

The Truth about the Life of Faith

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Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] Well, we're going to turn now to our Bible reading this morning, if you would, and we're looking this morning at Psalm number 3. If you have one of our visitor's Bibles, you'll find that on page 448, and you will see that the title of this psalm, and remember the titles of the psalms are part of the actual psalm, not the bit in bold print, that's been added by somebody who thinks that's a good title, but the little bit in small capitals there, a psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son, that is part of the scripture text.

And just keep your Bibles open at Psalm 3 there, and just listen, I'm going to read a little bit of the background of what this was all about, and what this psalm is speaking about.

If you want to read later on in 2 Samuel, really from chapter 12 onwards, you read the long and sad story of the demise of David's family, and of the terrible things that began to happen following his dreadful sin with Bathsheba.

And it culminated in a rebellion in his own family, his own son Absalom leading a coup d'etat against him, and David and his entourage having to flee from the capital Jerusalem in great ignominy and great distress.

And just listen to these words as David is making his way with a defeated host away from Jerusalem. When King David came to Baharim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gerah.

[1 : 41] And he came, and he cursed continually. And he threw stones at David, and all the servants of King David, and all the people, and all the mighty men were on his right hand and his left. And Shimei said as he cursed, Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man.

The Lord has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. And the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood.

And Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said to the king, Why should this dead dog curse my Lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head. But the king said, What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah?

If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, Curse David. Who then shall say, Why have you done so? And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, Behold, my own son seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite leave him alone. Let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.

[2 : 57] So David and his men went on the road, and Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and flung dust. And the king and all the people who were with him arrived weary at the Jordan.

And so Psalm 3 is the Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. O Lord, how many are my foes. Many are rising against me.

Many are saying of my soul, There is no salvation for him in God. But you, O Lord, are a shield around about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.

I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept. I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.

I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O Lord. Save me, O my God.

[4 : 09] For you strike all my enemies on the cheek. You break the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing be on your people.

Amen. Amen. May God bless to us. This is his word. Well, would you turn with me to Psalm number 3 that we read a little earlier, page 448, if you have one of our church Bibles.

A psalm which teaches us the truth about the life of faith. I think it's true that for many skeptics, the Christian faith is just a crutch.

It's a pretense that life is other than it really is. It's something that helps you feel better and cope better with life. That's why Karl Marx called religion the opium of the people.

That's why Richard Dawkins calls the Christian faith just a delusion. Something that cuts no ice with the real hard-nosed realist. And I guess there is some justification for these sort of views because it is true that some of what passes for Christianity is full of fantasy.

[5 : 35] The health, wealth, and happiness that's touted by the prosperity gospel, which is so rife today, and often has the very largest churches, is certainly like that.

Even, I think it has to be said, much of mainstream evangelical culture today is marked, isn't it, by a cult of celebration. Singing songs that are full of endless positive and happy messages.

And I think that is so much so that sometimes it is really very hard for people to actually come to church when they're not happy. When they're very sad. When they're full of great grief and suffering.

Because being forced to sing celebration songs when you feel like mourning is very difficult. It makes your pain, it makes your agony far worse. So I suppose some might well see the Christian faith as some kind of fantasy, some kind of denial of reality.

But of course, that kind of fantasy religion is in fact a million miles away from anything that the Bible speaks about. And the reality that the Bible is in fact rooted in and constantly expresses.

[6 : 47] The Psalms, of course, teach us theology in the raw. They speak and they sing of real life. And of real faith. And of the real God. Not some fantasy.

You'll see that Psalm 3 has a title. It's the first Psalm with a title. When David fled from Absalom. All the Psalms after Psalms 1 and 2 in the first book of the Psalter. That's Psalms 1 to 41.

They all have titles. And they're all of David. That means they're either by him or they're about him. God's anointed king. And they are nearly all laments.

It's rather striking. If you read through the Psalms, you'll find that more than half of all the Psalms either contain lament or are completely lament. Half the Bible's official hymn book laments.

And I think that's something we have to take seriously, isn't it? And you can't just write it off and say, well, that's Old Testament religion. Because the Psalms are the most quoted book of the Old Testament you'll find in the New Testament.

[7 : 52] By Jesus and by his apostles. And if that's so, it's rather strange, isn't it? That the Psalms have been more or less abandoned in the modern church in our world today.

What modern Christian songs can you sing in the face of great personal tragedy and grief and sorrow? Or in the face of corporate pain or agony in a fellowship?

There are some. There definitely are. Not many. But you open the Psalms and immediately you find something that resonates with real life.

Something that speaks to the very depth of our souls. There's no fantasy in the Psalms. There's no let's pretend. And here in Psalm 3 is a song that perhaps, well, maybe some of us here could sing with great feeling right now.

At this moment in your lives. I'm sure in a company of this size that is so. It's a real song. It's a song about the life of faith. There's no pretending in it. There's no hiding from the truth.

[9 : 00] At times are very, very tough. And yet it is a psalm of very great hope and encouragement. It's really an example in an individual's life of the realities that we saw the other week in Psalm 1 and Psalm 2.

Which I'll write at the beginning of this Psalter to show us the world that we truly live in. And Psalm 1, remember, tells us that God's word rules human life.

And that true happiness is to be found in turning away from the words and the attitudes and the wisdom of the world. And to delight in God's word. And Psalm 2 tells us that God's son truly rules human history.

And that real happiness and true refuge is found only in him and not among those who are united against him in this world. But you see, neither Psalms pretend that there is no present struggle.

In the presence, what we see in these Psalms is the man of faith surrounded by many pressures from the world. And we see the powers of the world firmly united against God's son in Psalm 2.

[10:10] And Psalm 3, if you like, is a picture of that reality on the ground. Of what this actually means in the life of any faithful believer. The people of the world among...

Sorry, the people of the word among the people of the world. What it's like to be the people of the king in the territory of the king's enemies. And there's no pretense.

There's no fantasy. And yet there is a very great deal of encouragement. So Psalm 3 tells us, I think, three things very clearly about the life of real biblical faith.

And the first is this. It is a life of constant foes. There's nothing pretend about the Bible's view of what the Christian life will be like.

It is a life surrounded by enemies. Both within and without. And it is a life with a constant assault of enemies directed right at the very heart of our faith.

[11:10] To destroy our assurance. And to destroy the consciousness of the salvation that we have in our God. Look at verse 1 and 2. O Lord, how many are my foes.

Many are rising against me. Many are saying of my soul, There is no salvation for him in God. See the agony and the intensity of that cry.

His foes are many. Three times. Many, many, many. Look how personal it is. They're my foes.

They're against me. They're assaulting my soul.

Some directly, deeply at his very core. And the many foes are mocking him. There's no salvation for him. Now what would bring about that agonized cry of lament?

Well, the answer, of course, is that it is the agonized cry of someone whose outward circumstances in their life suggest that God has deserted them.

[12:14] And that conclusion, of course, is reinforced by their inner thoughts which tell them that real sin and failure in their life means that the presence of God must surely have been driven away from them.

Because of what they've done. And because only themselves is to blame. Well, that was David, the author of this psalm. That said, you can see the story in 2 Samuel chapters 12 to 18.

But, of course, it is a very frequent experience, isn't it, for many of God's people. As I said, after David's great victories, after his ascension to the throne, it all began to go wrong.

And his own sin, it was, that led to terrible consequences for his family life, which in turn led to huge problems in politics and in national life.

And nearly, very nearly, ended up in him losing his kingdom. If you read back in 2 Samuel chapter 11, there's those faithful words that, at the time when kings go out to war, well, David the king wasn't going out to war.

[13:24] He was living a life of luxury. We see that picture of him on the roof, looking across and seeing this beautiful woman bathing naked. And, of course, David was a real man, not a fantasy figure.

He's not an asexual being. He was a red-blooded male. And, of course, his head was going to be turned by a beautiful woman. Today, well, it's internet pornography that's so easy, isn't it?

But David had a live show, and he was a powerful man. And powerful men are in very particular danger, aren't they, from that kind of temptation, because powerful men can usually get what they want.

And it's so common today, isn't it? We see that in our sports stars and rich businessmen, celebrities, and so on. All these emerging stories of predatory abuse from years back, from people who were in powerful positions.

And David the king was a powerful man, and he took what he wanted. He took another man's wife. He committed adultery with her. And, of course, he was then faced with the problem that faces so many in that situation, an unwanted pregnancy.

[14:30] And so often, again, that just leads to greater sin, often to the sin of murder. Today, that problem is very often solved by abortion, by getting rid of the baby that's being conceived.

You know that a third of women in this country will have an abortion at some time during their life? A terrible statistic, isn't it?

But in David's case, it led to murder of a particularly brutal kind, murder of the innocent husband of the woman that he had taken. And then Bathsheba, as you know, became his wife.

But God confronted David, and he punishes him. And as the story goes on, that child dies. And not only that, but God promises David that the consequences of his sin will mean that violence will not depart from his own household.

Now, what he has done will rebound, and even his own wives will be humiliated by another man. That's exactly what happened.

[15 : 43] By his own son, in fact. You see, God forgave David's sin. The Bible is very clear on that. But the consequences of David's sin could not be undone. Because life just isn't like that, is it?

We would love, wouldn't we, to turn the clock back and for things to be different. But the clock doesn't go back. And that's a real warning to us, isn't it? Don't let's be naive.

If David, a man after God's own heart, could sin that way, so can you and so can I. David's glands were just as powerful as yours and mine, just the same, just as human.

We've got to be careful, especially men. Especially those of us who are in positions of influence and power and opportunity. Especially when all round about us, the world says, take what you want, take what you can get.

It's yours to enjoy. The world will delude us. It will say, have it and there'll be no consequences. Friends, that's a lie. Don't be fooled.

[16 : 46] You can read it in the story of David. And it's a sobering tale. Don't think it doesn't apply to you. It might just be that you haven't had the opportunity yet.

But anyway, David's story is very grim reading. And what we see is sexual dysfunction multiplying in his family, as it always does. That's true, isn't it? Where there's been sexual abuse in a family, nearly always that person who's the abuser has themselves been abused in the past.

It's a terrible story. It leads to incest, to rape, and to further murder. And then it culminates in Absalom, David's own son, conspiring against him and leading a coup d'etat.

And in 2 Samuel chapter 15, you have a picture of dejection and defeat. And David flees Jerusalem with his bedraggled band. And they say, the hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom.

And people are cursing David and throwing rocks at him and spitting. So here's God's anointed king, the man after God's own heart, the one whom God has promised that his descendants will reign on his throne forever.

[17 : 58] And through whom all God's purposes for this world will be fulfilled. And yet he's rejected by public opinion. And it would seem that he's been rejected also by God himself.

There are real foes all round about him. Absalom, his son, the soldiers, the priests, the prophets, the whole world and the whole church together saying there is no salvation for him.

But I think even worse than that probably were the foes within. Because David knew his own heart. He knew that there was truth in their accusations. He knew he was a sinner.

He knew he had brought calamity on his whole household. And he knew that if he looked within to his own heart, well, there was no great assurance of faith to be found there.

In fact, there was the opposite because he had to admit that he deserved for God to desert him and leave him and reject him. And that's surely why these curses of Shimei that we read cut home so greatly.

[19 : 09] You man of blood, you worthless man, see your evil is on you for you are a man of blood. And David knew that was true. And so he said, let him curse.

Maybe God indeed himself has sent him. That was David's story when he mouthed the words of this psalm. Of course, David was unique.

He was a unique historical figure. He was a unique figure in the history of God's salvation. None of us is God's anointed king. But in another way, of course, David is just like us, isn't he?

A man chosen by God's grace alone. A man chosen for a purpose of grace and glory, not for his own merits. just a sinner adopted to become God's son.

And he had enemies in fact precisely because he represented God in the world. He stood for God and he spoke for God just as every true believer does today. Because as Psalm 2 says, remember, the whole world is united against God and his anointed.

[20 : 22] And so the whole world is united against God's people. All of whom, the Bible tells us, are adopted likewise to be his sons. Anointed to reign as kings with him, says Revelation chapter 5.

And so we too will face enemies, the Bible tells us. Honestly, enemies without and, yes, desperate enemies within. And we face just the same kind of deep and bitter struggles because we too are sinful people.

We are forgiven, of course, and yet at the same time we are all living with the consequences of our sin, aren't we? And that makes us so very vulnerable to this kind of assault on our faith, on our assurance, on our confidence.

That's real life, isn't it? In the life of faith. Real enemies without. We see that today with public opinion that scorns us. There's no salvation in that gospel.

It's nonsense. It's foolish. It's old-fashioned. It's ridiculous. God is dead. Look at the church. Look at the decline. It's so obvious. Why on earth do you persevere in your ridiculous nonsense?

[21 : 34] Do you think your faith is unique? Look around. All these religions are just the same. That's what we hear all the time, isn't it? In other parts of the world, of course, it's a very real and physical oppression that people face.

Pakistan, Pakistan, the Middle East and other countries in Asia today. Real physical persecution. Sharia law. Christians being murdered.

Where's your God to save you? Plenty of mocking enemies in the world today. And like David, very often it's close to home too, isn't it?

There's scorn in the family. Some of us might have the mockery and the opposition of a spouse who doesn't share our faith, who scorns it, or our children perhaps, or our parents.

Very common when a young person comes to Christ and wants to change the pattern of their life and the direction of their life to go and serve God. Often there can be very violent opposition from a family who thinks you're going nuts and wasting your life.

[22 : 40] New Testament is very, very real in saying to us that the life of true faith will mean constant foes right to the very end. In fact, the New Testament tells us to expect it to get worse and worse as we get closer to the end.

In 2 Timothy 3 we're told plainly in the last days there will be terrible times even in the professing church. It'll be tough for Christian leaders, Paul says.

You have to endure suffering. But actually, it'll be tough for all believers. He says, everyone who wants to desire to live a godly life will be persecuted. You will have constant foes right to the end, said Jesus.

But often the worst foes are the enemies within. Like David, we look at our circumstances and we look at ourselves and we know that we've made mistakes.

We know that we're sinners. We know that we fall again and again and again. Sometimes it is just exactly like David into sexual sin in the past, sometimes in the far too recent past.

[23 : 46] The guilt of that can lead us to despair or a host of other things that we know are not right and have not been right in our lives. You see, we have a great enemy, don't we?

We sung about it who tempts us to despair, who tells us of the guilt within and says, there's no salvation for you. Look at you. I wouldn't be surprised if some of us here this morning came into church with that heavy feeling on your heart.

Peter says in 1 Peter 5, your adversary, your foe, the devil, prowls round seeking to devour.

Revelation 12, he's called the accuser of the brothers because he points you to what you know is true just as he did to David.

You're a man of blood. Look at your heart. And he says, you're useless. There's no salvation for you. Look at your failures as a husband or as a wife or as a parent with your children.

Look at the mess you've made of relationships or a whole host of other things. Sometimes people feel that they have committed the unpardonable sins and something that is just so beyond the pale that there could never possibly be a way back for them.

[25 : 08] But friends, the Bible tells us and Jesus himself tells us, no, an enemy has done this. The great foe, the one who is behind all other foes. Let me say this very clearly this morning.

If you don't hear anything else, hear this. The mark of a true believer according to the Bible is that they have real foes. Foes without and foes within.

That is the first definition of a believer in the whole Bible. I never tire of saying this in Genesis 3.15.

The believer is one in who God has placed enmity.

God has put you into a struggle with the enemy. That's what a believer is. The real Christian has real foes always.

It's part of the very definition of what it means to be the people of faith. But that's not all.

[26 : 08] That would surely destroy us in a way, wouldn't it? Were it not for the great but God in verse 3 of our psalm? You see, the Lord is the great circumstance that changes all other circumstances in life.

But you, O Lord, he says, you're near me and that changes everything even though the mocking foes are joined by the knowledge in my own heart that says it's true and condemns me alongside

them.

You see what he's saying? He is saying in these verses 3 to 6 that the real life of faith is a life of constant fellowship with the Lord. That the true believer has a real relationship with a living God. That's what verses 3 to 6 are all about. It's about the reality of our relationship with God that is greater than anything that can ever assail us. Even the greatest of our foes.

And David describes it as the possession of two things. He knows constantly the beauty of God's presence and the bounty of his provision. Verse 3 you see describes the beauty and the wonder of God's presence with his own.

[27 : 18] The Lord's presence is his salvation. And that's so important isn't it to remember especially when we're deeply conscious of our enemies enemies without and within.

When we know him and when we call on his name his presence is with us. Not to judge us as our sin deserves but to save us from our sin.

To be our shield our refuge from all evil. Verse 3 you Lord are a shield about me. He is our protection you see from all these arrows real ones and metaphorical ones.

The fiery darts that ignite all those fires of fear within our hearts. Not just a shield in front but round about he says totally protecting him.

He's a refuge of safety no matter where the attacks may come from. Blessed are all who take refuge in him is how Psalm 2 ended.

[28 : 18] And he also says the psalmist is our righteousness in the face of sin and shame. My glory he says my dignity my identity that which gives me value when my self esteem is in the dust he is the answer to everything that quite rightly makes me ashamed of myself when my behavior has been inglorious he is my glory instead and he himself says David is my restorer from the depths of disaster he's the lifter of lovely picture think of what it's like when a little child is upset and crying and their head is down what do you do you put your finger under their chin don't you lift it up you wipe away the tears the lifter of my head remember in the story of Joseph that was the word that came to Pharaoh's cup bearer through Joseph wasn't it the king will lift up your that's the beauty of his presence which is with those that he loves all things he makes new even from the mess that we've made see

David is throwing all of his needs on God and he's saying I depend on you alone for protection for my dignity for my vindication if you want me to remain your chosen one your son your man it's all got to be your doing that's just what the bible means by faith isn't it looking to him for everything that we need everything that we need comes only from the beauty of his presence with us that's faith you see how verses 4 to 6 also describe this life of continuous fellowship with God as knowing constantly the bounty of his provision he neatly sums it up as knowing three supernatural things first in verse 4 it's knowing the miracle of prayer I cried aloud to the Lord and he answered me from his holy hill you see prayer is the primary mark of the life of God in the soul of man so the Lord said of Saul of

Tarsus when he had been converted to Ananias behold he's praying and it's the same for every new believer isn't it when somebody comes to know the Lord Jesus for the first time suddenly prayer becomes a real thing instead of just an idea or a rote or a duty and we know that our Lord is the God who answers prayer remember Elijah on Mount Carmel in 1st Kings 18 the God who hears and who answers he is the God compared to these deaf and impotent babes and in distress you see we can cry aloud like the psalmist we don't have to hide our emotions we can cry to the one who has already answered from his holy hill from the very place that seemed to be deserted by God to David to God's temple in Jerusalem but no he's there and he's answering from the very place that our world says is empty there's no one there there's no

God there's no throne there's nowhere to pray to but as Psalm 2 told us so emphatically his throne is set in Zion and we have access continuing fellowship by the miracle of prayer to that throne where God hears and God answers that's the miracle of prayer and says David the true believer knows also the miracle of God's providence verse 5 I lay down and slept I woke again for the Lord sustained me remember Psalm 1 the Lord watches over the way of his own he watches over the very hairs of their head they're numbered says Jesus so that despite all appearance to the contrary all things do indeed work together for good to them that love God for David in this instance it was just real physical preservation I think he's saying he was surprised to wake up again surprised not to have been killed during the night by violent foes that were all around

I know that there are some here this morning who have faced violent death from enemies of the gospel faced guns pointed at them but I've known the miracle of God's providential protection now of course God does not promise that every one of us will be spared physical suffering in this world indeed he promises us the opposite he tells us that glory that is promised will be preceded very often by great suffering but through all this he does have us in his strong and powerful hands always isn't it an encouragement when you look around the church at the older saints among us whom God has sustained in their faith all through their lives through many dangers toils and snares and still today in the twilight of their years they're following the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting in his grace friends that is a great and powerful miracle and every

[33 : 44] Sunday when I look out at some of your faces I praise God for the evidence before me of God's providential care for his own that's the miracle of his providence his constant care for his people when they're asleep and when they're awake all the days of our lives and you see because we have that also our continuous fellowship with him gives us also the miracle of peace verse 6 even amid great opposition and hostility I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around see the presence of God banishes fear and it gives supernatural strength there's nothing false there's nothing pretend about this notice the enemies are still there they're very real they haven't disappeared but to know that God is near and to know that he is with us well that strengthens feeble arms and weak knees when you're waiting in the doctor's surgery and your heart's full of fear about what he's going to tell you about those test results or when you're waiting in the anesthetic room or when you're waiting anxiously outside the theater wondering what's happening or when you're facing that really tough encounter with someone that you're dreading perhaps somebody at work perhaps a friend that you've had a difficulty with or when you're under attack for your faith or in all sorts of situations that naturally strike fear into our heart you see the great blessing of the gospel is that his presence brings us peace even in the midst of our foes

I will fear no evil for thou art with me you prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies says Psalm 23 because even there the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus says the apostle Paul the miracle of peace through continuous fellowship with him of course not that we are supernatural people of course not but we do have this promise of supernatural peace in the midst of real enraging circumstances because he is with us like Paul in 2 Timothy 4 when everyone else deserted him but the Lord stood with me and strengthened me and he could say the Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom see like David he knew the beauty of his presence and the bounty of his provision and so can you because the true life of faith is a life of continuous fellowship with the one who is our shield our glory the lifter of our head he is our refuge he is our righteousness he is our restorer and he hears our prayers and he sustains us by his providence and he grants our heart his peace and that's why you see the final verses of the psalm show us that the real Christian can have a life of confident faith verses 7 and 8 you see show us there's nothing passive about our part in the victory that God promises us real confidence leads us out into battle with his word going before us a word of testimony of victory over all enemies that's the significance of verse 7 you see arise oh Lord that's the battle cry of the people of God you can read it back in numbers chapter 10 the ark of the covenant led out the Israelites into the battles of conquest the people said let your enemies be scattered and those who hate you flee before you you see David is taking up the challenge and the responsibility of leading God's faithful people out against enemies against God's enemies and his people's enemies God is the one who brings victory and salvation but David has responsibilities to fight the enemies and in this instance he did you can read about it in 2nd Samuel chapter 18 and he won a great victory for God's people although it was a great personal cost in the death of his son Absalom you see there's great significance in that war cry it's the ark of God's covenant that led the way that contained the words of God's promised salvation it contained his gospel so this is a supreme act of faith David is trusting in God's promises normal armies lead out with the artillery don't they not with the Bible but you see in our battles of faith our confidence as believers is in the real relationship with God who hears and answers our prayers and with the God who has promised salvation to his people and faith just means seeing that it means seeing the invisible and seeing that God's army is far far greater than any foe that can be facing us I love that story in 2nd Kings 6 of Elisha's servant do you remember it?

Elisha's whole house is surrounded by the Syrian army and his servant is panicking and Elisha's getting rather fed up of him and just says to the Lord oh for goodness sake Lord please open his eyes and the servant's eyes are open and what does he see?

[39 : 14] The hosts of the heavenly armies vastly outnumbering those that are against them faith you see doesn't tell us to say let's pretend let's close our eyes to the real world no our eyes are open to the real foes but they're open to so much more to the truth of psalm 1 and psalm 2 that God's word of power is the key to life that God's son is enthroned and does rule the earth and the heaven therefore we can walk by faith trusting in that promise which is verse 8 of salvation and blessing for God's people because as verse 7 says he will defeat all his enemies you see those things are inseparable he mustn't ever forget that he breaks the teeth and delivers out of these vicious mouths but he strikes the cheek of his enemies he disgraces them and humiliates them because there is no salvation without the defeat of

God's enemies publicly and totally psalm 2 remember talked about breaking them with a rod of iron and that of course is what God's promise is all about God's covenant God's gospel in the ark was to lead the way to his people's victory always pointing to the ultimate victory over all God's enemies for all his people and salvation for all God's people and release from the jaws of their enemies and the humiliation of them all that was David's prayer as the anointed king of God that was the prayer of the Lord Jesus the great David's greatest son who came to save us all that's what the New Testament tells us plainly Jesus came says John to destroy the works of the devil he came to deliver from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of his son in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins how does he do that Paul says in Colossians 3 2 through disarming powers and authorities making public spectacle of them and triumphing over them by his cross breaking their teeth and smiting their cheek and friends you see that's the grace and the wonder of the gospel that's what links you and me and every

Christian believer with David and his real experience because out of the ashes of human sin our God works salvation for his people it's the triumph of his promise of grace and out of out of David's sinful union with Bathsheba a son was born wasn't he Solomon and through him God's promise lived on until at last his greater son the Lord Jesus Christ whose name Yeshua means salvation until he came into the world to defeat forever all his people's enemies and to pour out blessings and forgiveness to all of his own all his people from every nation all who are far off blessing be upon your people and you see each of us although we have real foes we're to rejoice in that because these things are the proof that we're truly his because we have fellowship with the real son of God who loved us and gave himself for us and that means that we also can have confident faith just as David did not to be passive but for us also to take up arms and to fight to fight against enemies without and against enemies within not of course any longer with the weapons of physical warfare we don't fight any longer for an earthly kingdom that's why mistaken religionists all over the world today do terrible things they're so utterly wrong about that but we do have the same war cry it is our God and his gospel promises that leads the way and against enemies without we have says Paul the great weapon of the gospel of God we destroy every argument we seek to break down every stronghold we seek to bring every thought captive to the glorious news of our Lord Jesus Christ and our confidence is not in ourselves but in the power of God to bring men captive to open their eyes to the beauty of his salvation and we fight also against enemies within with the same weapons weapons of the gospel but applied and and cherished in our own lives as a shield of faith to protect us from the darts of the evil one who tempts us to despair when he comes to us and says there is no salvation for you we claim the righteousness the peace the salvation that is ours by fellowship with the son of God who loved us and gave himself for us no one can rob us of these great blessings because salvation belongs not to us but to the

Lord so friends that's the truth about the life of faith of real Christian faith it is a life of constant foes there will be enemies without and within to the very end Jesus is absolutely plain about that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God but we have continuous fellowship in him with a God who is for us and who is for us everything that we can't be for ourselves he is constantly our refuge he is constantly our righteousness he is constantly our restorer he's our shield our glory and the lifter of our head and we will know always to the very end the beauty of his presence and the bounty of his provision he will never leave us nor forsake us never says the Bible and so we can have can't we confidence confident face to march out into enemy territory sure in the knowledge that in his great victory is every victory that you and I will ever need so friends if you're feeling this

morning a bit like David you're singing Lord how many are my foes how many are the battles facing me at the moment how powerful and oppressive the enemies of my soul within seem to be to bring me to despair don't listen to the voice of the world listen to the voice of the Lord you can have confident faith not because deliverance is in your hands that would be a disaster but because it is in his hands it's because salvation belongs to the Lord that we can be sure that blessing will be upon his people that means we can pray with David with confident faith arise oh Lord save me oh my God and he will always always answer that prayer let's pray heavenly father how we thank you that despite our weakness we know your wonders we thank you that you are the God who hears and answers us and promises us salvation so may we today know what it is to call upon you and to rejoice in your constant presence with us all the days of our lives amen