



Psalms of David (Part 1)
The Cry of Lament Psalms 3
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today, we start a brand-new series in the Psalms, and we are going to focus specifically on the Psalms of David. And you have one assignment between now and thanksgiving because that's how long this series is going. You must go to Sight and Sound and see the show, *David*. Amy and I saw it earlier this year and I just want to warn you that if you are the one that gets snacks at the break, be back when they tell you to be back. Do not miss the opening song of the second half. I'm going to try to find a way to sneak into it this week just to see that song.

I was so moved by how it brought David's life and the Psalms together. We have talked about doing this series for a while, I hope it encourages you. I want to start with some introductory thoughts about Psalms, as today we are going to be talking specifically about the Psalm of Lament. The Lament has four parts. It's I am hurting; the enemy is winning. God, where are you? There are times you feel distant from me. I sometimes interpret that to mean you don't care or you're not listening. But then it always ends with a confession of trust. Today, we are going to learn that it's not about silencing your enemies, or outrunning your enemies, but it's about building your confidence in the Lord. It's not about what I can do in the fight, but it's what he does as he fights for me.

Today, we are going to be in the lament and when we talk worship in the church, Lament is one of those Psalms and types of worship that we don't have a lot of worship music for. I've actually encouraged our team to dive in and find it for us as we go through this series. Here's where we are going to start with just a few introductory thoughts about the Psalms.

The Israelites expressed intense emotions while singing the Psalms. So, the Psalms were written to be sung. They were part of the Israelites everyday life. The intense emotions... We are not afraid of intense emotions at this church. I love how one commentary puts it

that the Psalms are utterances of the soul. I don't know if you've ever been where you didn't know quite what to say or how to express something, but then a song comes on and you're like, *Those are the most brilliant lyrics I've ever heard. Because it's expressing exactly what I'm feeling.* You don't even have to Google this. I think you'll know the answer. But it was a little weird in the first gathering. I asked, "What's the greatest country love song ever written?" A guy yelled out, "*Ain't no love in Oklahoma.*" He's getting free tickets to Branson shows until he learns some things. That ain't the greatest love song ever written. What is the greatest love song ever written? And I have to correct it because people think Whitney Housot wrote *I will always love you*. That's a country song. Can I get an Amen on that one right there. That was written by Dolly Parton.

What's the saddest country song written? *He stopped loving her today.* Is that the saddest of sad songs? This is the power of music. Music moves us emotionally. It connects us with our emotions in a way that we can express things that maybe we don't typically find words for. That's why the Israelites had it as a part of everyday life. I was thinking this week about some of my favorite times in the Ozarks. I have to tell you some of the best, sweetest memories I have are watching fireworks on Table Rock Lake. I can't explain it, but Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, maybe it's to save me money. I don't have to go buy fireworks, but I love being on the boat and I have a play list that you all are going to be so Jealous of, that you are going to want.

I have become the master DJ on the lake that I know when that first firework goes off, it's time to hit play; and it's off to the races. It starts with American Soldier, If you're reading this, Whitney Houston is singing the Star-Spangled banner, Aaron Tippin with Where the stars and stripes and the Eagle, I'm already there, Born Country. I drive your truck... God bless the USA. And then I bring out *Courtesy of the Red White and Blue*. That brings the anger into the punch of it. But you're feeling patriotic, and it mixes other emotions into it. That's what I love about the Psalms – meant to be sung, expressing intense emotions. We are not concerned or worried at this church when someone has intense emotions. We just want to make sure we're doing the right thing with them and taking them to the Lord. And that is what a Lament does. It takes the pain, the sorrow, the grief that we are carrying to the Lord.

But with a song, we can also be overjoyed at its goodness. We can be in awe of creation. You've seen thousands of sunsets in your lifetime. Why is it when you still see a sunset withal the colors mixed that you just have a moment where you stop and go Whoa!

You're in awe. You're overjoyed. You are in awe of creation. Sometimes though, you are confused, anxious, fearful. That's where we are at today. So, this is important. Intense emotions while singing, but there are many different types of Psalms. Today, we are going to look at a lament Psalm. But there are psalms of thanksgiving, to be sung when you are just grateful, overwhelmed with gratitude for what God is doing in your life and how he's carried you this far and where he's brought you to.

There are psalms of praise. There are psalms where we speak about the wisdom that God brings us. So, there are many different types and there are many different authors. This is important if you are new to studying the bible. There are many author of the Psalms but David is the primary author, with 73 of the 150.

Today, we are in Psalm 3. If you have your bibles and want to turn there, we are going to be going through Psalm 3, this Lament, as David is on the run from his Son, Absalom.

If you've ever felt outnumbered or overpowered by your enemies, this Psalm is for you. if you've felt betrayed, lied to, accusations, you have doubt, fear despair, you're discouraged, maybe defeated today. This is the Lament for you.

To kick off our series, we want to look at three powerful ways to trust God and strengthen our faith when we are overwhelmed and outnumbered. When the enemy is closing in on us. This is a psalm written by David... This isn't just figurative. Literally thousands of people are chasing after him to take him out and he fears for his life. His life is at risk.

We are going to talk about what it means to put your faith into action today. We've already been singing today. You have, from your lips, declared what you believe about God. I'm going to ask you: Are you going to live what you say you believe? Are you going to have confidence in the Lord when everything around you is shaky, when the world is chaotic, is your firm foundation truly Christ. Whatever intense emotion you have or are dealing with right now, is Christ the one on which you stand? That is where your confidence comes from.

Stop dwelling on the whispers of your enemies. The reason I use whispers is because this is what we do when people say things about us that are not true, they are torn into scripts, scripts that you and I listen to as we try to fall asleep at night. Have you ever had a problem falling asleep at night because of the whispers of your enemy? I'm really good at staying up and coming up with a game plan that can go right back at them.

Instead of scheming on your bed at night, we find confidence and trust in the Lord. And I'm not going to let the whispers of my enemy keep me from doing what God has called me to do. I'm not going to let the whispers of my enemy keep me from living out the truth that I know that God has said about me. So, for you and I, we need to spend less time scheming late at night on how to get even with our enemies and turn our eyes upon Jesus. You're overwhelmed with opposition, and your enemies may be despisers, haters, trolls, malcontents, cynics, hypocrites, toxic people. Again, welcome to Woodland Hills Family Church. We are glad you're here to all of our guests.

But you've heard the expression. *These people are living rent free in your head.* why? They may have said this about you one time, but you've whispered, you've listened to the whisper a thousand times. What they say about you.

Psalms 3 verse 1 is where the lament begins, where David states his case before the Lord. **of David. When he fled from his son Absalom. Lord, how many are my foes!**

How many rise up against me!

This isn't just *some people don't like me; this is like they are coming after me by the thousands.* David had sinned with Bathsheba and had her husband murdered up to this point. And in Second Samuel 13, we read about his son, Amnon who rapes his half-sister, Tamar.

This ties a little bit into what we talked about last week, but he rapes Tamar. The bible says that David was outraged by this, but he went passive in his response to dealing with Amnon. Absalom, however, Tamar's full brother, did not go passive. He was outraged and sought revenge. Not right away, but after a couple of years. He didn't stop at killing Amnon, he went on a full-blown revenge tour. He Usurped the throne of his father, David. David's life was at risk, so he fled. Not just the throne, but the city. He got out of Jerusalem. Literally tens of thousands of his enemies are coming against him as he flees for his life and he writes this Psalm. ***Lord my foes are coming against me. but more than Just that,***

**² *Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."***

David, God is not for you. He will not save you from your circumstances right now, David. And that becomes a whisper. And that becomes something that can keep you up at night. And your enemies will attack you. they will attack your competency, they'll attack your character, even attack your faith, saying God is not for you.

You have a choice to make. Are you going to believe the lies of your enemies or the truth of God? Where will you find your confidence because your confidence is not in silencing your enemies and your ability to do that, so stop losing sleep at night trying. Stop coming up with a better script that you can take to them in that meeting tomorrow or on the comment section later that night. Don't scheme. Trust, find your confidence in the Lord, and that moves us to the **second** powerful way to let the Lord go before you and to find your confidence in him.

Declare your confidence in God's protection over your life. Repeat it daily and regularly. In Psalm 3:3 we get this idea. ³ ***But you, Lord, are a shield around me.*** Common in that day for the Israelites to proclaim the Lord as a shield. ***You are the one that comes around us and protects us from our enemies my glory, the One who lifts my head high.***

Have you ever dealt with Shame or regret? And you walk into a room where you think people may be talking about you or at least they know what's going on with you and you just kind of keep your head down. You don't want to make eye contact with anybody because you're afraid they might find you out.

What David is saying here is "The foes are coming against me so keep my head down and just kind of move away, but God is the lifter of my head." So, this is like you going to your son or your daughter after they've done something and you've had to discipline them. You walk up to them, and you grab their chin, and you say *Look at me; I'm still your dad still your dad. I love you and I care for you.* This is a beautiful picture for us that when we are going through it and the attacks are coming, and the whispers are happening that we don't walk around with our head in shame and fear. We lift our head unto the one lifting our heads. He is the one that brings us confidence, he's the one that brings us protection, and it's time for me... And we sang it growing up in the Baptist Church. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. He is the lifter.

In 2 Samuel 7: 3, Nathan, the prophet, tells David clearly ***the Lord is with you.*** So, before he is on the run, Nathan proclaims the word of the Lord to David. And the Lord couldn't be clearer with the plans he has for David. We read in 2 Samuel 7 and 9, now then, tell my servant, David, this is what the Lord almighty says. I took you from the pasture from tending the flock and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. ***God is saying I did that. I have been with you wherever you have gone and I have cut off all of your enemies from before you.***

There are some seniors in here. I'm looking at some older people. If I were to bring some seniors up here with a whiteboard... There's a white board up here and I handed you a marker and I said I want you to write all the times that God provided for you, that he cared for you, that he protected you. and I just wanted you to list that, you would go back time and time again.

And then if you're in pain right now, why is it that we forget that board so quickly. Why is it that we forget what God has done for us.

He says, "I've gone before you, I've cut your enemies off from before you. Now I will make your name great like the names of the greatest men on earth. This is what the Lord says about David. And it trumps what the enemy whispers in his ear. It's the confidence that he has. And your enemies are not ultimately in charge of final outcomes for your life.

If ever this has been more true it's in recent weeks... You and I think that world leaders, good world leaders, bad world leaders, but we think world leaders are the ones that hold all the power, that make all the big decisions, they're in charge of final outcomes. Make no mistake, they are not in charge of final outcomes. God is sovereign and overall.

After the assassination of Charlie Kirk, let me remind you. God is still over all. He still has a plan. He is the one that goes before us and in charge of final outcomes.

Now, this is where it gets interesting because I think we can declare this stuff all day long, but it's the difference in declaring it and walking in it that is the disconnect for a lot of believers.

I want to remind you, before you place faith in Jesus, the bible speaks very clearly about who you are before God. Like how God viewed you before you placed faith in "Christ and were declared righteous because of what Jesus did, the scripture is very clear. I wish I could share it all with you. I just want to share some of how the Bible declares God sees you before you become a Christian. Before you placed faith Jesus and became a child of God, you were lost, perishing, unrighteous, under the wrath of God. You were of your father the devil. You were wicked and you were walking according to the ways of this world.

But when you repent of your sin, turn from your wicked ways that you think are right, but declare are wicked, and place faith alone in "Christ alone, Jesus saves you.

You're no longer under the wrath of God; he brings you peace. You are a child of God. Your sins are forgiven, your future is heaven, you have a hope and a future. You have eternal life. And you say you believe that, but are you living it? When the enemy whispers and says God is not for you and you are overwhelmed, outnumbered, feeling despair, guilt, fear, we turn to the Lord.

This is why gathering as a church is so important. Whenever I hear someone that flippantly speaks of the church, that's the one area where my blood begins to boil. For the one whose life is falling apart, and they show up to church four or five times a year, I'm like, "You need the gathering of believers that we gather, we sing individually and corporately what we believe. We do it every week. We declare the truth, and you did it today. You declared with your lips... Let me just remind you. some of what you declared. *When I see the battle, you see my victory. When all I see is the mountain, you see a mountain moved. When all I see are the ashes, you see the beauty.* You also declared with your lips, *"Christ is my firm foundation, the rock on which I stand. When everything around me is shaken...* Find me a believer that's living this out. Their life doesn't fall apart every time they turn on the news. They are not shocked and shaken because their first foundation is Jesus. They know who the source is.

For some of you that everything that happens in the world around you, whether it be at work or in your home or in the world around you, everything just shakes your faith. You need to begin walking in the truth that you're already declaring, believing it. The rock on which I stand. *When everything around me is shaken, I've never been more glad that I put my faith in Jesus because he's never let me down. He's faithful through generations.*

I sang this one loud today: I've still got joy in chaos. *I've got peace that makes no sense. When tragedy strikes, I won't be going under because I'm not held by my own strength. I built my life on Jesus; he's never let me down. He's faithful through every season.* You declared it. Will you believe it and live it? Because if you can, the third one I've been waiting for because I don't think a lot of you have ever heard this in church. Here's another powerful way for you to put your faith into action this week. Here's another powerful way for you to live out what you say you believe.

I want you to go home today and take a nap. People who have confidence in the Lord can go to sleep at night, turning the universe back over to him, and that's a problem with a lot of you. You think that world revolves around you and you're holding it all together.

But isn't it amazing that you can fall asleep and wake up in the morning and everything is still going. Some of you have tried everything to get to sleep at night, but that script, those whispers, that scheming is keeping you up, and you need to declare with your mouth what you believe, walk in it, and get a good night's sleep. And that's the third point – *rest in the Lord and get a good night's sleep. Start sleeping again.*

I've lost a lot of sleep through the years, not because of what my enemies were doing to me, saying about me, or false accusations coming at me. I lost sleep because I didn't trust God to fight my battles for me. It was my faith and trust. No, my enemy that was keeping me up.

***⁴ I call out to the Lord,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.***

⁵ I lie down and sleep; I wake again... Stop right there. You've got thousands of people coming at you, wanting to take you out. Is your first thought, *I'm going to take a little well needed shut eye right now.* No. I've never had thousands of people coming against me. Let's just say hundreds or ten. You've got five people coming against you right now, a number you can probably relate to more. Is it your first thought that Lord, you are going to have to take care of this because I need to rest my soul, my mind, my heart, my body right now.

I've never been on the run from anybody. I was trying to think this week when I've ever been on the run, like scared of somebody. This just kept coming to my mind and it fits because the emotions were similar.

I grew up in Oswego, Illinois and our house was a few miles from a McDonalds and there was a road called Douglas. It ran parallel to this big neighborhood called Bolder Hill. A lot of my friends lived in this neighborhood. On the way to McDonalds, the speed limit was 35. Nobody ever went 35. There were three side roads into this neighborhood that as you'd be driving down, if you passed a police officer and you know he clocked you, he would turn into this street here, you knew he was turning around to come get you, which meant punch it! Now, I never did that, but my friends did, my brother... He wears the Cub's stuff in the hot chocolate booth this morning. I've been with him on that run when he was a teenager and not altogether. His mind had fallen out when he was about 16, but I'm 13 in a car with my brother and I saw him outrun the police once. I'm in the passenger seat and I remember that fear. I was convinced that if there was an open garage that was empty, he would have pulled into it and shut the garage door.

I can't imagine when you're running from anything, that the first thought would be I should be able to take nap. But someone who has confidence in the Lord is able to rest. Are you resting right now in the Lord? I'm convinced that we don't have enough worship songs about sleeping. I challenged our team to come up with something that makes me want to take a nap in Jesus. Can I get an amen on that one?

That's what he saying. I lie down and sleep. I wake again. Why? ***because the Lord sustains me.*** He's the one that gives me sleep at night. He's the one that allows me to rest. I'd encourage you to pray... Amy and I pray every night before we go to bed. And I haven't done this for a long time, but I'm going to start adding this line... The last line typically is and Lord, wake us up refreshed to do your work tomorrow. But I'm going to start adding to it, Lord, as I fall asleep right now, I'm turning back control of the universe over to you. And I'm firing myself as general manager of the universe. And I'm going to get some good sleep.

Some of you track your sleep score. Let's see what happens to your sleep score with trust and confidence in the Lord. That's why we use the term *sleeping like a baby*. Isn't that a great term. I remember when our kids were small. I'd be holding Corynn and just thinking to myself, *man, you've got it good...* We'd be at family gatherings. It's loud, dishes clanging and she's sound asleep. I'd like. *You've got it so good.* No bills, no responsibility. We feed you every couple of hours. The more I think about it, you're pretty ungrateful if I'm being honest with you, little baby.

When have you slept, resting in your father's arms like that where you turn it over. Let this song be your morning song this week. Let it be what you wake up to. And in the last ***three verses Psalm 3 :6-8. ⁶I will not fear, though tens of thousands assail me on every side.***

⁷Arise, Lord!

Deliver me, my God!

Strike all my enemies on the jaw;

break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸From the Lord comes deliverance.

May your blessing be on your people. But this is where we get to the confession of trust, like Lord, I know what you do. I know who you are. I know what you have declared true about me. and I'm no longer going to let the whispers of my enemy keep me up at night. I'm going to rest, letting you go before me. And read this with me church, Verse 8 From the Lord comes deliverance may your blessing be on your people.

So, when I fight, I'll fight on my knees with my hands lifted high. Baptists, give that a shot this week. I saw some of you raising it during the hymn. Oh God, the battle belongs to you. and every fear I lay at your feet, I'll sing through the night. Oh, God, the battle belongs to you.

So, I'm going to ask you to do something throughout this series and it starts today. I'm going to ask you to get out your phone and take a picture of the next screen and I want you to start putting a play list together on your phone. Music to listen to. And this is the worship playlist from today. I quoted it in the message; you've already declared it with your mouth. I want you to look up the lyrics when it says show lyrics. Mom and dad, when it says share lyrics, send them to your kids. These are truths about God that we declared today. Read the psalms with your family.

Declare this worship music in your life, sing it, and believe it and go to bed and get a good night's sleep, trusting, finding your confidence in the Lord, and resting in the arms of your heavenly father. And all God's people said... Amen

Father, I am grateful for this series. I'm grateful for your Word and the songs that we're able to sing together, the songs that bring out these intense emotions. And there are people that are wrestling right now with fear and despair. They are discouraged; they have accusations coming against them. They are full of doubt. They feel attacked, overwhelmed. That today, this would be their song. That they would declare what they are going through with honesty before you but then cry out in confidence to you. deliver them from their enemies. That they would have this joy in chaos and this peace that makes absolutely no sense that only comes from you.

For the one that has never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day of their salvation. They would declare with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, believe in their heart that he has been raised from the dead, repent of their sins. They'll know that they are forgiven, and their life has purpose and their future is heaven.

Thank you for how you continue to walk this out with us in this church. May we live it and not just declare it.

It's in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen