

The Book of Psalms
Praying Our Trouble
Psalm 3

Ice Breaker

Option 1

Spend a few minutes—preferably with a partner or two—catching up on your growth as a disciple this past week. How did you do with your personal action steps from last week? Which step did you choose? Meet with someone from the group? What worked? What are you learning? What kept you from taking steps?

Option 2

Think of a time when you've been in trouble. Maybe it was a time when you were a kid and you were in a tough spot. Maybe it's been a more recent time and the trouble is more serious. Whatever the time or the circumstances, what does it feel like to be in trouble?

Understanding the Psalm

1. What stands out to you about Psalm 3? What questions do you have? What particular lines or images stand out to you?
2. Why is David on the run? How does he feel at the start of the psalm? (see 2 Samuel 15-18)
3. How does David perceive his enemies? What are they saying about him?
4. What does he believe to be true about God?
5. What action does he take in verse 5? Why?
6. How do you respond to the harsh language used to describe David's enemies?
7. How does the last verse illustrate David's faith? How would you describe his attitude moving forward?

Gospel Connection

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9 and consider how Peter's introduction to his letter, written to the early church in the midst of persecution, expands on Psalm 3.

- What is the hope that Peter describes?
- What is the purpose of the present suffering and trial?
- Why should we "rejoice with joy"? Isn't that redundant?

Processing and Applying God's Word

As you reflect on Psalm 3, consider the following sets of questions. Share your responses as you feel comfortable with at least one other person in the group.

1. Think about the current state of your prayer life. Do you spend more time talking about God or talking with God? Why? Do you tend to pray in generalities and clichés, or in specifics and real language? Why? How can the group help you understand your current state of prayer and help you take a next step toward a more authentic prayer life?

2. British theologian J.I. Packer describes the importance of being known by God:

“What matters, supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact that underlies it—the fact that He knows me. There is unspeakable comfort in knowing that God is constantly taking in knowledge of me in love and watching over me for my good. There is tremendous relief in knowing that his love for me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst of me, so that no discovery about me can disillusion him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench his determination to bless me.”

To what extent can you relate to Packer’s description? To what extent is this experience unfamiliar to you? How can the group help you think through this?

3. David’s trouble is largely the consequence of his own sins. Yet, for all of his past (and future) sins, he maintains a close relationship with God. Think about the trouble you’ve gotten yourself into. How have these circumstances affected your relationship with God? Have they brought you closer? Driven you away? How has your prayer life changed? Share with one or two members in the group about your experiences. How can you help each other learn and grow? What do you see now that perhaps you didn’t see then?

Action Steps (See bulletin insert)

Commit to take one or more of the following spiritual growth steps this week.

1. Each morning this week read Psalm 3 and pray this prayer: “Father, the world is full of troubles, some of my own making. Teach me to hold my head up in times of trouble because I am your child and servant. Be my shield and glory. And let your presence with me be known as I walk through these present troubles. Help me, Lord!”
2. Make rest a priority this week. Every evening ask for help getting to bed 30 minutes earlier. In addition, spend a few minutes quietly reflecting on your day each evening. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts as you reflect in order to better discern the divine presence you experienced that day. The goal is to simply increase awareness of God in the events of our lives. You might ask “God, where did you act as my shield today?” “Lord, what did you reveal to me about your character today?” or simply ask “Lord, would you show me yourself in the midst of the troubles I faced today?”
3. Make a list of the times God has sustained you in times of trouble. Choose one meal this week to eat alone as a time of reflection, worship, and thanksgiving. While eating pray through your list, thanking God for his physical sustenance as well as his spiritual sustenance in troubled times.