

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

WHAT TO DO WHEN TROUBLE COMES

**By
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Villa Rica Fathers Day 6/15/03

Scripture Reading: (Psa 3 NKJV) **LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. {2} Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." Selah {3} But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. {4} I cried to the LORD with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah {5} I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me. {6} I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around. {7} Arise, O LORD; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. {8} Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah**

Life is full of difficulties and trouble. As written in the book of Job: **Man is born to trouble as the sparks upward.** (Job 5:7)

C. S. Lewis said: "The great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions of one's own or real life. The truth is of course that what one calls the interruptions are precisely one's real life, the life God is sending one day by day. What one calls one's real life is a phantom of one's own imagination."

David had many trials and troubles in his life. David wrote this psalm at the time of Absalom's conspiracy against him. You remember the history of Absalom. He was David's third son by his wife Maacah. He was of royal blood on both sides because his mother was the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. He was the favorite of son of David and for this reason no doubt an heir to the throne. He was gifted with remarkable physical attractiveness and had a charm and eloquence and persuasiveness, which won him the hearts of all Israel. They thought they had in him a God-sent champion.

But he was eaten up with hate against his step-brother who had raped his sister Tamar. With designing politeness and patience he got him to attend a sheep-shearing feast at his home and there, when Amnon's heart was merry with the feasting and wine, he had his servants murder Amnon. For a time he was in exile but in due time was forgiven by David and allowed to return to Israel.

But it wasn't long after he had returned that he began to politic and woo the people and gained a following. He plotted a rebellion against his father and when he thought he had sufficient strength he went to Hebron for the purpose of having himself declared king. After he had done this David felt it wise to flee from Jerusalem for many had joined in the conspiracy. It was at this time that psalm 3 was composed by David.

I THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD FOR DAVID

1. Before David came to manhood he had faced trouble. Young people have trouble. David had to care for his father's sheep and once had to kill a bear and another time a lion. Then came the challenge from Goliath for Israel to give him a man to fight. And David took up the challenge and slew the nine-foot giant.

David had already faced opposition as a leader. Every person who comes to leadership will face opposition. As Lincoln once said, "You can please some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time but you can't please all of the people all of the time."

Certainly David learned that. Before he had become king, his father-in-law King Saul had turned to be his enemy and tried on numerous occasions to arrange for him to be killed and even attempted to kill him himself.

It is bad enough to have enemies but to have enemies right among the people of God and even from your own father-in-law was much worse. And David was innocent of any wrongdoing. He was absolutely loyal to the king and dedicated to God and Israel.

David had learned to trust in the Lord through all those days and years of trouble. He had never yielded to the temptation to give up on God or to take matters into his own hands. He could have killed king Saul on at least two occasions that we know of. But David believed that God had placed Saul in his position of leadership and that he durst not raise his hand against the Lord's anointed.

But now it is his own beloved son Absalom who has turned against him and who has drawn thousands of supporters to his traitorous cause. And once again, he had done nothing to provoke Absalom to commit such evil against him.

The thought is bound to come to mind, why? Why did God allow this to come about? God is sovereign and he can make even our enemies to be at peace with us. Why was David put through this trouble, this unloving and wicked action by his own son?

First let me say that God Himself has been rebelled against and hated without a cause. The earliest conspiracy of all, the conspiracy of Lucifer, Satan against the God who made him beautiful and who had given him an exalted position, turned against the Lord and sought to sit in the seat of God, to be like God. He drew many others after him. We read. **(Rev 12:3-4 NKJV) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. {4}His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.**

(Rev 12:9 NKJV) So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The Lord Himself has faced rebellion and whoever stands for the Lord will also face this ancient foe who persecutes the church.

David was opposed simply because he was the Lord's servant, just as the Lord Jesus was persecuted and opposed. The Lord allowed this to come upon David from an intimate of his own household, his own son Absalom.

David not only had this opposition from his son but thousands of Israelites who joined him in

his rebellion. Being a king does not make David immune from trouble. He is as liable to alterations of joy and sorrow as any of his subjects.

2. We learn here that the best of parents can have the worst of children. David had his Absalom. This is not common but it is certainly possible. The effects of a pious upbringing are sometimes not manifest until the heart of parents is nearly broken by the wickedness of their offspring. In some cases, indeed even with those who had had the best examples and instructions, they live and die in sin.

Grace is not hereditary. Isaac had twins, a Jacob and an Esau. God loved Jacob and hated Esau. Aaron had four sons, Nadab and Abihu and Eleazar and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu were destroyed for their wickedness in rebelling by offering strange fire while the other two sons, especially Eleazar were appointed priests and remained faithful.

Eli the priest had two wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas, whom the Lord slew for their wickedness.

II DAVID POSTULATES HIS PREDICAMENT

(Psa 3:1-2 NKJV) LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. {2} Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." Selah

1. Not only had his troubles increased due to the many who had joined forces with Absalom, they were spreading the word that God had deserted him, that because God was displeased with David he was having all this trouble. They no doubt attributed this to David's sin. Like all of us, David had sinned as a believer. His sins were public knowledge, as are the sins of most public figures nowadays. So people were saying that God had left him.

"God does not do what false Christianity makes out namely, keep a man immune from trouble. God says, 'I will be with him in trouble.'" (Oswald Chambers)

"Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties." (Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

Whenever bad things happen to a Christian the world will look for his mistakes and blame his troubles on that. Job was accused of secret sin for the calamity that had befallen his house. We know contrary to that the scripture says that he was upright and blameless. We are given a dialogue between God and Satan in **(Job 1:8 NKJV) Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"**

It was not because Job was sinning against God that God allowed Satan to send calamity on Job. Rather it was to test his integrity and faithfulness. So we ought not to look upon trouble as evidence that sin has been committed, although it is true that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

In David's case what was happening in this instance *was* due to sinful conduct. We read of it in the book of 2 Samuel. Nathan the prophet went to David with a parable and a judgment from the Lord. Listen to how it is recorded for us in scripture. (2 Sam 12:1-12 NKJV) **Then the LORD**

sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. {2}"The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. {3}"But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. {4}"And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." {5}So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! {6}"And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity." {7}Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. {8}'I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! {9}'Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. {10}'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' {11}"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. {12}'For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'"

Absalom fulfills the prophecy. He spread a tent on the roof of David's palace and takes David's concubines that had been left in Jerusalem to keep the house and he lets all Israel know that he has taken them as his own concubines, thereby showing his utter disrespect for David and that he is now master of the kingdom in David's place.

2. But David has not lost confidence in God's love and help. **(Psa 3:3-6 NKJV) But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. {4} I cried to the LORD with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah {5}I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me. {6} I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around.**

David was preeminently a man of prayer. No matter what trouble he had he sought the Lord in prayer. He knew that prayer is the way to the Lord's heart. He trusted that God would not cast him off. God may chasten but he does not rescind his love. So he resorts to prayer once again.

Notice also that he could sleep at night. When you have problems, troubles that are vexing you, take it to the Lord in prayer. That is the remedy for trouble. That was David's remedy. God gave him peace of heart in the midst of terrible difficulties. His whole world seemed to be falling down. The nation is torn between himself and his son. He is being sought as an overthrown king and there were thousands with Absalom. But hear his prayer? **(Psa 3:7 NKJV) Arise, O LORD; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.**

David remembers God's help in the past. He knows that God does not champion the cause of the ungodly. Absalom is doing something he never would have done against Saul when he was king. He knew it was wrong to lift up your hand against the Lord's anointed. These foes are not only his enemies; they are God's enemies too. And God will judge them. God will strike them down.

God did do that. Absalom was caught by his hair in the branches of a tree. He hung there suspended between heaven and earth until Joab took a dart and thrust him through, ending his rebellion. And all his followers melted away. God caused David to prevail, even though he mourned greatly for Absalom. Even in his rebellion David never stopped loving his son.

Isn't that the way God loves us. He cannot condone rebellion. It will be dealt with, but God's government is established on justice and love.

2. David closes his prayer with these words: **(Psa 3:8 NKJV) Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah**

God's salvation includes protection and deliverance. The circumstances may be desperate. We can look at the problem, the trial, the trouble and seem overwhelmed. But whenever that happens, go to psalm 3 and read it.

Have you ever watched a bird sleeping on its perch and never falling off? How does it manage to do this?

The secret is the tendons of the bird's legs. They are so constructed that when the leg is bent at the knee, the claws contract and grip like a steel trap. The claws refuse to let go until the knees are unbent again. The bended knee gives the bird the ability to hold on to his perch so tightly.

From sleeping birds we can learn the secret of persevering in prayer. That secret is the knee bent in prayer, seeking to get a firmer grip on the Lord's love, power, protection and faithfulness. When we hold firmly to God in prayer, we can rest assured he will minister His salvation grace to us. Prayer is verbalizing our faith in His never failing love and provision.

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