

Sunday July 5, 2020

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer (Ross Logan)

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Charlestown 5th July 2020

Welcome, it's good to be able to continue to join in worship, even though it's in a number of different ways.

Have you ever had one of those days?

You know the ones. You sleep through the alarm, find you've run out of milk for your cereal, and worse still, you've also run out of coffee. The top you've planned on wearing has bird droppings on it, that didn't get noticed when the washing was brought in, and you clip the letterbox as you hurriedly reverse out of the driveway.

It all seems to happen one thing after another and without fail, when it finally looks like things might just turn out okay, WHAM! Something happens that is way worse than everything else that's happened so far.

It's nice to be able to live one day at a time, but sometimes you get that feeling that several days have attacked you all at once. That feeling of being out of control and under pressure.

We can't control everything that happens to us, but we can control how we respond.

In Psalm 3 we find David having one of those days. He's supposed to be the king but finds himself fleeing for his life from his rebellious son, Absalom. There are thousands of soldiers drawn up against him on every side. Things are not looking good. Life is spiralling out of control. The pressure is on.

As Jon takes us through Psalm 3, we'll learn of the choice David makes, and how, we too, can respond when life delivers one of those days.

Let's pray,

Father we want to come to you this morning to thank you for the wonderful blessing of today. We want to thank you for giving us life and breath, for the food you give us that strengthens us, for bodies that can serve you. Thank you for the sunshine, for creation around us that shows that you are in control and reflects you.

We want to thank you for your Word, for the hope and strength that we find in it, for the things it teaches us about you.

We want to thank you for your love. Love that make our lives meaningful, love that shows us that you care, love that has no boundaries.

We want to thank you for your peace. Peace that gives us comfort and sustains us when life seems to be out of control.

Peace that allows us to be content when we take refuge in you.

We want to thank you for your grace that lets us be forgiven and restores our relationship with you. Grace that is undeserved, yet freely given

Thank you.

We know Lord that we come undeserving. That we are constantly forgetting you and rebelling against you. That we seek our own solutions to problems rather than turning to you. Forgive us.

We allow our emotions to control our actions. We seek revenge rather than restoration. We want to hurt others when we have been hurt by them. Forgive us.

We claim your promise to be faithful and just, forgiving us our sins and purifying us from all unrighteousness. Help us to walk in righteousness, peace, and joy, choosing to be kind and compassionate showing others who you are.

Amen

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fff2xQETe1c>

The Glories of Calvary - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSa-E7uoBcc>

Bible Reading - Psalm 3 (NIV)

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

1

Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!

2

Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him." [b]

3

But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

4

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

5

I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.

6

I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.

7

Arise, Lord!
Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.

8

From the Lord comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.

Matthew 27:32-44 (NIV)

32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33 They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). 34 There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. 35 When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

38 Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" 41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Announcements 5 July 2020

- Church in July. During July we will be again running services at Swansea (max 23 people), Charlestown AM (max 50 people) and Sunday @ 6 (maximum 50 people.) It is important that if you are planning to go to church that you register your intention to come. An email will be sent around each week for the Charlestown services showing you how to register. At Swansea if you just tell Stephen or Jon you are coming that should be sufficient.
- School Holidays. With NSW school holidays starting this weekend, our Home Groups and our Prayer Groups will go into recess for two weeks as well SPARKLERS and IMPACT. Kids Church will continue when families are invited to Church.
- Balance.
- Focus for July – Bible Challenge. Each July we aim to encourage each other to read the bible more with our yearly bible Challenge. This year we are spending July reading more about the name and character of God. The challenge can be found at <https://rachelwojo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/the-names-of-god-bible-reading-challenge.pdf> The plan is to choose one reading each day. After reading the Scripture we are to meditate on this aspect of God's character and to pray about it. Let's see if we can do one a day for the whole month.
- Prayer. No prayer meeting for the two weeks of the school holidays.
- Finances for June

Offerings – Actual	23, 614
Offerings – Budget	27, 330
Shortfall for June	3, 714
Surplus for Jan-June	3, 481

In the last few days we have received our first JobKeeper payments so that is going to be good for our finances going forward. Praise God.
- Rhema Sermons. Do you know that our Church as a radio programme each Sunday morning at 7:30pm on Radio Rhema 99.7FM? If you would like to support this ministry that costs approx. \$50 per week then just make a direct deposit to the church bank account and mark Rhema.
 - After this service please like the sermon or share it with someone else or complete the following one minute Survey Monkey survey @ at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6D9VPZK> This will help us work out who is accessing our interactive service and how we can better help out those who are not.

Prayer points – Sunday 5th July 2020

Pray for Yemen. Conflict, famine and the worst humanitarian crisis in the world have led the United Nations to call for a global response as Yemen nears collapse. "Four people out of every five, 24 million people in all, need lifesaving aid in what remains the world's largest humanitarian crisis," reported UN Secretary-General António Guterres. "Two million Yemeni children are suffering from acute malnutrition, which could stunt their growth and affect them throughout their lives." Aside from the humanitarian crisis, Yemen is currently facing the largest outbreak of cholera in the world and one of the most substantial mortality rates of COVID-19. Many Christians are being denied lifesaving resources as emergency relief is often distributed through Islamic organisations and local mosques.

COVID - 19. As Australia has escaped the worst of the pandemic the COVID-19 infection rates across the world are the highest they have ever been. Pray that all nations would work together to stop the spread. That the richer nations will help the poorer nations cope with this humanitarian disaster.

Pray for SRE in schools as will be available again in term 3. Many schools will choose to delay its reintroduction. Pray that all school children would have the chance to hear about the good news of Jesus.

Pray for the people of Walaha. Pray for the work that needs to be done to rebuild the community and its building in the wake of the volcano (2018) and the cyclone (2020). Pray especially as they repair the Church. Also as they work on the nakamal (traditional meeting area). When it's completed, we will use it to worship in and repair the church roof. Pray for unity and commitment in our community. And for a growth in the gospel among the people.

Pray for our leaders as they lead us through difficult and uncertain times.

Church Prayer (Simon Mulready)

Heavenly Father,

We come to you in thankfulness, as your people. Though spread out across Charlestown, Swansea, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle this morning, we are united together in our love for you, and thankfulness for your goodness and mercy. Thank you, that even in times of great uncertainty, your word is ever-present for us to know more of your greatness and power. Protect us from being consumed by the unending information the with which the world bombards us. Keep us from drowning in the mania about the latest infection control measures, the latest financial disaster, and the latest proclamations of Donald Trump. May we, like David in the Psalms, find rest and peace in the knowledge of your sovereign hand, and love for us. May we first seek your word. May we first seek your kingdom. May we spend more time in prayer and Bible reading, than in scouring the internet and TV for the latest media updates.

We thank you for the book of the Psalms, for the songs of praise, the songs of lament, the songs of instruction. We pray that over these weeks, of learning from the Psalms, we may understand more of your mercy and justice, your goodness and holiness. May we see clearly, the foreshadowing of Christ the King, the Anointed One, our deliverer.

Father we thank you for those who serve us at Charlestown in a position of leadership. We thank you for their hard work and careful planning in coordinating church ministries ways which are safe and compliant with the latest government regulations. Grant to our leaders times of rest and recovery in the midst of their busy lives.

We pray for the Sparklers Pray Group, and thank you for the opportunity for them to meet together again. We pray that the ladies will be able to provide friendship and encouragement to each other, while holding out the word of light. We thank you that one family is interested in engaging with Christianity Explored. We pray that they would come to understand the finished work of Christ, and that salvation is based on His performance, not our performance.

Help us all, Father, as we engage with our neighbours, our family members, and friends, to be salt and light in a world of darkness. May we live lives which bring glory to you and may we always be ready to share the message of hope and forgiveness.

Beyond Australia, we pray for the country of Laos. With a government suspicious and hostile towards the church, we pray that the believers would live safely, without persecution. May they be able to overcome the government restrictions in a way so that they can meet together, pray together and learn from the scriptures. May they be encouraged to keep trusting you, in the midst of difficult circumstances. Uphold their faith, that the church of Laos may stand with the saints on the last day, bringing you praise and glory.

For those in our church who are bearing the weight of suffering, or sadness, or loneliness, or sickness, or hardship, or financial difficulty, or temptation, or distress, or the guilt of sin, we bring our burdens to you, Lord God, our good shepherd. May we turn our eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, that things of earth may grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.

Amen

Kids Spot!

It's a battle between two Kings and the Kingdoms they rule. King Herod is a powerful human King who seeks to overcome and destroy King Jesus and his Kingdom. But the Book of Acts shows us that Jesus is the only REAL King. Using a shadow puppet play to bring to life Acts chapter 12, this Kids' Talk shows once again that the mission of the Risen King Jesus cannot be stopped but those who stand against the Risen King Jesus will be stopped.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR7Z9E8SfTA&feature=youtu.be>

Hear Our Prayer

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_1bJIJKSemkcp9vAasnNXCT6yY86neQd/view

Sermon - *Praying Under Pressure* (Psalm 3) by Jon Brown

Sermon Link: <https://youtu.be/6OhZ8iLbRtI>

What do you do when trouble comes your way? How do you deal with the pressures of life? There seems to be two main ways we react in times of trouble: Fight or flight mode. We either conjure up the strength within ourselves, and face difficulty with a stiff upper lip. Or we run. We try to escape by avoiding the problem.

In Psalm 1-2 we've walked through the double doors of the Psalter. And we've walked straight into trouble. In Psalm 3 we meet a man under terrible pressure. And his reaction isn't fight or flight, but prayer. And this isn't just any man. It's God's Anointed King! King David. Notice the superscription says he wrote this Psalm 'when he fled from his son Absalom'. This is recorded for us in 2 Samuel 15-18. Here we're immersed into the most terrible and dramatic episode of David's kingship. Absalom, David's good looking, self-centred son, leads a popular rebellion against his father. David flees Jerusalem, crosses the Kidron valley, and faces almost certain death. It is a desperate time for God's anointed king. And yet he prays.

Let's walk through Psalm 3 together with the King, and learn how we too can join him in praying under pressure.

1. Praying Under Pressure with the King (vv. 1-2)

Notice how the Psalm starts? "Lord, how my enemies increase! There are many who attack me. Many say about me, "There is no help for him in God.'" Notice how the pressure increasing? There's a three-fold repetition of 'many'. At the start of the rebellion a messenger comes to David and says, 'The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom' (2 Samuel 15:13). The polls are against you. Your ratings are at rockbottom. You're heavily outnumbered. But it gets worse. Notice these enemies start closing in on him? 'They rise up against me,' David says. The cosmic hostility against God's King in Psalm 2 is becoming a concrete reality in Absalom's rebellion. But the climax is in verse 2. The worst thing these 'many' are doing is speaking. Listen to what they say: 'God won't deliver him.' The worst thing about David's pressures is the accusation that God won't help him.

If you know David's story it's easy to understand why. As David flees Jerusalem a man called Shimei pelts him with stones. And he's shouting out, 'Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! The Lord has repaid you, for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The Lord has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You've come to ruin because you're a murderer'. 'Don't even bother praying because God's not listening'. Add to that David's guilty conscience about his adultery with Bathsheba. And the arranged death of her husband Uriah. This makes for a toxic mix of despair doesn't it. 'Perhaps they're right,' David is probably thinking, 'maybe God won't rescue me'.

Now before we jump straight from David's experience to our own, we need to stop and ask, "I might feel squeezed but I'm not sure I have all that many foes." And I'm not sure if I've heard them say directly, 'God will not deliver him.'

Before we join in this song we need to track the psalm to David's greater Son. Jesus had many foes didn't he. The religious establishment was against him. The political establishment was against him. From very early on in his public life, 'the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill' Him (Mark 3:6). Finally the imperial power of Rome condemned Him to a shameful death. Jesus knew what it was to have many plotting against him. Watching and waiting to trap him. He knew what about mocking didn't he: 'He saved others...but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now for he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God"' (Matthew 27:42-43). If anyone knew about pressure it was Jesus wasn't it? Think about the pressures that Jesus faced in his life. First of all, the pressure of living knowing he would die on the cross. The cross overshadowed his whole life. What about the pressure he faced in the garden. He felt the weight of the sins of the world. Oh the pressure! Sweating great drops of

blood. Anyone would have cracked then and there. And then the physical pressures. The pressure of carrying a heavy wooden cross with no sleep, bruised and beaten. And that's not all. The most pressure came from being abandoned by his Father. "My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me!" In fact it was pressure that killed him in the end. His heart exploded. That's how he died! That's why water and blood flowed out from him. The medical condition is a ruptured heart. And he did it for you. The judgment and all the pressures that we deserved fell upon him. And he trusted prayed and trusted God even in his death.

And here's where you and I come can join in. Those who have bowed the knee to Jesus. Those who have kissed the Son (Psalm 2:11), must expect to experience some of the king's pressures with him. Just as David's loyal followers did when they fled Jerusalem with him. That's the Christian life according to the New Testament is: we will suffer with Jesus our King.

You might be facing the pressure of temptations. You might have greedy desires swirling around your heart. Maybe you're feeling choked by envy or bitterness. You might be wrestling with lust. Jesus knew the pressure of temptation like no one else and so he sympathises with us.

You might be feeling the pressures of sadness or grief. Sickness or weariness. Discouragement and conflict. These are the overflowing pressures of Christ. Verse 1 and 2 might not be my direct experience. But if we're one of the King's followers, you and I must expect some overflow of these pressures. And we need not be surprised when they come.

2. Praying the Promises with the King (vv. 3-6)

And we shouldn't stare at our pressures for too long without moving to the promises. The tone changes in verse 3 doesn't it. Notice the King goes from concern about the 'many' enemies, to confidence in the Covenant God. In the middle of danger the King sings of safety. He sings to the LORD. "But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory and the lifter of my head." The LORD never promises to keep his people from trouble, but he does promise to keep them in their trouble. David has lost everything. The things he had built his life on have been taken away haven't they. "I'm popular", not anymore. "I'm a good father." But he can't say that either. "I had a this great moral record", but what about the adultery and murder? Here's a man who's admitting something. "My life is crumbling around me...but" But you Lord are my glory and the one who lifts up my head. In the midst of despair David has confidence in God. Actually he has more than that. 'my glory' and the 'one who lifts up my head' is an idiom for military victory. Although all the chips are down. Although his world is crumbling, David is confident that he has the victory. How? Look at verse 4. "I cry aloud to the LORD and he answers me from his holy mountain." What does that mean? Psalm 2:6 gives us a clue. God says to his enemies, 'I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.' This is referring to the place of the covenant with David the King (2 Samuel 7). The city of David where the promise to David is given. For God to answer David is to keep his promise that one of David's sons would rule the world. This is the ground of David's confidence. Not his goodness, but God's faithfulness. David didn't have any goodness to claim. Actually he was under judgment for his sin! And his circumstances don't give him any confidence do they? It's God's covenant promise to David that finds its fulfilment in Jesus. This promise isn't made directly to us, but to the King. But the King's people share in all his blessings! When you're in Christ all the things promised to Him are now yours. You inherit the promises. If we suffer the pressures with Jesus our King, we will share in the glory of Jesus our King (Romans 8:17).

And notice in verses 5-6 the objective promise leads to the subjective enjoyment of it. The promises of God are sure and steadfast. None of them will ever fail. And so surrounded by enemies, David sleeps doesn't he. And he's sure that he will wake again. Why? Because the LORD protects him. By human standards he should be lying awake all night frightened for his life. He should be full of fear and anxiety. But he isn't is he. 'I will not fear' he says. His circumstances haven't changed have they? He is still surrounded on every side. Notice in verse 4? Thousands have surrounded him. He's still under terrible pressures. And yet he can sleep and not fear because God protects him.

And King Jesus did the same didn't he? In a small boat, in the midst of a terrifying storm that threatened his life. Jesus was asleep on a pillow (Mark 4:38). And at the end of His life we watch Him give Himself up to his enemies on the cross. And even when the whole world had turned against him, He committed Himself to God. And we watch him sleep the sleep of death. Jesus was confident that God would awaken him. And he did! He rose from the dead!

And in Jesus you get to experience that same assurance. You also can learn to rest and trust with Jesus although it might feel like the walls are closing in. Nothing can separate you from the love of Christ! Take heart Christian!

Salvation Belongs to the LORD! (vv. 7-8)

David's final words are a victory cry. Notice in verse 7, "Arise O LORD. Save me, my God. You strike all my enemies on the cheek. You break the teeth of the wicked." The worst thing David's enemies did was speak about him, and say 'God won't deliver him.' And that's true of a Christian too. The ultimate enemy the Devil loves to discourage a follower of the King. He wants to steal all of your joy in Jesus. The Devil will make you question whether God really loves you. Because of your sins. Or because of your dire circumstances. But here we are reminded that the enemy won't have the last say. How can we be sure? The cross. Although Jesus was mocked and pressured. Crushed and killed. It seemed like utter defeat, and yet it was the final victory. Jesus triumphed over the evil powers making a public spectacle of them by His death on the cross (Colossians 2:15). The cross was the knockout blow. The serpent's head was crushed! Jesus our King was delivered. He was raised from the dead. Lifted up into glory. Seated at the right hand of the father. Given all authority in heaven and earth. The name that is above every name! Salvation is of the LORD! That's the message of the Bible in a nutshell. It's all by grace. God chose his people. He calls them by grace. He regenerates them by His Spirit. And keeps them by his power. And it's all in Christ alone. All his blessings become yours. Notice how the psalm ends? The final line is, 'May your blessing be on your people'. When the King is delivered, blessing comes to his people. The destiny of the people is wrapped up in the destiny of their King. And that means our destiny is secure! Our salvation is eternally secure because it depends on Jesus alone - the LORD Himself.

So friends, in Christ we expect to share in the overflow of His pressures. But we are promised if we suffer with him we will also reign with him. In Christ alone, we claim the covenant promises of God and enjoy the assurance that brings us in the middle of our troubles. In Christ we will share in the final victory. And so we can say with the Apostle Paul, we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Let's pray. Great God, may we count it the highest privilege to suffer with Christ your Son, and reign with him in glory. Help us to call out to you. Help us to lay hold of your promises in the midst of our pressure. Thank you for securing our eternal salvation. And blessing us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. In His name. Amen.

A Mighty Fortress is Our God - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNeP7bGaggg>

Benediction.

Salvation belongs to the LORD! Your blessing be upon your people (Psalm 3:8b).

Church Engagement

To help us know who has participated in today's service would you please either

- Like the sermon on Facebook OR
- Share the sermon on Facebook with someone that you believe would benefit from it. OR
- Fill out a two question survey (approx. 1 minute) at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6D9VPZK>

Morning Tea

Our morning tea is a vital way that we give and receive fellowship during a time like this. We don't want to be just consumers of Church, we want to be a part of the family of God. Why not join our virtual morning tea on Zoom. Click on the link at 10:45am to join: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89081952206?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89081952206?pwd=aGVTcm1oOHp3VXMxYVg0bk5HSS9rZz09)

[pwd=aGVTcm1oOHp3VXMxYVg0bk5HSS9rZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89081952206?pwd=aGVTcm1oOHp3VXMxYVg0bk5HSS9rZz09)

Meeting ID: 890 8195 2206 Password: 797654

Or you could give one or two people a call. Who might your ring now?