Opening Words

Could you use a good night's sleep? I bet some of you listening today have trouble sleeping because of worry or fear. What's the solution? – meditate on the truth of God. Stop meditating on the lies.

Psalm 3 – Part 2 – What David Did About the Lies He Faced

We are studying Psalm 3, a psalm written by David when the nation erupted into civil war because of the rebellion of his son Absalom. We learned that David's enemies were many, they organized and they came against him with a pack of lies. What were these lies? They were ones we face today!

First, "God isn't going to help you! Why do you think God would help you! You have so many problems. He has turned his back to you." But, we learned those are, indeed, lies. God loves us and will help us.

The second lie, "God isn't going to be faithful. God can't be trusted. You might as well give up because he doesn't have the ability or he doesn't have the desire to help you."

All lies are meant to drive a wedge between the person and God. Verse 1 is constructed in an interesting way because the first word in the verse is the name of God which is Yahweh, or Lord, and the last word in the verse is the word, "me." In between those two words – "Lord" and "me" is the foes that rise up against us. Our foes, our enemies, the lies that come against us try to separate us from God. But by meditating on the truth of God's word, the truth of who we are in Christ and the truth of God's faithfulness, we can extinguish those lies and not fall in battle.

Today, let's learn more about this Psalm. Let's see what else David did to strengthen his heart. Let me read verse 3 to you:

> 3 But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
> my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

In verse 3 David mentions three things about God. First, he calls him a shield. But notice that God is not just a shield *in front* of him. He is a shield *around* him. God surrounds David with his protection. The lies were an attempt to get David to think that God was separated from him, distant from him. The lies that come against us do the same. They are an attempt to make us think that God is not with us, but David knew better and we should know better. God is not distant from us. God surrounds us with his shield.

The imagery of a soldier's shield is found frequently in the book of Psalms. Listen to some of these verses:

Psalm 5:12
Surely, Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

Psalm 7:10
My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart.

Psalm 28:7
The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.

Psalm 84:11
For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Just to let you know – I pray one of these verses for myself frequently. It's Psalm 5:12. I pray that God would surround me with favor as with a shield. You also can pray this for yourself and for your family.

The second truth David mentions about God in verse 3 is that God is ***his glory***. David says, "You, Lord, are my glory." What does David mean by this? He means two things. First, God is the one in whom David boasted, and he is the one in whom we must boast. The nations of the world boast in their idols. But those idols are nothing. They can't see or hear or walk or answer prayer. Our God is the only God. He is the creator of all. He is our boast. He is our glory. We should not be ashamed of him. We should boast in him before others.

Second, when David says "God is my glory," he means that God is the one who gives him honor. David's honor as king and as a man of integrity was in the hands of God. David is speaking of his honor that God bestowed upon him. Listen to these words from Psalm 21:4-5, "The king asked life of you, you gave it to him length of days forever and ever. His glory is great through your salvation. Splendor and majesty you place upon him."

Now some might say, "Yes, but David was a king and I am not." Well, if you say that, you are wrong for if you are in Christ you are destined to be a king and to rule with Christ. God is one day going to bestow great honor and glory upon you for your service to him. And in Psalm 3:3 David reminds us that the Lord is our glory. The Lord is the one who protects our honor. The Lord is the one who protects our reputation. We don't have to hire a PR firm. We don't have to go to court. God is our protection and our honor.

God is our shield. God is our glory, and the third truth David mentions in Psalm 3:3 is that he is the one who lifts our head high. I see two wonderful truths in this verse. First, sometimes, we hang our heads low. We hang them low for many reasons. We may be discouraged by our failures. We may be disappointed in the actions of others. We may be in dismay at the circumstances of life. We may be fearful of what others are saying or doing. Life is this way – life tends to make us hang our heads low.

I remember a few years back, someone I love very much was in an awful situation at work. He worked for a boss who got things done by verbally abusing others. He would get in his employees

faces and scream and curse at them. The one I love was beaten down by weeks and months of this kind of verbal abuse and he was hanging his head low. Yes, that's the way life is for many of us.

But I have some good news for you. God isn't this way with you. God is the one who lifts our heads! God comes to us with great tenderness. He carefully reaches out his hand to our chin which is almost touching our chest and gently lifts our head so that we make eye contact with him. He is the one who lifts our head. Are you letting him lift your head?

The image of God lifting our head also has the idea of a great athletic contest. Imagine with me a boxing match. Two boxers have fought it out for 15 rounds. It was a close competition. The referee is standing in the middle of the ring with a boxer on either side of him and he is holding their arms. The announcer is giving the results and one of the boxers is declared the winner! His arms are lifted up and if you look closely you will see that his head will be lifted in triumph also. If you look at the other boxer his arms remain at his side and his head remains down.

God is the lifter of our head. He is the one who ultimately gives us the triumph over all our enemies whether they are external or internal enemies.

This is how David coped with difficulties. He meditated upon the truth that God was his shield, God was his glory, and God was the one who lifted his head, three truths we should all think about.

David went on to say in verse 4, "I call out to the Lord and he answers me from his holy mountain." David did not let the lies of the enemy keep him from praying. Neither should we!

David said that God heard him from his holy mountain. This is the place where the tabernacle was pitched. This is the place where the temple would be built. This is the place where God manifested his glory. For us, this place is heaven where Jesus is at the right hand of God, exalted and reigning as Lord. We can have this added assurance that God will hear our prayers because God is for us and Jesus is at the right hand of God having died for us, risen for us, been enthroned for us, and now interceding for us. God will hear when we call upon him.

What is the result of this? What is the result of pushing away the lies by realizing that God is our shield, our glory, and the lifter of our head? Well, surprisingly, one of the results is a good night's sleep! Listen to verse 5, "I lie down and sleep. I wake again, because the Lord sustains me." David learned not to lose sleep over his troubles. He learned to have such peace with God in his heart so that at night he could sleep peacefully and awaken refreshed because he knew the Lord was the one sustaining him. David said, "I will not fear even though tens of thousands come against me."

Could you use a good night's sleep? I bet many of you listening today have trouble sleeping because of worry or fear. What's the solution – meditate on the truth of God. Stop meditating on the lies. God is your shield. God is your glory. God will lift your head in triumph.

David finishes with a flourish of confidence,

Arise, Lord!
  Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
  break the teeth of the wicked.

8 From the Lord comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.

David asks God to hit the enemy right in the place where the lies came from. Hit them in the mouth God! Stop those lies. Show them to be wrong! Exalt your truth.

The enemies were saying there was no deliverance for David. But David finished the psalm by saying, "From the Lord comes deliverance."

And then here is the glorious conclusion – David prays for the blessing of God to come upon others. David's victory was not just for him but it was a victory that unleashed the blessing of God upon the whole congregation.

God will do the same with you. He will give you victory and then he will bless others through you!