

Washington church of Christ

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Order of Services

Sunday, June 9, 2013

Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	Lee Redd
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Bill Duryea
Prayer for the Cup	Cameron Wydro
Prayer for the Collection	Ralph Ruggiero
Assisting at the Table	Daniel Wydro
Scripture Reading	Brian Jeffries
Morning Closing Prayer	Bob Celentano
Evening Opening Prayer	Stan Thompson
Announcements	Derald Sanchez

Our Prayer List...

Jan Thompson family ... Jan DeGrado ... Doug Focht ...
Joan Focht ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... Donna Banghart ...
our young people here at Washington ... our young
people away at college ... the men and women in military
service ... leaders of our nation ... leaders of our
congregation ... our congregation.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15)

The Washington Messenger

Volume 2 – Number 20

June 9, 2013

Fear or Faith?

The Bible contains various passages that speak to its intrinsic value, and the benefit it provides to those who allow it, as the word of God, to influence their lives. Among such passages is ...

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
(Romans 15:4 NIV)

I'd like to suggest that if we wanted to look into the life of a Bible character and benefit from their "life's lessons learned", the book of Psalms, as much as any other Bible book, is worth consideration. For in it we read of the reactions to life of David, who God himself called "a man after my own heart" (Acts 13:22).

Psalms 3 is said to have been written during the time that David's son, Absalom, initiates and leads a revolt to over-throw his father and take control of the kingdom. When we read it we may be able to empathize with David's heartbreak over his son's civil war and the impact Absalom's growing army is having on David's own life.

Whenever adversity strikes we have a choice: we can turn from God or we can turn to God. We can use suffering to justify unbelief, or we can use suffering as a spur to belief. David leads our way; he turns to the Lord directly.

First, David complains of the increase of his adversaries. The growing opposition becomes overwhelming. Absalom's revolt has caught on, and the nation follows him. We may not lead nations, but if we take a bold stand for Christ our enemies will increase. Our families, our circle of friends, our business associates ... we will feel the effect. Jesus himself promised "*In the world you will have tribulation*" (John 16:33). So it is that God's people often have trouble from the world or from worldly Christians.

Along with the increase of his adversaries David experiences an assault on his faith. In verse 2 he adds, "*Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him."*"

It seems that the success of the opposition rallies others and justifies this charge that God has abandoned David. If the Lord has rejected David then the people are free to do so also.

The application here seems to be that at times, adversity for us lies not simply in the numerical strength of our opponents but also in their implied charge "there is no help for him in God." This is what Lloyd Ogilvie, in his notes on Psalms, calls the threat of practical atheism. It bears so many nuances. First of all, from God's side, practical atheism charges that God is impersonal, at best a "first cause." He is aloof; He doesn't

care. Or God is so holy, He must be angry with us. Or, God is unable to help; He is weak and impotent.

Second, from our side, practical atheism laments, "there is no help for him in God." We are too evil, too faithless, too unworthy ... God certainly wouldn't help us! The consequences for us are clear. The first attack is that God has abandoned us; the second attack is that we aren't worth His attention anyway. The third attack is in the conclusion that we should give up our faith in Him and turn elsewhere for help ... remember Job's wife?

So, the skepticism of others and our own self-doubt do battle against the faith in our hearts. As the evil in the world seemingly explodes upon us, and as our own frailty and compromises become more and more evident, the lie "there is no help for him in God" sounds like the truth.

If we are going to fight against this lie we must remember its origin. Jesus says of Satan,

"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources [or nature], for he is a liar and the father of it [or the father of lies]" (John 8:44).

Man's human attack against God, therefore, is ultimately satanic in its origin. Is there any wonder that the apostle Paul exhorted the Ephesians to take...

"the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (Ephesians 6:16).

This is exactly what David does in verse 3, when he says,

But you are a shield around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. (Psalms 3:3 NIV).

We must turn from the lie to the living God. We can feel David's faith grow as he focuses on the protective power of God rather than the chaos around him ... and so shall it be for us.

The remainder of this Psalm is like a testimony to prayer...

To the LORD I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill. Selah I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side. Arise, O LORD! Deliver me, O my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people. Selah (Psalms 3:4-8 NIV)

Of note is verse 4 ... "*To the Lord I cry aloud...*" David's prayer is audible. He "*cries aloud.*" If your mind wanders in prayer, try praying out loud. It is an excellent discipline ... it will help keep you focused on the Lord. There is a confidence that comes in prayer itself, not simply in answers to prayer. When we pray in faith and are open to the will of God we receive the assurance that God hears, that we are in communion with Him.

Summarizing the flow of Psalm 3, we see the crisis of adversaries; the cry to the Lord; and the confidence that God hears, God answers, God fights the battle, God defeats our enemies, and God blesses His people.

It is said that David probably composed this psalm on a day of battle. This word of God to us is important because we too have our battles against Satan and all his minions. David shows us here who fights these battles for us, and how we are to fight. It is in prayer that we conquer when fear is met with faith. There is a moment when we break through to assurance and we know that God has heard. We can live in confidence ... trusting in Him and His Will for our lives!

EVENTS AND NOTES

WE WILL HAVE THE THURSDAY MORNING STUDY THIS WEEK STARTING AT 11AM ... ALL ARE WELCOME.

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ✦ THE COAT RACK IN THE FOYER WILL BE CLEANED TOMORROW. ANYONE HAVING, OR WANTING, A COAT FROM THE RACK SHOULD TAKE IT TODAY.
- ✦ THERE WILL BE A TEACHERS MEETING TODAY STARTING AT 5:00PM.
- ✦ THE NEXT LADIES BIBLE CLASS IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 27TH.
- ✦ OUR NEXT PRAYER GATHERING IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 29TH. PETE AND SHARON FERENCZE WILL HOST THIS GATHERING.
- ✦ A GOSPEL LECTURE SERIES AT THE UPPER WEST MANHATTAN CONGREGATION ON JUNE 8TH – 9TH. FIVE YOUNG EVANGELISTS FROM THE METRO AREA WILL PRESENT THE LESSONS. A FLYER IS ON THE BULLETIN BOARD.
- ✦ THE NORTHEAST FC CAMP, JUNE 30TH – JULY 5TH.
- ✦ THE WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH.
- ✦ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11TH – 13TH.