

070118

- I. My Notes... WWC message 7/1
- II. Series: A Summer of Psalms
 - a. Title: Finding Fulfillment
 - b. Text: Psalm 3: 1-8 NLT2
 - c. Quote: American President Abraham Lincoln said, "I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day." [Michael Burlingame. *Lincoln Observed: The Civil War Dispatches of Noah Brooks*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)]
- III. Communion
 - a. Have you ever thought about this time, this ritual (sacrament), participating in Communion – as a time of worship? Jesus told the Disciples to, “do this in remembrance of Me”. We even have that reminder on our table cloth. But what were they remembering? Well, the last thing that Jesus had done was to wash their feet – to treat them with honor and respect. He was preparing them, Jesus was leading by example. The only way they would be able to communicate the Gospel, against all odds, was to love and serve each other. They were being reminded to live and act like Jesus did. It is said that “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery” (Charles Caleb Colton, Writer). Our behaviors, our actions, honor the Lord and give Him glory. This time... remembering that the Cross served as the bridge between Man and Heaven. And that Jesus chose to suffer the humiliation associated with it so that we may have life eternal, life in glory, life with the Father – forever... Well family, this is praiseworthy.
- IV. Introduction

- a. Last week, we finished the series titled, "That's Life". We looked at ways and reasons to stand firm in our faith at all times. There are going to be challenges and circumstances that can push a believer to their limits. I hope that today we have a better sense of how to be that "light" to the world no matter what. Now, we begin a period of time where we will be looking at various chapters in the book of Psalms. The Psalms were written over a 1,000-year timeframe (perhaps more). The psalms' teachings are difficult to summarize because their main purpose is not to teach doctrine. The Psalms are heartfelt expressions of worship that come from a deep desire to praise the Lord God.
- b. The book of Psalms has the most chapters in the Bible (though there are longer books – Jeremiah and Genesis). And, in the book of Psalms, there were many different authors. David wrote many of the Psalms; Asaph (a family) and the Sons of Koran (a family) wrote several; Solomon wrote 2 (72, 127); Heman wrote one (88) and his brother Ethan the Ezrahite wrote one (89); Moses wrote one (90); and there are several anonymous Psalms.
- c. Now that we have some of the details out of the way, let's move into what the Lord has put on my heart for today. Have you ever been in such a difficult circumstance and it seems everyone has turned against you? Even though you may be right it can be very hard to stand against the onslaught of many. In some ways, I think we have been on this point for a while. That there are going to be hard times, that difficulties are a part of the Christian life. We don't have to go looking for trouble, it will find us. And often, the challenges – the rough circumstances, are of our own doing. We must take responsibility and learn from these things. Growth occurs, it is intentional, as we learn to hold an accurate view of our lives and the circumstances that surround them.
- d. In acknowledging where we have been, I want to help us see that even in the hard times there is a proper view – a correct way to respond. The Lord is worthy of praise and adoration. NT believers were challenged by the

Apostle Paul... "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." (Colossians 3:17 NASB). Our actions and attitudes, despite the circumstances we are facing, must be done to honor and glorify the Lord God. And as we honor Him, we are to do it with an attitude of gratitude. He is Lord of All. That means that during the difficulties you might be facing – He is Lord, He is Sovereign (Self-determining, He charts His course). In the pain that is part of daily life – Jesus is Lord... and worthy of praise. In the times where everything is going great, He is Lord and He wants to celebrate with you.

- e. A Psalm is a message wrapped up in experience. While we shouldn't only seek the positive experiences – we shouldn't avoid experience. Life lessons facilitate growth and help us "ease on down" the road. Use those times, the experiences of life, to grow and mature – to be able to show others what it means to live in a way that honors the Lord. A Psalm is an expression. It is a statement of appreciation and understanding of God's love and mercy in our lives. A Psalm is emotional. It deals with real life and the feelings that accompany it. There is disappointment, fear, joy, adoration, and more throughout the Psalms. Let's begin this adventure.

V. Text

a. Psalm 3:1-8 (NLT2)

O LORD, I have so many enemies; so many are against me.

So many are saying, "God will never rescue him!" Interlude (Selah)

But you, O LORD, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.

I cried out to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy mountain.

Interlude (Selah)

I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the LORD was watching over me.

I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies who surround me on every side.

Arise, O LORD! Rescue me, my God! Slap all my enemies in the face! Shatter the teeth of the wicked!

Victory comes from you, O LORD. May you bless your people. Interlude (Selah)

- b. What do you hear as this Psalm is read to you?
- c. There is fear and grief. King David is at a place in his life where he is confronted with overwhelming circumstances. (Have you been there? Recently?)
- d. There is hope and acknowledgement of God's goodness.
- e. And the Psalm – this song ends in worship and praise. Psalm 3 and 4 are “companion Psalms”. They are like a morning and evening hymn
- f. It would seem, that there are times, that the Lord allows difficulties and helps them be turned into sweet songs of praise.

VI. Cry Out for Help

- a. The circumstances surrounding this Psalm were that King David's son – Absalom- had (deceptively) stole the kingdom from David. The king left in shame – exiled. He had been cursed and ridiculed. Many had turned against him and his son was making plans to kill him
- b. David cried out to the Lord
- c. It's a great lesson for us. Turn to the Lord in our hard times – cry out, from the depths of your emotion. The Lord God is able to handle your hurt and anguish

- d. We have become so self-sufficient that we often feel we can handle the circumstances before us.
- e. Often, it's our effort that has gotten us in trouble/difficulty
- f. Even then, if we are willing to confess and take responsibility, great things will happen
- g. Our past can have a way of catching up with us. The sins of David's life had brought him to this point
- h. The struggles and choices we have made in our yesterday's can, at times, impact our days
- i. We must be willing to go to the Lord, acknowledge our need, and trust Him for the answers

VII. I've Got Confidence

- a. There's a wonderful song from some time ago. It says... "I've got confidence, God is going to see me through. No matter what the case may be, I know He's gonna fix it for me" (Andrae Crouch, *I've Got Confidence*, 1968)
- b. David expressed confidence in the Lord.... "you, O LORD, are a shield around me" (vs. 3)
- c. He understood where His help and protection came from? I wonder, do we?
- d. God's love for you and I never wavers.
- e. Even when we have really made a mess of things. He loves us continually and –
- f. Lamentations 3:22 (CSB)

Because of the LORD's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end.

g. He deals with us in grace and kindness – not in what we have “earned”

h. Psalm 103:10 (NASB)

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

i. You and I are loved and protected. He is our shield and the lifter of our head.

j. He hears us and answers us. We just need to learn to listen

k. We are loved so very much and the Lord God went to great lengths to reveal that to us

l. He showed us by giving; He revealed this truth by serving; His desire for a relationship was communicated throughout the life and ministry of Jesus while He was on earth.

m. Song of Songs 7:10 (CSB)

I am my love's, and his desire is for me.

n. There is an assurance in this statement... it is a declaration of a committed relationship. It's a pledge of devotion and deep love for one another

VIII. Peace Arrives with the Right Perspective

a. Isaiah 26:3 (NLT2)

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

b. 2 Thessalonians 3:16 (TLB)

May the Lord of peace himself give you his peace no matter what happens. The Lord be with you all.

c. Jesus spoke peace to the storm (see Mark 4:39). He brought relief in the turmoil

- d. There is safety for those in the Lord's family... even when there are difficulties
- e. In this Psalm, David found peace – he found confidence in the Lord's protection and care for him
- f. It's there for you and I too
- g. Feeling alone – God is there; In the middle of trouble – God is greater; Not knowing where to turn – Jesus is the answer; Is the mountain in front of you too big – shouts of grace bring God's capability to the situation
- h. It may seem simplistic but knowing that God is trustworthy helps us make sense of circumstances
- i. Trouble is a given in life. No matter how you try to protect yourself and your situation – it happens.
- j. Even if it seems you have everything together. Accidents happen, illnesses arrive, or bad news is on the horizon
- k. And yet, knowing that God is listening – that He cares and is concerned about YOU can bring joy and peace in the most difficult of things.
- l. It isn't that things have changed, it's knowing you aren't alone – that there is hope – that help and answers are available
- m. "Peace with God brings the peace of God. It is a peace that settles our nerves, fills our mind, floods our spirit and, amid the uproar around us, gives us the assurance that everything is all right." (Bob Mumford)

IX. Dependable and Worthy of Praise

- a. As we come to know the Lord God more and more, the more we see Him as trustworthy. The more we trust Him, the more we see – accept – experience His love and compassion
- b. In this Psalm, David acknowledged the ability of God to deal with the circumstances he was facing

- c. Additionally, he spoke praises and adoration over the truth that victory – that relief came from the Lord.
- d. And that He – the Lord – would bless, that He would help them overcome their circumstances and be joyful always
- e. Understand that David's reference to slapping the enemies in the face and breaking their teeth was about “disarming” – making them incapable of attack and harm
- f. God does that for us... He disarms our enemies
 - i. Col. 2:15 (BSB)

And having disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.
- g. Because of His love and compassion for us, the Lord will guide us and protect us in every circumstance

X. Final Thought

- a. There is a side of handling difficult circumstances and crises that can cause exhilaration – some may describe it as “feeling alive”. It takes a lot of energy to accomplish these tasks. And I know many people who have become addicted to this type of excitement. The issue becomes when there is no excitement – when there is no rush – life ceases to hold much meaning. So, you can seek out stress, you can live for the pressure of the moment, and more often than not you will exist in exhaustion. Wanting to “be the man” in the circumstances of life holds short-term experience. The thrill, the high, is only temporary. Eventually, what will happen in living for that kind of validation, is that something will arise that we are incapable of handling. We won't be able to overcome the difficulty on our own effort and ability.

That temporary high will not be able to be found. The crises will occur and the typical response (instead of a high) is one of failure, of disappointment and despair. We sense that we aren't important, that we don't matter.

As the feelings we seek become the issue, we minimize relationships to pursue the excitement that accompanies the feelings. Instead, there is a better choice. As we grow in grace and learn that we can trust God. We become less busy and more grounded in what is essential to our live and peace. We don't need to stay in motion to prove our worth. The high (if you will allow) comes from the security and complete acceptance we get in our relationship with the Lord. Exhaustion doesn't define us, stress isn't the key indicator. We are important because God says so. He declares His love continually throughout our relationship. His desire is for us and we can rest assured that He is there. The change from the temporary to the permanent allows us to begin to see that we can have our best life now. We are no longer society's "status symbol", we are comforted and protected as children of the Creator of the Universe.

Instead of living under the "half-truths" of "I want to spend time with you but...", we can thrive in the fullness of our value in every relationship. We can avoid the excuses we make to feel better about ourselves and remain in the truth that we are acceptable and valuable no matter what the circumstance.

- b. Let's Pray
- c. May the God of Grace and Peace help you see that in every step, you are safe and protected. May He show you that your accomplishments are fulfillment of what He has purposed. And may you find meaning in the truth that trusting Him brings hope and a clear view.