

Salvation Belongs To The Lord!

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[0 : 00] Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Psalms this morning, and we'll read Psalm chapter 3, the psalm that Treg just prayed from together this morning.

If you're using the pew Bibles there in front of you, if you didn't bring your own Bible with you, you can find this passage on page 418. So Bibles open, let's read together Psalm chapter 3.

This is a psalm of David when he fled from Absalom, his son. O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me.

Many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God. But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory and the lifter of my head.

I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept. I woke again, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.

[1 : 11] Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek. You break the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing be on your people.

This is the word of God. Let's bow and pray once more. Lord, we thank you for the privilege and the joy it is to open up your word and to hear from you this morning.

So we pray now that you would give us ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to receive what you've written here in Psalm chapter 3. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. How do we respond in times of danger?

I mentioned last week that all of the Psalms, the book of Psalms, they all hold together. This is one organized, intentionally structured book. Well, we're past the introduction now.

Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 were the introduction of the book. And now, here in Psalm chapter 3, we're beginning the first of a collection of Psalms that are specifically attributed to King David.

[2 : 18] Last week from Psalm chapter 2, the question was, Why do the nations rage? Why do the peoples plot in vain? Why do the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed?

And here in Psalm chapter 3, we begin to see a specific example of this taking place in David's life. In fact, Psalms 3 through 9, where we're going to spend the rest of our time together this summer, Psalms 3 through 9, all of them deal with a specific rebellion against David by his son Absalom.

See, David is in danger. The nations are raging. The people are raging. Although now, it's not just outside of him. It's not all the other nations. It's within his own nation.

It's within his own household. It's within his own family. But instead of responding like I might respond, instead of closing his eyes and ignoring the problem, he sees it clearly.

Instead of trusting in his own strength to bring him deliverance, he trusts in the Lord's protection.

And instead of plotting and planning his way out of his problems, he calls out to the Lord in prayer.

[3 : 31] I wonder how you would respond to a danger like this. Here's the big idea for us this morning from Psalm chapter 3. Because the Lord is our salvation, God's people face every danger with confidence.

That's a big idea for us. I'm going to say it again. Because the Lord is our salvation, God's people face every danger with confidence. You may know the old John Newton hymn that goes like this.

It says, Though troubles assail and dangers affright, though friends should all fail and foes all unite, yet one thing secures us. Whatever be tied, the scripture assures us the Lord will provide.

Do you know that hymn? See, that's the confidence that believers have in the face of any and all danger. So this morning, what we'll see then, in light of God's salvation, we'll see three responses in times of danger.

Three responses in times of danger. This will be our outline for us this morning to help you follow along. Three responses in times of danger. First, because God is our salvation, God's people recognize the dangers.

[4 : 48] Because God is our salvation, God's people recognize the dangers. Look there to the beginning of our psalm. Not to verse 1, actually above verse 1.

There should be some text there that helps give us some context. It says, This is a psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son. And I love when the psalms do this because it helps us to understand the context.

It helps us to read this psalm within a specific context of what was happening in the author's life. This time, specifically, he tells us this was about when he fled from Absalom his son.

If you don't know that story, I would encourage you to go home and read 2 Samuel 15-18. 2 Samuel 15-18. Because this will be the background context for the next several weeks as we cover together Psalms 3-9.

But here's the summary. I'll give it to you. Absalom, David's son. It says, He stole away the hearts of the men of Israel from David. And now the rebellion was growing, was rising up.

[5 : 54] It grew to the point where now David had to flee from Jerusalem. He had to flee from his home, away from his home, away from his kingdom, away from his throne, away from the city of God.

And as he reflects back on this uprising, he writes these words. Psalm chapter 3. Look there to verse 1. Oh Lord, how many are my foes? Many are rising against me.

Many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God. Many are rising up. Many foes. And he's not wrong. We learn from 2 Samuel that at least 12,000 fighting men had joined up with Absalom.

And along with them, David's own counselor, Ahithophel. You've got to practice that one. Ahithophel. He had joined up with Absalom in the uprising. He was counseling Absalom now instead of David.

And what did they say? They said, There is no salvation for you in God. Doesn't that sound like Psalm chapter 2? The nations are conspiring together.

[6 : 58] The rulers, the kings, all the people to dethrone the Lord and to dethrone the Lord's appointed king. Exalting their plans above God. Exalting their power above the power of God.

Mocking God and mocking God's anointed. There is no salvation for you in God. Now of course there's a physical element to that statement. They're saying God won't save you from the danger that's coming.

We're coming for you. We're going to come get you. We're going to come kill you. And you can't escape it. But there's also a spiritual element there as well. There's no salvation for you in God. No doubt David's sins are flashing before him. As he remembers Bathsheba. As he remembers Uriah. Why would God save such a sinful man?

Well we'll see David's response to these accusations here in a moment. But first I think it's important that we recognize first that David's first step here in the face of danger is acknowledging the danger that he's in.

[8 : 00] You know sometimes I think we can easily make the mistake of thinking that because God is in control that believers just check out. Right? We let go and let God.

But actually I think the opposite is true. Knowing God is in control. It doesn't mean that you close your eyes to the dangers around you. Instead you now become more vigilant.

You now become more aware. More attuned to the dangers around you. We don't pray that the Lord would close our eyes to the dangers around us. But instead that the Lord would open our eyes to see clearly the dangers around us.

Why? Why do I say this? Two reasons. One. Because the dangers that we face as God's people are greater.

And way bigger. Way stronger. Way more numerous than we tend to realize. First. And second. Because our awareness of our need is directly correlated with our dependence on his help.

[9 : 09] If you want to grow in your dependence on the Lord. I hope you do. I do. Ask him to show you just how much you need him in every moment. Ask him to show you how weak you are and how strong he is.

John Newton again. He says this. He says, Do you want to walk closely with him?

And ask him to show you clearly the dangers that we face. Just think together about all the dangers that we face for a moment.

Think of all the external, the physical dangers that we face. We face external physical dangers every single day. Some of you moms especially seem to be attuned to this more than anybody. There are dangers of external physical attack. Dangers of potential harm from other men. People who would intentionally do us harm. There's danger of murder.

[10:25] Danger of theft. Of course, there's also unintentional dangers that we face every day. There's risk. There's danger from just driving down the road. Highway 17. Some of the way that people drive.

I know not y'all. Some other people out there. I've seen the way they drive. We can get injured just driving down the road. We can trip over a rug in our house and hurt ourselves. Anywhere we go, we face some sort of external physical danger.

But on top of this, of course, we face dangers of social suffering, isolation, loneliness, exclusion. I bet if you poll the general population, they would act like the biggest danger that we face is disapproval.

But all of this, I hope you see, all of this is outside of us. External dangers. Think about the internal physical dangers that we face.

We face dangers of physical suffering from disease and sickness, mental distress. Our bodies grow weak and grow tired. They wear out. And ultimately, all of us face the great enemy of death.

[11:34] No one is immune. No one is immune. But for many of us, this is where our awareness of our dangers stops. For many, this is what most concerns us.

For many, this is what most preoccupies our thoughts and our worries. But what I want us to understand is that there is a whole other level of danger that most people in the world are completely oblivious to.

Do you realize that we face an army of spiritual dangers every day? These dangers aren't as immediately obvious to us. They aren't as visible to us.

But don't let that fool you into thinking that they aren't as harmful to you. These dangers, these spiritual dangers that we face are infinitely, eternally dangerous.

Do you realize that we face dangers every day of external spiritual attack? Paul says in Ephesians chapter 6, See, some of us aren't wrestling because we don't even know that the threat is there.

[12:57] Do you realize that we face an enemy who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour? Not everything is a satanic attack.

And not everything is an attack of Satan. But you can be sure that the enemy wants to destroy you. You can be sure that the enemy wants to destroy your family.

You can be sure that the enemy wants to destroy your marriage. That he wants to destroy your faith. That he wants to destroy your relationship with the Lord. That the enemy wants to destroy this church. Are we aware of the spiritual dangers that we face as God's people?

But you know what? The greatest danger to us is not outside of us, is it? The greatest danger that we face is the internal threat of our own sin.

More dangerous than pain and suffering. More dangerous than any physical threat or social isolation. More dangerous than the devil himself.

[14:07] Our sin is our greatest enemy. Do you see it? And do you see it in yourself? Are you aware of it? Or do we close our eyes to it and ignore it?

Too many pastors, too many churches, too many Christians, I'm afraid. We want to talk about the good news of Christ. The good news of the gospel. Without clearly understanding the bad news that makes the gospel so good.

We can't make much of our Savior without first knowing, without seeing, without recognizing what we have been saved from. The greater our awareness of our sin, the deeper our love for Christ will be.

The deeper our dependence on him will be. So I ask you, what specific sins are threatening you right now, believer? What specific sins? What specific sins are threatening your joy?

Are threatening your peace? Are threatening your prayers? Pray that the Lord would do the painful grace of revealing them to you so that you can find rest in him.

[15:20] This is exactly what David does here in verses 3 through 6. Look there with me. Second, because God is our salvation, God's people rest in our defender.

Because God is our salvation, God's people rest in our defender. Look there to verse 3. He sees the dangers. He sees them clearly.

But his response isn't what we might think. He doesn't take up arms. He doesn't plot and plan. He doesn't do anything. He rests in the Lord. He says there in verse 3.

But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory and the lifter of my head. I cried aloud to the Lord and he answered me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept.

I woke again for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Is this how we respond when we're faced with danger?

[16:21] David is totally helpless. He can't do a thing about it. Yet at the same time, he is totally confident. Why? Because the Lord is his salvation. This is the sweet rest of the Christian.

And I see at least five truths here that support David's trust. Five truths here that support David's trust. And each one of these in Christ can be applied to you in your situation, Christian.

Any danger you face in Christ, each one of these can be applied to you. Look there with me. David trusts in the person of God. This may be a little bit hard for us to see in the English, but the name that David uses there for the Lord is Yahweh.

And in fact, whenever you see the Lord and it's all capitalized there in your Bible, all caps, that tells us that the writer is using the personal name of God, Yahweh. This is his covenant name.

It's kind of hard for us to grasp the depths of the richness of what this means, but baked within this name, Yahweh, are all of the glorious truths, all of the glorious promises, all of the glorious attributes of who God is, and who God is for his people.

[17:40] That he's a promise-keeping God. That he's faithful. That he's trustworthy. All of this is communicated in that name, Yahweh. See, David's confidence in the face of danger was that God would keep his promises to him.

So, in light of this, number two, David trusts in the protection of God. He is a shield about me, he says there in verse three. Not just a one-dimensional like most shields that we would think of.

He is a shield all around me. And don't you think that David had protection? And don't you think that David had an army with him? Don't you think that David was skilled in war himself?

Yes, of course he did. But what was his confidence, ultimately? His confidence, his trust was in the Lord. He is a shield about me, where my eyes can see and where they can't, where my hand can reach and where it can't.

He, David, trusted not in his own strength, not in his own ability, but in the sovereign protection of an almighty God. Which is why, number three, David trusted in the praiseworthiness of God.

[18:53] God is my glory, he says. God is the only thing worthy of praise. God is the lifter of my head, not me. You see, David knew that if he was to be restored, if he was to be saved, if he was going to be delivered, if he was going to get out of this situation at all, it would not be by his own doing.

If he was going to be protected, it wouldn't be by his own strength. It would have to be the work of the Lord. And because of this, who would receive the glory?

Not him, but God. He alone would receive the glory. But not only this, fourth, David trusted in the presence of God.

Now this is remarkable to me, isn't it? He trusted in the presence of God. David had fled from Jerusalem, he fled from the place where God's presence dwelt, but yet he calls out to him, and the Lord answers him.

I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. Why? Because his protection was not in his nearness to a place, but in his nearness to a person.

[20:08] And because of this, fifth, David trusted in the power of God to preserve him. Look there to verses five and six. I love this.

In the face of threats against his life, what does David do? He goes to sleep. I lay down and slept. I woke again. Why? For the Lord himself sustained me. You know, sometimes the most productive thing we can do, when we're faced with any issue, sickness, stress, doubt, disease, danger, the devil himself, is to stop tossing and turning, to stop tossing it in our minds, to stop tossing and turning in bed all night, trying to resolve it, just for a minute, to stop trying to solve your problems, and then to go to sleep, to trust the Lord, that he is in control, knowing that God is more capable to work it out than we tend to realize.

He's more than capable to solve your problems without you getting involved. Just think about this. There is no other time when we're more vulnerable, more helpless, more unaware, more unproductive than when we are sleeping, right?

John Piper, he says, sleep is our daily reminder from God that we are not God. And we lay down six hours, seven hours, eight hours, if you're lucky, and we just check out completely.

[21 : 52] All of our troubles are still just floating out there in the world, and meanwhile, guess what? God continues to run the universe just fine without us. It's amazing, isn't it, how that happens?

Now, I'm afraid that far too often we put too much trust in our own productivity, in our own strength, in our own problem-solving ability, in our own power, when really, it's the Lord who sustains us.

David here with 12,000 men out for his head, he lays down and he rests with confidence, and then he rises again. Why? Because it was the Lord who sustained him.

Christian, I know that we face all sorts of trials, all sorts of difficulties, all sorts of enemies, but we can rest confidently, not in our own strength, and not in our own ability, but in the power, the protection, the person of a great and sovereign God.

And this is what Paul says in Romans chapter 8, we read it this morning, I'm sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[23 : 16] So what do we have to fear? So now, recognizing the dangers and resting in the Lord, third, because God is our salvation, God's people request deliverance.

God's people request deliverance. Having recognized his enemies, having found rest in the Lord, now, now, David prays for God to act.

Look there to verse 7. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God. Do you see the contrast here with verse 1? If you've got your Bibles there, just look at the contrast with verse 1.

In light of the many foes rising up against him, 12,000 rising up against him, David now calls to the Lord, you arise, O Lord. In light of their claim, there is no salvation for you in God.

What does he ask God to do? Save me, O my God. He calls out to the Lord in confidence because despite what they say, despite how many they have, despite what they may do, he knows and trusts in who God is and who God is towards him.

[24 : 27] He calls out to the Lord to save him. Why? Because ultimately, he knows two things to be true because of the promises of God. Two things to be true. God will judge the wicked.

God will save his people. God will judge the wicked and God will save his people. These two certainties are certain hope for God's people.

This is solid ground for us in face of any danger, physical, social, spiritual, or otherwise. No matter what comes in this life, we can know with certainty and then pray in light of the fact that our God will judge the wicked and our God will save his people.

Look there again to verse 7. We see a picture here of judgment, don't we? He says, Save me, Oh my God. For you strike all my enemies on the cheek.

You break the teeth of the wicked. This is an image of humiliation and defeat. Our God will put to shame all of his enemies and he will render them powerless.

[25 : 40] This is like a toothless snake. What can it do to you? Now, I realize, and I want to address this because this may seem harsh to some of you.

If you're not used to reading the Psalms and seeing this type of language in the Psalms like this, you may wonder, is it right for us to pray like this? How should we pray against the wicked?

When we see all of the wickedness around us, when we see people rebelling against the Lord, when we see persecution, people afflicting God's people throughout the nations, how should we pray against the wicked when we read of the persecution of Christians happening throughout the world?

Well, our first prayer should be for repentance. Christ has come to make forgiveness and reconciliation possible for the worst of God's enemies.

This is why Christ came. And this is what we long to see from our enemies. And so our first hope for the wicked is that they would be brought to repentance, that the Lord would grant them the same heart of repentance that he granted us when we were his enemies.

[26 : 56] And so we pray, Lord, Lord, turn their hearts towards you so that they will hate their sin and love you. Lord, pluck them out of this foolishness.

Pluck them out of this wickedness and give them a new heart that runs towards you and not from you. That's our first prayer, church. But if they will not, if they refuse, then it is right for us to pray for the Lord to render them powerless and to divert their attacks, to clog up their wheels, to break their teeth, and ultimately to bring justice.

We need to know that's the Lord's prerogative, not ours. We don't slap the cheek of the wicked. We don't break the teeth of the wicked.

We don't take vengeance into our own hands, but we do pray and we do trust that the Lord himself will right every wrong. And the day will soon come when everyone will have to give an account to him.

That's not all that we pray for, is it? No, we pray as David does and ask the Lord for deliverance.

We pray with confidence that God will save his people.

[28 : 19] This is what he does here in verse 8, isn't it? He declares with confidence, salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing be on your people. See, both of these truths, the righteous judgment of the wicked and the gracious salvation of God's people, we know they're only partially realized here and now.

We don't experience this in full here and now. We know that these are eternal truths. These are eternal promises, promises, promises that will come to pass in full one day.

We pray one day soon. And so in light of those eternal promises, we pray and we long for the experience of that to grow and to grow, for us to know and to see it more and more here and now until Christ returns.

And so we pray, God, judge the wicked. Render them powerless right now. God, would you close their mouths and bind their arms? But even if not, we know that what we long for now will come to pass when Christ returns.

You've promised us this. And we pray, God, God, save your people. Bless your people. God, deliver your people. God, save me from this sickness. Save me from this doubt.

[29 : 38] Save me from this sin. Save me from this struggle. But even if not, we thank you and we praise you that what we long for now will be brought in full when Christ returns.

That's our hope. This is what Paul reminds us of in 2 Thessalonians 1. He says, This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are also suffering, since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed.

This is our hope, church. In every danger, our hope, our confidence, our protection, our deliverance, all the assurances and promises of this psalm are realized ultimately and finally in Christ Jesus.

Do you see him as the hope of this psalm? I hope that more and more as we read through the psalms together, we'll build up that muscle of being able to recognize Christ in every single one of these psalms.

[31 : 28] Christ is the hope of Psalm chapter 3. See, Christ, like David, endured the rage of many enemies against him. They taunted him, didn't they?

He saved others, let him save himself. If he's the Christ of God, his chosen one, save yourself. If you're the king, come down off the cross. There's no salvation for you in God.

But like David, God was a shield about him. God lifted him up. Up. God, as Ephesians 1 says, raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

And we know that because he now lives and reigns, because God has lifted him up, he now stands to offer eternal life, eternal salvation, eternal protection, eternal security for any who come to him in faith.

So that all of his people can say with David, I will not be afraid of many thousands of people in Christ. In Christ, I will not be afraid of any enemy who sets themselves against me all around because I am in Christ.

[32 : 47] I fear nothing. I'm safe in him. In this risen Christ, church, he promises us that in this world we will have troubles, but take heart for he has overcome the world.

And he will come again. He will return to break the teeth of the wicked. He will finally crush the head of the serpent and all who join him in rebellion against the Lord.

And he will come to bring salvation and blessing to his people. This is the confident hope of all of God's people.

Do you have it? Is this how we face the dangers of our life? You may have noticed that we've quoted from John Newton more than a few times this morning.

And we're going to close now this morning with another one of his works as we respond by singing Amazing Grace. How sweet the sound. There's a line in there. I'm sure you know it.

[33 : 53] It goes like this. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. 'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace shall lead me home.

This is our hope. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, you know better than we do the many dangers that we face every day.

Not just physically, Lord, that's real, that's a part of it, Lord, our suffering is real, but spiritually, God, we need you. And we praise you for the help that you've given us in Christ, the salvation that you've given us in him for eternal security, for eternal joy, for eternal peace, for eternal protection.

So we long and we pray for that day to soon come when Christ would return and judge the wicked and save his people. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.