

I CAN SLEEP

Psalm 3

Key Truth:

Prescription for a good night's sleep: confess sin, accept God's forgiveness, trust God with your battles.

I shared a while back a terrible mistake I made as a rookie pastor. One Sunday after services, without consulting my fellow elder and choir director, I completely rearranged the stage and removed the choir loft. Two nights later I woke in the middle of the night deeply convicted of my sin; I had disrespected and violated the authority of my fellow elder and I had shown a complete lack of love and appreciation for my brothers and sisters in the choir. I felt horrible and tried to get back to sleep, but only tossed and turned until the sun came up. I was anxious to go to Glae and confess.

Glæ responded with grace and love. He forgave me. I never experienced anything but kindness and love from Glæ in the years that followed. There was freedom and peace in our relationship. But there were consequences to my sin; members of the choir were hurt by what I had done. Understandably they felt devalued. Though I had freedom and peace in my relationship with Glæ, I suffered a chilly relationship with the choir as a consequence of my sin.

Often we must live through the consequences of our sin. But what a difference it makes to go through those seasons knowing we're forgiven by God and reconciled with Him.

This is what we will discover in Psalm 3.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The preface of Psalm 3 reads:

"A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son."

David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband, Uriah (2 Samuel 11:1 - 12:15). Confronted by the prophet Nathan, David confessed his sin. Nathan assured David of the Lord's forgiveness, but warned there would be consequences; the child conceived in Bathsheba would die (2 Samuel 12:13-14). In addition, Nathan revealed the Lord would raise up evil against David from within his own house (2 Samuel 12:11-12). That evil came in the form of a violent coup led by his son Absalom.

Filled with grief and remorse, David wrote Psalm 51:

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

God forgave and renewed David.

But David still had to live through the consequences of his sin. Absalom conspired against his father. Handsome and charming, he generated a following large enough and powerful enough to drive David and his loyalists out of Jerusalem and across the Jordan River.

As he was running from Absalom, David composed Psalm 3. Psalm 3 reveals David's deep confidence in God's protection and deliverance. Underlying David's confidence in God's protection and deliverance was his confidence that God had really forgiven him and restored him. In the opening verses David describes his situation, but without complaint. He accepts the fact he is suffering the consequences of his sin. The natural mind reasons that if you are suffering the consequences of your sin, God is still angry with you; He hasn't forgiven you. But David knows he's been forgiven and reconciled to God. He has incredible peace in the midst.

PSALM 3

A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN HE FLED FROM ABSALOM HIS SON.

¹ O LORD, how many are my foes!
Many are rising against me;
² many are saying of my soul,
"There is no salvation for him in God." *Selah*¹

No doubt this was extremely painful for David; those rising against him were fellow Israelites. *There is no salvation for him in God.* His foes believed God would not restore David to the throne. As He removed Saul, so also God was removing David for his sins of adultery and murder. Very likely Absalom was the source of this idea.

³ But you, O LORD, are a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter of my head.
⁴ I cried aloud to the LORD,
and he answered me from his holy hill. *Selah*

Though on the run, David is trusting God. Like a shield, David is confident God is protecting him. He describes God both as his glory and the *lifter of my head*. The Hebrew verb *lift* means *to exalt*. I take it that *lifter of my head* means to be exalted once again to wear the crown. Even though his enemies believe God is removing him, David is confident God will lift him up to the throne once more. David is confident because God answered his prayer.

⁵ I lay down and slept;
I woke again, for the LORD sustained me.
⁶ I will not be afraid of many thousands of people

¹ *Selah* may have been a musical instruction. It may be a call for the instruments to enter, raise the pitch or volume, affirm what has been said, or serve as a breath marker.

who have set themselves against me all around.

How in the world could David sleep in the midst of such turmoil and uncertainty?

He was living in the freedom and peace of Psalm 51. He accepted God's word that he was forgiven. He is still God's *Son*; God has not taken away His steadfast love. Though he is suffering God's discipline, David is confident God is for him, not against him.

Is this not what God wants for all His people?

To believe Him when He tells us He has forgiven us and then walk before Him in freedom and peace!

When we trust in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin and life with God, all our sin, past, present and future, is paid for in full (Rom. 8:1; Col. 2:13-14). Judicially we are forgiven for all time. But our sin affects our fellowship with God. The remedy for this is confession just as it was for David. 1 John 1:9 teaches us...

¹ John 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We confess, He forgives and cleanses that we might continue to fellowship with Him in the light. God does not want us to wallow in guilt and doubt and insecurity in our relationship with Him. He is our loving heavenly Father and when He says He forgives us, He means it. Believe it and live free!

⁷ Arise, O LORD!

Save me, O my God!

For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;
you break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸ Salvation belongs to the LORD;

your blessing be on your people! *Selah*

Who is David trusting to deliver him from Absalom? David knew God was on his side. God was not going to allow Absalom to take the throne by force. David looked to God to fight this battle and to restore him to the throne.

How often are we tempted to take things into our own hands when we are afraid? When we do we often sin by manipulating people, guiltning people, misrepresenting situations and conversations. We lose our peace.

How much better to turn to the Lord and trust Him to fight our battles? He loves you. He is for you. He is good and righteous in all His ways. He is all-powerful. He'll either deliver you or change your heart and perspective. Whatever He does is far better than what we try to do in our own strength.

When we accept God's forgiveness and trust Him to fight our battles...

...we keep our peace,

...and, we can sleep.