



Songs in the Night Psalm 3

Are You Aware of Your Importance?

I have gone through this before where I have wondered if my life mattered to anyone. Would it affect others if I never existed? I heard recently of a young woman whose husband left her after she had a mastectomy. It is hard to believe you are of value when that happens! An older fellow had worked thirty years for the same company and was suddenly let go. How do you recover from that? I had friends in graduate school who tried several times to pass the entrance exam to get into the doctoral program and never did. It is tough to deal with that sort of embarrassment. Parents who are rejected by their children, children who never live up to the expectations of their parents, men and women who give their lives to an occupation that is not valued in our society, young men and women rejected by those they hoped to marry; the pain is immeasurable. What has struck me in the past several years is the individuality within the masses. I was mesmerized by the vast numbers of people I encountered on the Metro in Moscow. Huge crowds enveloped me as I stood waiting to go through the gates and get on a train. The sheer numbers were overwhelming, and it was tempting to think of all the people as one giant crowd...but they were not. Each one there was a person...with problems and hardship and dreams of what might be.

The earth is not filled with eight billion people. It is one person, eight billion times. There are eight billion single individuals all living their unique and particular lives. Do you ever really see yourself as one in the crowd or as one, one in every situation? Individuality is never lost but sometimes the individuality of the others is forgotten. When the pain of rejection or the anguish of being attacked or ignored is encountered, it may seem as if there is nowhere to go with our pain, no one to hear us, no one to comfort us despite there being so many in the world. We feel alone when we are pushed aside and trampled. Psalm 3, one of the many beautiful songs found in the Bible, takes aim at the feeling so many of us have that we are just a drop in the ocean, a statistic in census data reports, one with pain, one with hurts we have carried but kept hidden from all the other ones. This song is extremely raw and personal. It describes how it feels to need an advocate, someone to stand up for you when your cause becomes unbearable and impossible to achieve.

O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him. Selah But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. 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. (Psalm 3 NIV) You probably are jolted by the angry violent tone of this song. Yet it reminds me more of desperation than fury. The songwriter wanted God to destroy the source of his pain. Have you ever felt that way?

The notation on this Psalm indicates that it was written when David, the king of Israel was fleeing his son Absalom who had a great army and was out to rip the kingship from his father. David had an extraordinary life. He experienced extremes that you probably will never encounter. Yet you have been through it too; you have had victories and defeats also and each one of them has impacted you and shaped the way you look at God, the way you value your life. Let's take a look at David's life and see if in some way you can relate to it.

We meet David as a young man who was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the next king of Israel. However, as we learn, that kingship was far in the future and at the moment, he was shepherd for his father's flocks. When he came to bring food to his brothers who were in King Saul's army, poised to fight the Philistines, he discovered that a great giant challenged any willing Israelite to one-to-one combat with the winner's country immediately enslaving the other nation's people. David challenged the giant Goliath and killed him with the sling, chopping off Goliath's head with the giant's own sword. Right away, David became one of the chief generals in Saul's army, defeating Philistine forces right and left. He was so successful that the women of Israel sang of his victories. **"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."** (1 Samuel 18:7 NIV) The elation over being a national hero did not last long though. After he married King Saul's daughter, the king became wildly jealous of the acclaim David was receiving, so much so that he wanted David dead. **Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed." So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped.** (1 Samuel 19:11-12 NIV)

One moment David was the most popular person in Israel, the next he is all alone running for his life. You have experienced these kinds of waves. Everything is going great and then it's not. You are healthy and then you have cancer. You are in a wonderful relationship and then it's over. Finances are perfect and then you are in debt. Perhaps the changes are over a long period of time or maybe in the blink of an eye. Probably your waves have not been as high and low as David's, but it could be they have been...at least for you. Your wave is not measured by me any more than mine is measured by you. You can drown in a foot of water just like you can in the middle of the ocean and a kiddie pool can be just as enjoyable as a swim in the Atlantic. You measure the size of your waves by what they mean to you.

Now I want you to notice something. When David ran for his life, he was all by himself. Not a single human being to keep him company, even his wife stayed back. As he cried out to God for help, he felt alone and forgotten. And yet, as we read more, we discover that over four hundred men and women joined him. You have more friends than you know, more who love you and want to see you prosper than you are aware. God had certain people for David who would be there for him, who would support him and encourage him. We find that in the middle of David's loneliness and despair, a close friend of his risked his own life to go be with David and boost his spirits and help see things differently. Jonathan, the very son of King Saul, David's mortal enemy, came out to where David was hiding and encouraged him. He wanted David to know that God was with him, that the Lord had plans for him and David was important to God. **"Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this."** (1 Samuel 23: 17 NIV) This was of course impossible at the time. King Saul's thousands of soldiers were hunting down David and on the verge of capturing and killing him. David might have thought this comment of his friend ludicrous, maybe even infuriating. Yet it was prophetic. You have friends who when you are down and broken by life want to lift your spirits, and you may be tempted to push them away and ignore them. Remember this though. They might be sent by God. There are eight billion people God can choose from to come to your aid and support you. He has someone in mind to lift your spirits and help you carry the load you bear.

David we know eventually became king and found great success in life. His popularity and wealth did not keep him from being hated by his own son and considered disposable by the people he risked his life many times to save. At those moments when your head begins to droop, when you lose your way and feel like what you do no longer matters, that is when God helps you see your cause is not hopeless and your value is infinite. You may not realize how valuable you are, but someone needs you. Someone is counting on you to be the way God brings hope and encouragement and help. In the night when all is still and it seems like you are most alone, Jesus is there with you to give you the strength you need to overcome whatever you face the next day. This verse is just for you. Memorize it and repeat it often. **From the Lord comes deliverance.** From the Lord comes my deliverance.