

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Second Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 7) – June 19, 2022

“But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.”

-Psalm 3:3-

Psalm three depicts David crying out to God as an ever-growing multitude of enemies besiege and taunt him declaring that not even God can save him (see verses 1-2). However, in the midst of these terrifying circumstances David confidently declares, “But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.”

In David’s day in the Near East, the shield served as the standard military means of defense to protect from oncoming swords and spears. The shield referenced in this psalm probably refers to the more common hand-held shield that protected the chest and arm.

But David looks not to the military or to their weaponry or paraphernalia for defense, but to a far greater shield who will not only completely protect him from every side (“a shield about me”), but who will also give David dignity and honor in the midst of the enemies’ taunts (“my glory, and the lifter of my head”). Clearly, David knows from whom his true salvation comes (see verse 8).

In fact, David places such trust in God that, even in the face of great danger, he declares, “I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around” (verse 6). He then lays down to sleep and awakens in safety because “the LORD sustained me” (see verse 5).

This psalm so beautifully depicts the faithfulness of God in the midst of difficulties and suffering that come our way. We may be besieged on every side from within and/or from without, and without any apparent solution, but God remains faithful and near in the midst of our pain.

When we cry out to him as David did (see verse 4), God hears and enfolds us on every side in his protective arms. Yes, we may still suffer and die, but God will not allow the enemy to harm our souls. And when we experience the taunts of the enemy that cast doubt on God’s salvation of us or the worth, dignity, and honor ascribed to us by God, we can turn to God knowing he is our shield, glory, the lifter of our head, and our sustainer in the midst of every trial no matter how small or great.