

“Praying When Life Implodes”

INTRODUCTION: For any of you who grew up using *prayer books*, you would have noticed this ...

1. ... they usually begin with *morning prayers*.
2. **John R. W. Stott** prayed this morning prayer, every day, before his feet hit the floor, and for over 60 years!

*A Prayer for the Early Morning*

*Good morning, heavenly Father. Good morning, Lord Jesus. Good morning, Holy Spirit. Heavenly Father, I worship you as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Lord Jesus, I worship you, Savior and King of the world. Holy Spirit, I worship you, Sanctifier of the people of God. Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.*

*Heavenly Father, I pray that I may live this day in your presence, and please you more and more. Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow you. Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Holy, mighty and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God, have mercy upon me. Amen.*

3. The Psalter, *The Prayerbook of the Bible*, begins with a **morning prayer**: Psalm 3

- a) A morning prayer? Why is it called this?
- b) Because of verse 5 ...

*I lay down and slept;  
I woke again, for the Lord sustained me. (Ps 3:5)*

- c) So the Second Temple Levite, when they arranged the Psalter, put Psalm 3 as a *morning prayer*
- d) and, complementary to Psalm 3, they place Psalm 4 next as an *evening prayer*.

*Be angry, and do not sin;  
Ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah. (Ps. 4:4)*

4. **James M. Boice**: *Psalms: Volume 1*; p. 29.

*After Psalms 1 and 2, which are foundational psalms – the first stressing the importance of the law of God in one’s life, the second stressing the ultimate triumph of the Messiah – a number of psalms deal with various circumstances that come into the godly man’s life in which he must trust God. Psalm 3, which heads the list, describes a person who is in great physical danger as a new day dawns.*

*It has been called a morning psalm because of verse 5: “I lie down and sleep; I wake again because the Lord sustains me.” At first glance this does not seem sufficient reason to call Psalm 3 a morning psalm, as most commentators both past and present do. But I am convinced, that if the introductory title is taken seriously, as I want to show it should be, the psalm does describe a a specific dangerous morning in the life of King David and is a testimony to how he gained confidence and courage at that time in those dangerous circumstances by his faith in God.*

5. Psalm 3 is the first Psalm, after the Preamble of Pss 1 and 2, which opens Book I of the Psalms.
  - a) Psalms 1-41
  - b) All but 4 attributed to *David* (Pss 1, 2, 10, and 33)
  - c) Very *personal psalms*: I, me, my, mine, etc ...
  - d) And Psalms focused on *conflict*: the wicked, enemies, or foes, those against me, and death.
  - e) 30 of the 41 Psalms of Book I make reference to enemies and opposition.
  - f) Of the remaining 11 Psalms, 3 imply the presence of enemies and 5 refer to death!
6. How can we pray these *I-psalms*? These intensely personal Psalms written out of David's own life?
7. Answer: *David serves as a type of Christ. He is a messianic figure; a Messianic King struggling to establish a Kingdom for God. He therefore reminds us of Christ who is building the Kingdom of God in the midst of Satanic opposition.*
8. As David fares so fares Israel. For us: As Christ fares so do we, because we are united to Christ in the Covenant of Grace!
9. Of course, this comment begs the question: *Why is David so prominent in the Psalter? Why are more of his Psalms included in the Psalter than those of Moses, Solomon or others?*
10. The Answer lies in **Covenant Theology**. God unfolded the Covenant of grace in **six** stages, using a *key individual* to receive the Covenant promise as a Federal Head:
  - a) Adam and *the Covenant of Creation* (Initiation)
  - b) Noah and *the Earth* (Preservation)
  - c) Abraham and *the Patriarchs* (Promise)
  - d) Moses and *Israel* (Law)
  - e) David and *The Nation of Israel* (Kingdom)

*And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Samuel 7:11-13)*

- f) *Jesus and the New Covenant* (Church)

*"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34)*

11. So ... David as the *Messianic King* prefiguring Jesus (the Son of David) writes the majority of the Psalms to point us to Christ and our Covenant relationship with Him.

12. **O. Palmer Robertson:** *The Flow of the Psalms*; p. 63

*This distinctive role of David as God's anointed Messiah explains the centrality of his person in the Psalms. These I-psalms describe the various situations in life faced by this singular servant of the Lord. Indeed, each of these psalms contains a message for the individual believer. But to understand these I-psalms in their fullest significance for the individual, they must first be appreciated for their role in speaking for God's anointed servant, the messianic king. Then a principle regularly at work in the Psalter will become clear in its significance: As it fares with the messianic king so it fares with each member of the messianic kingdom. The first psalm in Book I proper (Ps. 3) gives clear expression to this principle.*

*So the large number of psalms in Book I appearing in the first person by no means points to an egocentric perspective in which David can think of only his own personal problems. Instead, Davidic centrality in these psalms rests firmly on the reality that as the anointed king fares, so the totality of God's chosen people fare.*

13. **Here is a key Principle**, both to understanding the Psalms and Praying the Psalter: *The enemies of Jesus become our enemies because we are united to Christ in His life.*

- a) *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)*
- b) *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. (John 15:18-21)*

14. Psalm 3 is the first of 14 Psalms with a superscription that links it to a historical event in the life of David: *A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.*

- a) This story is absolutely tragic: 2 Samuel 11-18
- b) David committed adultery with *Bathsheba*, conspired to have *Uriah the Hittite* (one of his most loyal men and the husband of Bathsheba) killed, and then married Bathsheba.
- c) God exposed David's sin through *Nathan* the prophet, and spoke this word to David:

*Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'"* (2 Samuel 12:9-12)

- d) Years later David's son *Amnon* raped his half-sister *Tamar*, Absalom's full-sister. David did nothing!
- e) *Absalom* then killed Amnon, and David exiled Absalom.
- f) David later allowed Absalom to return, but he had nothing to do with him. Absalom became embittered.
- g) So Absalom plotted and then executed a *rebellion* against King David, his father, so that David had to flee from Jerusalem.
- h) Nathan's prophesy then came to fulfillment:
- (1) *Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your counsel. What shall we do?" Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened." So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. (2 Sam 16:20-22)*
  - (2) *When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on 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." (2 Sam 16:5-8)*
- i) David crossed over the river Jordan, with his family and circle of friends, to hide from Absalom and the army in the trans-Jordan wilderness.
- j) *Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they crossed the Jordan. By daybreak not one was left who had not crossed the Jordan. (2 Sam 17:22)*
- k) There, the next morning, David wrote Psalm 3 ...
- (1) *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. Selah  
But you, O Lord, are a shield about me,  
my glory, and the lifter of my head.  
I cried aloud to the Lord,  
and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah  
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!*

*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! Selah*  
 (Psalm 3)

(2) 3 Stanzas (paragraphs); 3 prayers; 3 pauses to think ...

## I. UNDERSTANDING PSALM 3

### A. A Prayer of Lament (Ps. 3:1-2)

1. *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. Selah*
2. David *complains* to God that his foes are many. Some are justifiable so; others are not!
  - a) Absalom – his enraged son
  - b) Ahithophel: David's advisor
  - c) Shimei: Relative of Saul
  - d) Amasa: General of Rebels
  - e) Many people who sided with Absalom
3. It seemed as if more and more joined the rebellion against David. *He felt deeply betrayed.*
4. People were saying “*There is no salvation for him in God,*” because God had “cursed” David, and he had this rebellion due him for his sins against Uriah the Hittite!
5. **Question:** Can any of us ever pray prayers of an “innocent” man when we are so personally sinful?
6. Answer: *We can*, and for Four reasons:
  - a) Our sins do not justify the evil actions of others against us.
  - b) God will discipline us; others have no right to abuse us and claim God's work in doing so.
  - c) Although we are sinful, we may suffer for Christ in such a way that we are “innocent” people treated unjustly.
  - d) In Christ the believer is righteous and under no warrant of destruction.

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* (Romans 8:1)

### 7. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer:** *Prayerbook of the Bible*; p. 173

*It is a thoroughly unbiblical and destructive idea that we can never suffer innocently as long as some kind of fault still remains in us. Neither the Old nor the New Testament makes such a judgement. If we are persecuted for the sake of God's cause, then we suffer innocently, and that means we suffer with God. That we really are with God and, therefore, really innocent is demonstrated precisely in this, that we pray for the forgiveness of our sins. But we are innocent not only in relation to the enemies of God, but also before God, for we are now seen united with God's cause, into which it is precisely God who has drawn us, and God forgives us our sins.*

8. **Note:** The genre of Psalms that occur the most is that of *Lament*: calling out/ complaining to God over injustices and suffering.
9. *Selah*: occurs here for the first time in the Psalter. Meaning? *Pause* or *Interlude* (musical)

B. A Prayer of Trust (Ps. 3:3-6)

1. *But you, O Lord, are a shield about me,  
my glory, and the lifter of my head.  
I cried aloud to the Lord,  
and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah  
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.*  
(Ps. 3:3-6)
2. David cries out to God for deliverance, and he expresses his confidence in God.
3. **Notice again** “God’s address”: God lives in *Zion* (Holy Hill)
  - a) *I cried aloud to the Lord,  
and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah* (Ps. 3:4)
  - b) He knows God will help him because God lives in the Tabernacle in his capital city –
  - c) Next door to his palace
  - d) *There is a river whose streams make glad the city  
of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be  
moved;  
God will help her when morning dawns.*  
(Ps. 46: 4-5)
  - e) **O. Palmer Robertson:** *The Flow of the Psalms*; p. 66  
*The threatened Messiah cries to the Lord, who answers him “from his holy hill,” the locale of God’s dwellingplace among his people (Ps. 3:4). Because of the Lord’s settled dwellingplace in their midst, the king can rest in peace even though tens of thousands are drawn up against him.*
4. The Tabernacle/Temple is a foreshadowing of the *Incarnate Christ*.
  - a) *Immanuel*: God with us.
  - b) God with the OT Church in the Tabernacle/Temple
  - c) What Israel called *The Presence*
  - d) God with the NT Church in Jesus Christ (Incarnation)
  - e) Jesus saw Himself as the Temple of God.  
*So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was*

*speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. (John 2:18-22)*

5. God is with us, in Christ, so we need never fear our enemies.

*For he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper;*

*I will not fear; what can man do to me?" ... Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:5-6, 8)*

6. Because of this reality David lies down, sleeps (well) and rises the next morning to face his enemies – “many thousands” in Absalom’s army.

- a) *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.*

*(Ps. 3:5-6)*

- b) *When evildoers assail me*

*to eat up my flesh,*

*my adversaries and foes,*

*it is they who stumble and fall.*

*Though an army encamp against me,*

*my heart shall not fear;*

*though war arise against me,*

*yet I will be confident.*

*One thing have I asked of the Lord,*

*that will I seek after:*

*that I may dwell in the house of the Lord*

*all the days of my life,*

*to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord*

*and to inquire in his temple.*

*For he will hide me in his shelter*

*in the day of trouble;*

*he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;*

*he will lift me high upon a rock. (Ps. 27:2-5)*

7. Many times evil and evil men have arisen against us. Not once did they prevail. Though they have *scared* us, or even *hurt* us, they have not been able to *destroy* us, because God was with us in Christ, and we were with Him, in His Church.

### C. A Prayer for Action (Psalm 3:7-8)

1. *Arise, O Lord!*

*Save me, O my God!*

*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! Selah (Ps 3:7-8)*

2. A frequent prayer of David to God, “*Arise, O Lord,*” (9 times in the Psalter)

- a) The Picture of God standing up from His throne to take action.
- b) Standing up, strapping on His armor, going to war.

3. David’s Prayer is simple, straightforward and compassionate.

- a) *Arise ... save ... strike ... break ...*
- b) But it is his own Son, Absalom, who is God’s enemy.
- c) So, David prays for God to ...

(1) *Strike him on the cheek* (slap some sense into him!)

(2) *Break the teeth of the wicked* (take away their bite)

- d) **Please note:** But *not* to destroy, ruin or kill them!

4. **John Goldingay:** *The Psalms: Vol.1; p. 114*

*But hitting someone on the jaw or cheek is at least as much a gesture of shaming as of physical hurt, and the image of shattering teeth may also be a legal metaphor for disempowering.*

5. *And the king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.” And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom. (2 Samuel 18:5)*

*The king said to the Cushite, “Is it well with the young man Absalom?” And the Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man.” And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” (2 Samuel 18: 32-33)*

6. David prays for his son, the murderer and adulterer, as one who knows the mercy of God; one who was himself a murderer and an adulterer.

7. *For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:10-13)*

8. When we pray about our enemies, mercy triumphs over judgement.

## II. PRAYING PSALM 3

- 1. It is popular now to be laid back, and “cool,” and to say “*We have no real enemies. There are really not any bad people, just people who need to be understood and loved.*”
- 2. **Not in my world**, nor in the real world we see thought these “spectacles” called *The Psalter* (true worldview)
- 3. You and I have **real enemies** in this world, defined in Davidic terms: *those who oppose the work of God in the world in which we are engaged.*



4. Just think of this Psalm in relation to Psalm 2 before it:

a) God had installed David as King in Zion

(1) *“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”* (Ps. 2:6)

(2) A verse with a *double reference*

(i) First: David, King of the Jews

(ii) Then: Jesus, King of the Jews

(iii) David and the “Son of David” (Messiah)

(3) *And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. And Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.* (1 Samuel 15:26-28)

(4) *When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.” Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”* (1 Samuel 16:6-12)

(5) *Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ ... For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption,* (Acts 13:21, 22, 36)

b) But then David’s son, his advisor, members of Saul’s house, friends he’d taken in and cared for, and both palace and priestly officials ran him out of Jerusalem and off the Throne!

c) **Michael Wilcock:** *Psalms: BST; Vol. 1; p. 27*

*David, installed on the holy hill by a God who defies the rage of nations, now chased off it by an impudent upstart like Absalom? In theory, unthinkable! In practice, a common experience.*

5. We are given Psalm 3, by the Holy Spirit, to pray in the morning when we awaken to ...

- a) A husband (wife) who married us, once loved us, but now has found an “old flame” for whom they left us and our children.
  - b) Get caught between two powerful people in the office and the office politics, who gave us a great job review last year, but now has decided to fire us!
  - c) Children who’ve turned against us in pursuit of a sinful lifestyle they love more than God or their parents.
  - d) Friends who betray us, and join with others in seeking to do us harm.
  - e) Pastors or other leaders whose constituents turn on them for the least provocation.
6. Based upon the confluence of Pss. 1, 2, and 3 we can establish these facts:
- a) Psalm 1 informs us that such betrayals and opposition have a *moral/ ethical* dimension: they are unjust.
  - b) Psalm 2 informs us that such battles have a *theological* dimension: they oppose God’s order of things.
  - c) Psalm 3 informs us that these fights have a *personal* dimension: They are designed to hurt or ruin us individually.
7. **Key Point:** These incidents are *not* purely subjective, not only personal, and not merely a matter of “good people disagreeing” on things. These are *calculated* actions to treat someone badly, oppose God’s order of doing things, and designed to seek vengeance and personally hurt someone. Bluntly: *They are evil deeds by people who have chosen to make themselves our “enemies.”*
8. So, how do we pray in the midst of these things? David sets before us a godly and balanced example.
- a) **First:** We need to see our sufferings in these events and at these times as attacks upon the Person of Christ because we are united to Him by faith.
    - (1) *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. Selah* (Ps. 3:1-2)
    - (2) “*There is no salvation for him in God*” = No Jesus Christ our Savior who redeems him.
    - (3) *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,* (Phil. 3:10)
    - (4) *From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.* (Gal 6:17)
    - (5) Whatever we have done that was sinful ...
      - (i) We have been forgiven by Christ
      - (ii) We need not be punished by people: God will discipline us.
      - (iii) Violence against us cannot set things right.
    - (6) *for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.* (James 1:20)

- (7) To strike at God's people is to attack Jesus.

*But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." (Acts 9:1-6)*

- b) **Second:** We should pray always with a view to what is best for Zion, the Church. Our personal distress must always be placed in the context of the church.

- (1) *But you, O Lord, are a shield about me,  
my glory, and the lifter of my head.  
I cried aloud to the Lord,  
and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah (Ps. 3:3-4)*

- (2) **O. P. Robertson:** *The Flow of The Psalms*; p. 65

*From the example of David as messianic king, God's people in every age may learn a valuable lesson about the most acceptable way to pray in times of great personal distress. Whenever the believer today feels a need for the Lord's special intervention, let him focus on the well-being of all of God's people as the proper framework for seeking personal deliverance. Even the extremely personal matter of receiving forgiveness for sins may be best formulated in the context of a consideration of the blessing that may come on all of God's people as the individual experiences forgiveness.*

- c) **Third:** We must pray with the belief (confidence) that the God who always does what is both righteous and merciful will come to our aid in due season.

- (1) *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. (Ps. 3:5-6)*

- (2) **Even** if we need to pray this prayer every morning, in time God will come to our aid.

- d) **Fourth:** We pray with moderation and with grace. We ask God not to ruin, destroy or damn our enemies, but that He would shame them into repentance.

- (1) *Arise, O Lord!  
Save me, O my God!  
For you strike all my enemies on the  
cheek;  
you break the teeth of the wicked. (Psalm 3:7)*

(2) Best case scenario: They come to faith in Christ, or repentance from evil, and learn to love God and us once again.

e) **Fifth:** Our “deliverance from evil” is part of the salvation God offers us in Christ.

(1) *Salvation belongs to the Lord;  
your blessing be on your people! Selah* (Ps. 3:8)

(2) *Pray then like this:  
“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.* (Mt. 6:9-13)

9. This is how Jesus prayed for us and taught us to pray about others.

10. **Tremper Longman:** *Psalms: TOTC*; p. 66

*New Testament readers can see Jesus as the ultimate example of such trust in the midst of trouble, as he faced his executioners with full confidence in the the Lord.*

Conclusion: Is is not easy to sort out right from wrong when we are set about with multiple enemies ...

1. ... much less when the enemies were once family or friends, and we ourselves are not blameless in wrongdoing.
2. I know. *I have prayed this Psalm hundreds of times in my pastoral ministry of 34 years. Not because I'm always certain of who's a “good guy” and who is not. Nor because I am always an “innocent” party. But because I am trying to do God's work, attempting to preach Christ, working at building up the church, and without evil motivation for what I do.*
3. Like Paul, I often say to God...
  - a) *For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.* (1 Cor. 4:4-5)
  - b) This is neither a persecution complex...
  - c) nor a Messiah complex praying,
  - d) It is merely an honest call for God's deliverance and aid.
4. *I assume that (1) I am on God's side, (2) Christ is with me, (3) I am working to bless Zion, the Church, (4) Satan will oppose me, and (5) men will purposefully or inadvertently oppose the good I seek to do. This is not self-righteousness; it is self-disclosure before God, in prayer.*

5. Injustice, hatred, opposition and harm both to me and the Church are present, and so I pray, in the morning, “*O Lord, how many are my foes! ...*”
6. From 1842-1857, the people of India rose up in a great rebellion against their overlords, the *British Raj* (Empire in India)
  - a) The English army, governors and gentry were hardly innocent.
  - b) They had wrongfully conquered India and forced them into the British Empire, against their will, and often violently.
  - c) During this uprising a *Dr. Dunn*, a medical doctor living with his family in Calcutta, was in grave danger.
  - d) He later wrote in his diary (**Rowland E. Prothero**: *The Psalms in Human Life*; pp. 322-323)
    - (1) *In the midst of panic, open mutiny, and secret disaffection, he himself felt “a confident persuasion that, though this crisis has been permitted to humble and warn us, our work in India has not yet been accomplished; and that until it be accomplished, our tenure of Empire, however brittle, is secure.” ... “Never before,” he continues, “did I realize as now the literality and sweetness of the Psalmist’s assurance – ‘I laid down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God!’” (Ps. iii. 5-7).*
    - (2) He acknowledges that Britain needed humbling.
    - (3) He saw the British Raj as a venture for bringing the Gospel to India.
    - (4) He felt “brittle” but secure in God’s sovereign will.
    - (5) And he prayed Psalm 3 for his and his family’s protection.
    - (6) Then ... *He let God sort out the rest.*
7. When you feel surrounded by “*many (who) are rising against me,*” then it is time to pray Psalm 3 in your morning prayers, seek the good of Christ’s Church, place yourself in God’s hands, and sleep well in His grace.
8. For this is the promise of God’s Word ...
 

*Salvation belongs to the Lord;  
your blessing be on your people! Selah (Ps 3:8)*
9. So ... **pray** it back to God!