

When the world is against you

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[0:00] Well, I was going to start my sermon this morning saying, imagine that a king's son, a prince, is against his dad.

And then I realized maybe it's not that hard for us to imagine. Going to say no more. That's the situation we're in as we look at Psalm 3 together.

David is king of God's people, Israel. But the background to this psalm is that his son is against him. And we know that because this psalm has a superscription at the top. A psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom.

And we know the details of that. You could read later today, perhaps from 2 Samuel chapters 15 to 18, which record those events taking place.

[1:04] And reading them alongside this psalm, we're greatly enriching as you do that. But we've not got time to be looking through those chapters this morning.

We're here in Psalm 3. And it is enough for us just to know that's the situation David faces. That situation for David, it comes not long after he sins with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. Not ideal for a king's integrity. Perhaps if this was today, the world around him might cancel him. He's done wrong.

But our God is a God of grace and mercy. And we see his grace and mercy extended to David. Perhaps you could read Psalm 51 as well later.

Just giving you things to do in case you don't have many things to do this afternoon. Which is David's response. Prayer of repentance to the Lord after that situation.

[2:08] But that grace and mercy that he knew shows that the Lord is still committed to him as king of his people.

And so whatever Absalom felt about his dad, it was wrong for him to rise up and try and depose him from the throne. So it shouldn't be a surprise to us though that that happens if we remember what Psalm 2 says.

Psalm 2 began, Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed.

King David was God's anointed king for his people. It's no surprise that others are trying to rise up against the Lord and his anointed king.

And they do that because they feel that the Lord's ways, the Lord's ways of ruling are oppressive to them. Psalm 2 verse 3, we read this last Sunday evening.

[3:21] Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles. Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.

Sort of resonate a little bit with how David might be feeling. Perhaps this morning you feel like there are people who are against you. Perhaps people at work.

People you work with. Perhaps people in your family. They're against you and the God that you serve. Perhaps they're very happy to listen to you about everything apart from your faith in God.

Don't mention it. It could be even this morning as we've traveled into church. We feel like the world around us, the city that we live in is against us and our faith in God.

As we walk to church, seeing rainbow flags and knowing the pride celebrations are around. Celebrations of all things that are against God and his words.

[4:47] Perhaps we feel like the city that we're living in is against us, is against our gods. So we can understand a little bit about how David is feeling as he writes this psalm.

He writes it and he begins this in verse 1. Many foes, not just as on Absalom.

Actually, Absalom led loads of God's people to be against God's king. And David continues and he says this in verse 2.

Many are saying of me, God will not deliver me. They're saying that the Lord's not going to save you.

You have no hope. As we read of David's foes, he says, how many are against me?

[5:54] This is the picture I thought of for David. A picture of a whole wave, tidal wave going over him. Actually, tidal waves were a real threat for people this week, weren't they?

This isn't a literal tidal wave here in this psalm though. But it's a tidal wave of people in opposition against the king.

And God won't save you. You're alone. Where is your God now? Be no good you following him.

Now you're in this situation. And these people saying that, saying God will not deliver you.

God's not going to offer you any hope now. They're a bit like the wicked people that we saw in someone. Sitting, scoffing, mocking God's and his ways.

Delighting in their own evil schemes. Rather than submitting to God and his good rule.

[6:58] So these are the circumstances we find David in. And it strikes me these are circumstances which are familiar to our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, aren't they?

David's greater son, the Lord Jesus. Can you imagine him taking the first couple of verses in this psalm and saying to his father, Lord, how many are my foes?

How many rise up against me? Many are saying of me, God will not deliver him. Imagine Jesus saying that in that final week leading up to his death on the cross.

First he came into Jerusalem and the crowds praised him. And then at the end of the week they're saying crucify him, crucify him. A tidal wave of opposition coming against him.

Coming against our saviour. And on the cross people mocked him. If he's a son of God, surely he could save himself, couldn't he?

[8:03] And come down from the cross. But that's not happening. So surely God's not going to save him. God's not with him. The situation that David's in is familiar to the Lord Jesus.

And we're to expect it to be familiar to us if it's not already. Jesus said, didn't he, to his disciples before he went to the cross, in this world you will have trouble.

In this world people will be against you. And against your gods. So what should we do when it feels like people are against us and against our gods?

What should we do? Four things to remember. Firstly, remember who God is. Remember who God is. As people tell David, God's not going to deliver you.

David looks to the Lord and reminds himself, who is his gods? And he finds that God is strong enough to save him.

[9:15] He is his shield. Verse 3. But you, Lord, are a shield around me. He is my shield. A shield, as you will know.

A piece of armor that's used to protect against the weapons of the enemy. And David remembers that God has revealed himself to his people as a shield.

To Abraham, God said, do not be afraid. I am your shield. I'm the one who protects you.

Who covers you. Who stands in the way of those that are seeking to bring you down, David. I am your shield. That's a comfort we could have for ourselves.

When it feels like people are against us. When the enemy is against us. Perhaps he's causing us to despair. He's saying, you're not good enough.

[10:23] You're a guilty sinner. You're no good for God. Throwing his fiery darts against us. Remember, the Lord is your shield. Remember who he is.

He's covering you. He's protecting you. God is a shield. And next, David remembers that God is his glory. But you, Lord, verse 3, are a shield around me.

My glory. You're my glory. As David's on the run from his own son, Absalom. We might think he is losing the glory he once had as king.

The glory of wearing the crown, of sitting on the throne. This is embarrassing. People look to him and say, God's not going to save you.

There is no glory for you now, David. But David thinks about the Lord and thinks, no, he is my glory. [11:22] I haven't lost any glory because I know him. Came across this extraordinary little story of Queen Victoria.

A ruler, a queen of this country.

And all the glory and majesty and pomp of being queen. And yet she said, I should like to lay down my crown at his feet.

David might be under threat in terms of his position as king. But that's okay. His glory is found in his gods.

He delights in knowing him. This morning, perhaps we might glory at times in our own wealth.

[12:42] In our own achievements. But when we feel like others are against us. Or against our God.

Perhaps we feel like we don't have any particular glory. But this morning, hopefully this psalm reminds us actually. Our glory, our delight.

It's found in knowing God. God who brings wonderful joy. In the midst of deep trouble and opposition.

Our God who we are so secure in. Because he is our shield. Against those who are against us.

And thirdly, in verse 3. We see that the Lord is the lifter of David's head. You're my glory. I'm the one who lifts my head. As David faced strong opposition against him.

[13:45] Against his position. It could be easy for his head to just drop. Situation so bad. Perhaps we may know what it's like to feel like our heads have dropped.

The smiles gone from our face. The tears flow. We look downwards. But actually we can be encouraged by this psalm.

To look up to the one who will lift up our heads. As we remember he's our shield and our glory. And remember that he himself knows what it's like to bow down his heads.

On the cross. John 19 verse 30 says. When he had received a drink. Jesus said it is finished. With that he bowed his heads.

And gave up his spirits. But we know that that wasn't the end for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now the one who is lifted up.

[14:54] So that he can lift us up. He is exalted. At God's right hand. Head held high. And if we know him this morning.

As our saviour. We can lift our heads. High. That even though there might be people against us. Even though we might walk out of church this morning.

And feel like the city around us is against us. We know the Lord Jesus. He's our glory. He's our shield. He's the lifter.

Of our heads. Sometimes we sing. Don't we turn. Your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim.

In the light of his glory and grace. You're feeling like you're discouraged this morning. Like your head has dropped. Turn your eyes to the Lord Jesus.

[15:53] It's good that we're taking communion this morning as well. Isn't it? That can help. That's a means to which God can use to lift up our heads.

If we're feeling discouraged. If we're feeling discouraged. If we're feeling like there's just an overwhelming number of things against us. This morning we take and eat.

And we remember the one who has endured such opposition against him. Remember the one who is so for us. That in love.

He gave himself. And died for us. And so we can. Lift up our heads knowing. This great love.

That's on display. For us in this meal. And in all this situation. As David remembers his gods. He.

[16:51] Next remembers to pray. Remember to pray. Verse 4. David says. I call out to the Lord. And he answers me from his holy mountain.

When the pressure mounts against us. When it feels like people are just against us. And against our gods. Perhaps we could easily sit in a place of self-pity.

And say woe is me. Perhaps David. As he was being surrounded by people who were against him. Could have said woe is me.

I've lost the crown. I'll just hide here and sit in despair. But no. As he's turned. His thoughts upward to the Lord.

He then remembers. He can call out to him. I call out. To the Lord. And he answers me from. His holy mountain.

[17:56] His holy mountain. We saw in Psalm 2. Is Zion. The place where God says. I have installed my king. He says that to those.

Who are against him. And against him ways. This is non-negotiable. I've installed my king. He's installed David. As king.

He might be physically far away. From Mount Zion. But. God has installed him there.

As king. And so David can call out to him. And we this morning. Thinking about this psalm.

In the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. We look. Look ahead. Don't we. From this psalm. To the Lord Jesus. To the one that God has. Installed forever.

[18:54] As his king. Forever as his king. On Mount Zion. Building his eternal kingdom. Not confined to one place.

But filling. The entire. World. And this morning. Because of. The Lord Jesus. God's king. We have special access.

To him in prayer. We expressed that earlier. Together. As we had that time. Of open prayer. We need to remember. That we can pray.

At all times. Because of the Lord Jesus. We can be so consumed. With life struggles. That it's very easy. To forget.

To pray. Be so knocked down. By others. Being against us. That we lose confidence. In prayer. That we lose confidence.

[19:54] That we have. A wonderful friend. In Jesus. Who we can pray to. And yet. If God is our shield. If God is the one.

Who protects his people. If God is. Our glory. And the lifter of our heads. Then where else. Would we go. But to him in prayer. To come before his glorious.

Throne. And plead with him. Lord. See how many. Are my foes. How many. Rise up against me. Lord. Work in this situation.

Answer my prayer. Lord. As David. Says to the Lord. Here. Some wonderful words. About prayer. In the New Testament.

Words. Which I guess. May be precious. To many of us. In the book of Philippians. Paul writes. The Lord. Is near. Do not be anxious. About anything.

[20:50] But in every situation. By prayer. And petition. With thanksgiving. Present your request. To God. And the peace of God. Which transcends. All understanding. Will guard your hearts.

And minds. In Christ Jesus. Paul is not flippantly. Saying. Do not be anxious. There. He is saying. Remember. That the Lord is near.

Remember. He is your glory. Your shield. Your protector. And so. Instead of. Of. Of living. And being overwhelmed. By the anxieties.

That you have. Turn to him. He is near to you. He is with you. In them. Turn to him. And pray. And as you do so. You may know.

A wonderful peace. A peace. Like no other. A peace. Which transcends. All understanding. We need to remember.

[21:49] To pray. And David. As he remembers. To pray. We see.

We see. Indeed. That he. Does. Have. A peace. Which passes. All understanding. Because. Thirdly. Remember. To sleep. Verse 5.

David says. I lie down. And sleep. I wake up again. Because the Lord. Sustains me. Perhaps. Perhaps. When we're. In situations. Of great pressure.

When we're in situations. Where it feels like. People are against us. And against our God. And sleep doesn't come. So naturally. We find it hard. To switch off.

And for David. People were advising. Absalom. His son. To go and attack him. In the night. Whilst David is sort of. At his weakest.

[22:49] An advisor said to Absalom. I would choose 12,000 men. And set out tonight. In pursuit of David. I will attack him. Whilst he is weary.

And weak. I would strike him. With terror. And then all the people. With him will flee. I would strike down. The only the king. Attack him at night.

Attack him. Whilst he's at his weakest. And most vulnerable. Perhaps he'll be asleep. And won't even know. What's going on. Attack him. That's your moment. And so it's completely.

Extraordinary here. To read in verse 5. That David says. I lie down and sleep. I wake up again. Because the Lord. Sustains me. It's extraordinary. When his life. Is so under threat.

[23:43] Where he. He will know. That's his most dangerous time. Of the day. The night time. And yet. As he's pondered.

Who God is. In this psalm. So he remembers. He is his shield. He. And takes. Confidence in him. By turning to prayer. He knows.

He can indeed. Lie down and sleep. So as he prays. He knows. That peace. Which transcends. All. Understanding.

We may look at this. And think. Well. David. How can you say that? We don't understand. How you can say that. In your situation. And yet.

He does. Because he looks. To the Lord. To the Lord. To the Lord. To the Lord. To the Lord. And has anything. Changed. When he wakes up.

[24:40] Not really. Look at verse six. I will not fear. Though tens of thousands. Assail me. On every side. He wakes up. Nothing's particularly.

Changed. The Lord hasn't. Removed yet. The threats. Around him. In fact. Maybe it's got worse. Tens of thousands. Assail me. On every side. He says. Doesn't make sense.

Unless you know. David's God. At night time. It's definitely.

The time. Where I get most nervous. Where things. That didn't worry me. Much through the day.

Really worry me. At night time. Over the last few months.

Found it helpful. To like David. Look to the Lord. Found it helpful. To learn those words. In Psalm 27.

[25:43] A different Psalm. I'll just read them to you. When I'm fearful.

I say these words. The Lord is my light. And my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold. Of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?

And remembering those words. Just help to settle. My fears. My worries. And hopefully. That is of help to you. If you're kept up.

By the worries. If you find it hard. To settle your mind. Look to the Lord. Remember who he is.

Remember he is your light. And your salvation.

Remember these words. In Psalm 3. You Lord are my shield. My glory. The one. Who lifts up. My head. We'll think more about.

[26:41] Sleep. In Psalm 4. This evening. So do come back. If you can. As we consider that Psalm. But finally. David remembers.

That God saves. He remembers. That God saves. Verse 7 reads. Arise Lord. Deliver me. Save me. My gods. We're probably. Saying yes and amen. To those words. And then we read. These words. Strike all my enemies. On the jaw. Break the teeth.

Of the wicked. And we're like. What? Is that really right? Can we really pray those words? Break their teeth? Dentistry can't have been that good then.

Why is David praying that? That's. In order for David to come out of this situation. Alive and well.

[27:42] The wicked ones need to be dealt with. Don't they? Absalom. And those rising up against David. That they need to be dealt with.

Otherwise there won't be an end to these troubles. Hopefully this is a helpful illustration. Earlier this year.

We were staying with some friends. Down in Plymouth. And one of the evenings. A mouse was spotted. To which I discovered.

That I was completely terrified of mice. Didn't know that before. And I could not rest. I could not settle.

Until the mouse. Had left the house. Until the threat. Was removed. If the threat.

[28:43] Wasn't removed. I might not have slept well that night. And if. The threat for David here. Is not removed. His situation.

Remains unchanged. And so he trusts. That God is the God. Who delivers. God is the one. Who saves his people. From his enemies.

As he has shown. Time and time again. Throughout the scriptures. And as he shows. In the cross. In the work of the Lord Jesus. That we're remembering this morning.

The communion table. Because the biggest threats. That stand in our way. Are the threats. Of our sin. The work of Satan. Death.

And hell. And if these threats. Are not dealt with. Then there can be no salvation. For anyone. And God knows that so well.

[29:44] That he has provided. A way for us to be saved. In the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. And he knows that so well.

That he himself. Was struck. David prays. Strike all my enemies. Jesus was struck.

By his enemies. Wasn't he? On the cross. Matthew 26. 67. Then they spat in his face. And struck him with their fists. And others slapped him. What an awful thing to read.

And yet the Lord Jesus. Was willing to go through that for us. And even more than that. He faced the full force.

Of God's anger. On our wickedness. On our sin. So that we. The guilty ones. Might go free. And yet good.

[30:46] That we can remember that this morning. Remember. The God who saves us. Through his death on the cross. Christ. And he now. Is Christ.

The victor. Christ. The victorious one. Christ who has disarmed. The powers and authorities. That stand against his rule. That stand against his kingdom.

That stand against his people. And if it wasn't. For the God who saves. None of us would be here this morning.

Rejoicing in God. Would we? We would be standing in opposition to him. To his son. To his people. And so we can praise God.

For his. Incredible grace. And know that there is. A safe place. For those who are not yet the Lord. Those who are still.

[31:46] Walking in evil ways. There is a safe place for them. As Psalm 2 makes clear. At the very end. Kiss his son. Or he will be angry. And your way will lead to destruction.

For his wrath can flare up in a moment. But blessed are all who take refuge in him. Well today is still today. Today is the day of salvation.

Today people can find. Salvation from the God who saves. Because of the Lord Jesus. Who has given his life.

So when we find that people are against us. And against our God. Four things to remember.

Remember who your God is. Remember to pray. Remember you can rest and sleep.

Remember that whatever people may say to us. God does save. And Jesus said this. In this world you will have trouble.

[32:55] But then he said. Take heart. I have overcome the world. Let's pray. Father God. Thank you so much. That even though there are many.

Who are opposed to you. And your ways. People who may be opposed to us. Because of our faith in the Lord Jesus. Thank you that you are our shields.

You are our glory. You are the lifter of our heads. Thank you that we can pray to you. We can call out to you. Thank you that we can rest securely in our beds tonight.

Because you Lord are with us. You will sustain us. And thank you that you are the God who saves. Father as we look now to the cross. In this time of communion. Bless us we pray. And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

[33:56] We're going to sing.