's all around, isn't it? So it's more like this, the Roman shield. Or actually, even better, like this. All around.

That is faith. That is God protecting us. Life makes our head go down sometimes, doesn't it? And especially if you suffer from depression or, you know, suicidal thoughts sometimes. That can rob you of the ability to lift your own head, can't you?

[ 12 : 11 ] But if you're a Christian, then there's somebody else who can do that for you. Look at verse 3 again. You are the one who lifts my head high.

God can do us, do that for us, because he is one with us if we follow him. We are one with the Lord Jesus Christ, which means that God's power is in us. So it means that if we can't lift our head, God can.

God can do that. So if you feel you can't lift your head, pray this psalm. Know that Jesus prays it with you and for you. And David, verse 4, then does exactly what God has enabled him to do by lifting his head.

Exactly what we're asked to do in Psalm 2, verse 6, which is to look up. He looks up to God's holy mountain, verse 4.

I call out to the Lord and he answers me from his holy mountain. Who's there? Chapter 2, verse 6, Psalm 2, verse 6. Who is on the holy mountain? It's the king that God has installed there.

[ 13 : 20 ] That's where he looks. And so he rises again, see, as God lifts his head. He looks at Jesus. Jesus, the king who rose again, who's really in charge.

Verse 5. I lie down and sleep. I wake again because the Lord sustains me. So here's how David can sleep.

It's not because everything's fine. It's not because the baby's quiet. Or because the teenagers sort themselves out. Or because mum has finally accepted reality.

Is it? It's not any of those things. It's because the Lord sustains him. That's how he sleeps.

That's how he knows he will rise again. Verse 5. I wake again because the Lord sustains me. Now, if you know your Bibles really well, then you'll know that throughout the story of Absalom, actually, David never falls asleep.

[ 14 : 23 ] There's lots of other periods in his life where he's in a cave hiding from someone and he goes to sleep. Or he's hiding out in a field or in someone's house. He goes, it doesn't happen in Absalom's story. So whose voice is this then?

This is the voice of Jesus speaking through David. Jesus falls asleep and rises again because the Lord sustains him.

From the days of the very early church, St. Augustine tells us this is talking about Jesus' death. He's falling asleep. And he's rising again. His resurrection.

See, David doesn't die in this rebellion against his kingship. Jesus does. But Jesus can trust God even in the sleep of death that he will rise again.

So this is Jesus singing Psalm 3 as he goes to the cross. I lie down and sleep. I wake again because the Lord sustains me.

[ 15 : 28 ] And that's how David, that's how Jesus can say verse 6. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side. David is looking with the eyes of faith just as Elisha did.

Do you remember? Two kings when his house is surrounded by enemies. And the servant is with him and the servant says, Lord, save me. And Elisha says, those who are with us are more than those who are with them.

So if you can't see the king who rises again, the one who has all power, who surrounds us like a shield, protecting us from our enemies, who feel like they are tens of thousands.

If you can't see that, pray that God would open your eyes so that you will see the king who rises again. Even if we mess up, like David did, we still get to call God our shield.

We still get to be part of rising again. Even if our children turn out to be more interested in their hair than their holiness. That's Absalom in a T, isn't it? Even then, we can still sleep soundly because God sustains.

[16:44] The answer to all of that trouble in verses 1 and 2 is Jesus who rises again. And as we become one with Jesus through faith, the truth about him becomes the truth about us.

He is our shield. He is our glory. He is our sound sleep. We can even lie down in the sleep of death, knowing that he will raise us again.

Because the king rose again. Let's keep going. Verses 7 and 8. Verse 7.

Arise, Lord, deliver me, my God. Strike all my enemies on the jaw. Break the teeth of the wicked. So just like in Psalm 2, actually, we don't see David going out for revenge and retaliation himself, do we?

What we see is David asking God to keep him safe and make sure justice is done. David, who's the king, believes that it is God's job to see that just desserts are handed out.

[17:56] And he asks God, silence the voice of my enemies. That's what it means. Strike all my enemies on the jaw. Break the teeth of the wicked. He's saying, those people, make them be quiet, Lord. And when we ask something like that, when we say, Lord, rise and deliver me like David did, actually, we have a basis in history for believing that he will.

Because we know that God did save David. And we know that God did raise Jesus. So when we ask, Lord, rise and deliver me, we can have faith that he will.

And that rise up, arise, verse 7, then links back to verse 5, doesn't it? I will wake again. What's going on then? We are calling, as we sing this psalm, the risen Lord Jesus to be our protector, our defender, to make sure that justice is done.

Not to give us the strength to hand out judgment ourselves. And when we pray this prayer to God, we do that knowing that Jesus prayed this and that Jesus was answered and that, therefore, we will be answered too.

We look to Jesus on his throne. We pray, Lord, rise and deliver me. We see him rise and we know our prayer will be answered. But there is one final comfort that we have come to receive from the Lord this morning and that is verse 8.

[19:30] From the Lord comes deliverance. Salvation is from the Lord. Salvation is from the Lord. In simple terms. From the Lord.

Not from us. Now we saw, if you look back to verse 5 just now, that we wouldn't even be waking up if the Lord didn't sustain us. Would we?

So neither do we contribute to our salvation. And that doesn't make us puppets. On the contrary, what it does is free us, if you think about it. Because if we can leave our salvation, our rescue, our safety, our security, our getting to heaven eventually, in his hands, then we're really free, aren't we? We were thinking in community groups about the self-sufficiency of God. That he doesn't need anything. That he is completely provided for in himself.

That's good news because it means he can't be manipulated if he doesn't need anything. And he can't be frustrated. Because he doesn't need anything to finish what he starts. And that truth about his identity, who he is, that he is self-sufficient, carries through into his work of salvation.

[20:47] In other words, what he does is an expression of who he is. And if he is self-sufficient, does he need anything from us to save us? No.

Salvation is not conditional on what we do. He calls us, and that's why we come. He rescues us, and that's why we're safe.

Salvation belongs to the Lord. And thank God that it does, because then I'm really safe. Aren't I? And that answers, too, our question of, can God really help me and my family with all of my failures?

And the brokenness and division that we see in this world? And even when I make mistakes in my parents? Yes, because he doesn't need us to make it work before he can help.

He doesn't need us to make faith work before salvation works. Salvation is from the Lord. We need this psalm, because it shows us what the reality of following the king is like.

[ 21 : 53 ] And then the comfort that we need as a result. So together, we can sing, rise and deliver me. And we can do that knowing that he has arisen, and that therefore he will arise.

Here's Christopher Ashe summarizing this psalm. They said God wouldn't rescue King David, but he did. They said God wouldn't rescue Jesus, but he did.

They say God will not rescue Jesus' people, but he will. Let's pray. Lord God, we are all too aware of the uprisings around us.

And that your power to save is not trusted, it is rather mocked. And we thank you so much, Lord, that we see in this psalm, through David's journey of faith, our ability to rise again by your power. Lord, we thank you that we see the risen King Jesus, who is the guarantee, Lord, that you will help us, that you will save us, that you will stay with us.

[ 23 : 13 ] And so, Lord, we pray with David this morning, rise, O Lord, and deliver us. We thank you that salvation is from you.

We thank you that your blessing will be on your people. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Rather than singing or standing straight away to do anything like that, we're going to listen to a song, which is Psalm 3, set to music.

It will give us some space to just reflect and respond to the Lord in our hearts, to what we've heard. Just a couple of minutes. I invite you to bow your heads. Amen.