

MCGREGOR BAPTIST CHURCH

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Psalms 3

"WHAT TO DO WHEN TROUBLES COME"

JAMES O. HOLBROOK

PASTOR

Intro:

What are you going to do in trouble comes your way?!

Now I'm not trying to be cute or "catchy." I am simply stating the fact that trouble eventually come to each of us, and I'm asking if you have thought how you would handle it. God's Word assures us that "in this world, you will have troubles." In fact, He tells us, in James 1, that troubles are a necessary part of our character development. We should not expect them, but welcome them when they arrive as an opportunity for growth.

Some of us are in the midst of them right now. They are battering us around and shaking the very foundations of our beliefs.

With you on the midst of trouble now or whether you are waiting for your day to come, let me offer you a formula for finding our way through troubles. It was inspired by Almighty God, and was tried out and proven to work in the life of one of God's greatest men: King David. As David faced the most severe testing in a long career that was filled with troubles, he let it all hang out in this inspired poem. I see it as his five-step formula for what to do when trouble comes.

I. When troubles come, LOOK AROUND. (Vs. 1, 2).

Look around at your troubles. Obviously, no one has to tell you to do this. We do it automatically. It is all we can seem to see at first.

David did this. All he could see was "day that trouble me" and "many that rise against me" (vs. 1) and those who talked badly about him, (vs. 2), saying it even God wouldn't have him.

And if you wonder what troubles David had at the time he wrote this Psalm, let me give you the scenario. It is found in 2 Samuel 15.

David had a son named Absalom. He was a handsome man; and, because of his natural gifts, he became a favorite of all the people. And, even though his father had been the greatest King and Israel. For many years, Absalom was able to undermine his father to the people. He would criticize his father's policies, and he would agitate and stir up doubts about his father's ability. Maybe he would just say, "the old man seems to be slipping, doesn't he?" But the fact is that Absalom eventually "Stole the heart's." of most of the people away from his dad. And, in a big ego trip, he actually led a conspiracy against David.

In David had to flee for his life! David, the boy-wonder, who saved his people by killing the giant, Goliath ... David, who had outlived the crazed king, Saul ... David, who had united the 12 tribes of Israel into a mighty nation and defeated their age-old enemies and brought peace and prosperity to his people ... now running for his life, amid the jeers and curses of his secret enemies, like a dog with his tail between his legs. And from whom was he retreating for the first time in his life? His own son. His own flesh and blood, whom he birthed and protected and developed and cared for so tenderly.

Talk about troubles. Talk about stress and trauma. Career-wise -- he was disposed as king. Physically -- he was running for his life. Psychologically -- he was betrayed by his own son and scorned by his secret enemies, who had pretended to be his friends, as long as he was top man.

I believe the last kind of troubles the psychological kind, are often the heart is to take. The bottom can fall out of our careers, our health can break, but these do not pain like those inter-personal relationships, where our loved ones turn on us, and the fickle unstable crowd forgets all the good that we have done, and people take sides against us and spread malicious gossip and lies. What people say often hurts us more than what they do. To assassinate our characters can be deadly to our futures.

Boy! That's enough to break a man and make him bitter! This is trouble with a capital "T". And, everywhere , David look, that was all he could see.

Maybe that's all you can see, when you look around. Then it's time to pass on to the next step in a formula. If you remain here too long, you may never get

through the present trouble. Your troubles can hypnotize and paralyze you. Go on to the second step.

II. LOOK UP (vs. 3-4).

Look up to God our strength. No sooner had David gotten to a safe distance then he stopped on the Mt. of Olives and prayed to God (2 Samuel 15:30-32). He forced himself to stop and look up!

Let us never forget God's promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." God has invited us to "call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Psalm 50: 15) James says, "is any afflicted, let him pray." Look up! That's the first positive move to get through our troubles.

On British warships during World War II, and probably even today, there was a procedure that was followed whenever some trouble came. If they were torpedoed, are bombed, are shelled, or a fire broke-out -- what ever -- a signal was piped over the loudspeaker. It was called "this still."

At that sound, everyone on board was to be still, just for an instant, to figure out where they were supposed to be in what they were supposed to be doing, and then to go about doing it.

Is that not what God means, when He says, "Be still, and know that I am God?" In the midst of troubles, be still a moment, look up, remember that I am still on my throne. That's why David stopped on the Mt. of Olives long enough to look up and pray in worship God. He was observing "this still."

Last Monday, a devastating fire broke out down the road. With winds up to 30 miles per hour, it was racing through the underbrush and headed straight toward our church buildings. Firemen and volunteers were bravely battling the uncontrollable flames. At the corner of Deer Run Road, it could have easily leaped across to ignite our church. It leaped that dual highway out in front like it wasn't even there. The raging inferno came right up to the edge of that little road.

After looking around and doing all they could, the people here joined hands and "looked up." in prayer. The wind, which had been consistently blowing directly toward the church, shifted directions in the fire never even scorched our grass!

"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Look up!

III. LOOK BACK (vs. 5-6).

Look back on God's faithful dealings in the past. When David spoke of lying down in the midst of "thousands" who were "against him" and waking up the next day to find that the Lord had "sustained" him, he could have been talking about the last few nights, camping out under the stars, as he fled from Absalom. But I rather believe that his memory was going back farther than that. I believe he was thinking about years before, when he was a young man, and King Saul, obsessed by his jealousy, was chasing him from one hiding place to another with thousands of soldiers. Often he had hidden in caves all night and barely escaped by the skin of his teeth. But every night he had lain down in simple faith, he had awakened with the knowledge that God had sustained him.

And that ability to look back and see where "God had" helped him to look forward and believe that "God would" again. We sing a song: "Yield not to temptation." Some of the words say this: "Each victory will help you some other way to win ..." That's our faith stronger for the future.

We all can give testimony of how God helped us in years gone by -- some of them, were situations than the one we face right now. Is there anyone here that can remember one single time when God has brought you through some trouble? Of course not! Well, He is "the same yesterday, today and forever."

We call tomorrow "Memorial Day." We look back to the past, and it gives us courage for the future. It's good to look back like that.

In trouble? Go ahead and Look Around. But begin very quickly to Look Up. And don't forget to Look Back on all God has done in the past.

IV. Then Look Forward (vs. 7).

Look forward in faith to how God will bring you through. "Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God ..." Lead on! I believe. I affirm that I know you will.

When David said "thou hast smitten all my enemies on the cheekbone, and thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly," it had not really happened yet! No. He was still looking forward to it. But, he speaks of it as if it had already happened --

in the past tense. There's a lesson there! By this time, he was looking forward to God's help in such anticipation and faith that it was as if it had already happened in his mind.

He was prying about the future "and faith believing." Jesus told us that what ever you asked "and faith believing," you would have. (Of course, you can't ask "in good faith," unless you are convinced that it is in line with God's will). That kind of faith anticipates God's help.

Jesus told us that nothing is impossible to him who believes. When faced with a mountain of trouble, "stay to the mountain." Say "Be removed into the sea" and it will be. Genuine faith looks forward to God's help and actually dares to "speak" of it. It verbally affirms it. That's why some people pray, "Thank you, Lord, that you are going to do such and such."

Now I know that most of us are either too modest or too chicken to affirm the future quite that boldly. Maybe we've seen some people go overboard on this sort of thing and have reacted to the way they made a fool of themselves. Yet, never forget, the faith that can't look forward and anticipate is not enough faith to even make us do our best to help! We must look forward and expect.

We were faced with a mountain of troubles in relocating this church. One Sunday, after much prayer and hard searching, I stood up and said, "We're going to build that church." I asked everyone present to say it with me. Most spoke it.

A lovely lady came to me and said, "You just built that church this morning." I said, "I did?" She said, "Yes, it's as good as built. Because we had faith in up to speak it and affirm it." I'm not sure that I will ever understand the full depth of what she meant. But I appreciate the truth in what she said. And who's to argue with her.

Here it stands! We must look forward and see the victory and affirm the victory before the victory will ever be possible, or before we will hang in there long enough to help bring it to pass.

Look forward, my friend! If you are bowed beneath your troubles, look forward and affirm the victory that will be yours!

V. But there is one more vital step. LOOK AWAY (vs. 8).

Look away from your own strength and know, as David knew, that "salvation belongs to the Lord." Our hope is in the Lord. Our strength is in the Lord. Our confidence and are boasting is in the Lord.

Paul said: "I can do all things ..." Is that what he said? No, he said, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

When you are in trouble, look away from yourself to Christ. He alone can deliver. In fact, if we will not look away from ourselves and are limited knowledge and resources, we will get very discouraged and disheartened.

Some of us remember and all of us have heard about the Great Depression. It's funny, but so many people told me about it when we get ready to build these buildings. I guess the size of the dollars brought back frightful memories of foreclosures in the early 1930' s.

It made me think, too, think our! But finally, I had to look away to One who is far greater than all. And a poem came to my attention. Let me share it with you.

"The bank had closed; my earthly store had vanished from my hand; I felt there was no sadder one than I and all the land; my washerwoman, too, had lost her little mite with mine, and she was singing as she hung the clothes upon the line; "How can you be so gay?" I asked; "Your loss, don't you regret?" "Yes, ma'am, but what's the use to fret?" "God's Bank Ain't Busted Yet."

I felt my burden later grow, her faith I seemed to share; in prayer I went to God's great throne and laid my troubles there. The Sun burst from behind the clouds, in golden splendor set; I think God for her simple words: "God's Bank Ain't Busted Yet."

And now I draw rich dividends, more than my hand can hold, of faith and love and hope and trust and peace of mind untold, I think the Giver of it all, but still I can't forget my washerwoman's simple words: "God's Bank Ain't Busted Yet."

Oh weary one upon life's road, when everything seems drear, and losses loom on every hand, and skies seem not too clear; throwback your shoulders, lift your head and cease to chafe and fret, your dividends will be declared, "God's Bank and Busted Yet."

--Alice P. Moss.

That's what I mean by looking away. The rider to the Hebrews called it "Looking unto Jesus," while we run life's race.

And was all this an exercise in futility for David? Was it "wishful-thinking?" Not on your life! God took a hand in his defense. Before too very long, Absalom was stopped. David defended himself, but did not go after his own son. Instead, the Lord caused Absalom to get caught in his own devices.

Remember how I told you that he was handsome? Part of that was his beautiful thick hair. He was so proud of it that he let it hang loose. And, as he rode his horse into battle, he was caught by his hair in a tree. There he hung like a sitting duck. Once Absalom had died, his followers broke up, and David was restored to his throne.

And, my friend, if you will trust God through your troubles, ultimate victory will be yours in time. Just remember not to look around too long. Be quick to look up. Don't forget to look back. Boldly look forward. And look away from yourself and unto Jesus!