

Salvation Belongs to the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

If you are new or visiting with us, welcome. We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we are trying to fill seats, but because we are following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we've become convinced that there's no one so good that they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it. Which means that when we come to look at God's word, which is what we're about to do, we're convinced that God has something to say to everyone.

He has something to say to people who have been Christians their entire lives. He has something to say to people who have been Christians for a short amount of time, and maybe even people who would not consider themselves Christians, who have doubts and questions and objections about Christianity.

God speaks to all of those things in his word, and so that's why we come to it together. If you have been with us, you know that we're going through the book of Psalms, and I've been telling you a variety of things about the book of Psalms.

[1 : 1 0] One of the things I've told you every time is that it's the hymn book and the prayer book of the people of God in the Old Testament, and so it was a guide for how to worship God, and it's continued to be used by people in the New Testament because, of course, it's still relevant and helpful for us, as everything in the Old Testament is.

And I've also told you it's hard to talk about the Psalms because there's not just one thing that I could say that would sum it all up. It would be as if you took out a hymnal and said, I want you to summarize this hymnal for me.

Well, it's full of songs, right? And those songs talk about all sorts of different things. And so what I'm going to do each week is tell you something, a different kind of angle or facet of the diamond of the Psalms. So last week I told you that the Psalms are poetry, and as poetry they make complicated things simple.

And that's what we looked at with Psalm 2. To understand another element of the Psalms, I'm going to tell you a story. So many of you know that I grew up on the East Coast right outside Washington, D.C., and I happened to be born to a mother who had a passion and a love for art history and art appreciation.

In fact, she loved art history and art appreciation so much, I'm going to brag on her a little bit, that she was recruited at one point. I grew up right outside Washington, D.C. She was recruited at one point to be a docent for the National Art Gallery in Washington, D.C., to be a volunteer who's trained over several years that would give tours and explain to people the complexities and the love and the joy that comes from looking at famous artworks.

[2 : 3 8] Now, it didn't work out at that time. It wasn't the right time in our lives, and so that ultimately didn't happen. But the point is that I went many, many times to the art gallery, sometimes willingly, sometimes unwillingly.

I have good memories. I also have memories of having some meltdowns, times where I'd been looking at paintings for too long. But it gave me a love and an appreciation and an eye as well to kind of walk into various art museums and have some idea of what I'm looking at and what's going on.

And if you're someone who loves art and you know about art galleries, you know that when you go in, there are some art galleries that are more important than others. And you can tell the caliber of an art gallery by the value and the caliber of the paintings in it.

So if you're in an art gallery and there's a Leonardo da Vinci, you know this is a serious art gallery. And size matters as well. So in the National Gallery in D.C., they only have a small Leonardo da Vinci. But if you go to the art museum in Paris, they have the Mona Lisa.

And so there's different gradations of value and relevance. Now, if you don't know a lot about art but you know just a little bit, you're probably familiar with a lot of Impressionist painters.

[3 : 45] And there's one painter you'll probably recognize, and that's Monet. Monet. And Monet is famous for covering the same theme over and over again.

He's famous for painting water lilies in different shades and different colors. In fact, it's estimated there are about 250 different paintings of water lilies. He also decided at one point that he was going to paint this one specific cathedral in France, and there are about 30 paintings of that cathedral.

Different times of day, different shades, different variations. And if you go to a new art gallery, you're going to want to make sure you see the hits. So when I moved to St. Louis, Missouri for seminary, there's a St. Louis art gallery, and it's free.

So, of course, I went multiple times, being trained well by my mother. And in it, there's a Monet. And you know what I didn't think? I didn't think, man, I've seen the water lilies before.

That's so boring. I'm going to make sure I don't visit that room in the art gallery. No, I'm at the art gallery. I want to see the highlights. I want to see the greatest parts of the collection. And the Monet in the St. Louis art gallery is almost 14 feet long.

[4 : 58] And so, of course, that's one of the things I'm going to make sure I see over and over again. And if I go to any other art gallery that I've never been to before, I'm going to make sure I go and I look at the Monet. Even if it's water lilies that I've seen before.

And so, no one in their right mind would say, I've seen this before. I know this. I'm just bored by it. There's nothing new for me to see. In fact, it's the repetition that partially makes this fascinating. People will work to bring these collections together so that you can look at this same cathedral over and over in different variations of different shades.

And so, I tell you this long story to say this. The Psalms, if we want to understand them, we have to know that they're a lot like paintings by Monet.

They will focus on the same themes over and over again, but with different shades and different colors. And so, one of those themes that we're going to see, in fact, the theme, the shade that shows up more than any other, the water lilies, if you will, of the Psalms are the Psalms of Lament.

And these are the Psalms that help us understand how it is that we can have hope in the midst of difficulty. What do we do when we see life's challenges and difficulties?

[6 : 09] What do we do when we're in situations that feel overwhelming? We looked at the big picture of the Psalms in Psalm 1 and 2. Psalm 2, we saw the King is going to come back. He's going to make everything right.

And yet, we're still waiting. And everything is not right yet. And so, as the Psalms give us Psalms of Lament over and over, as they repeat these Psalms over and over, they remind us of the importance of repetition, that the Bible does not exist for us to simply extract some kind of abstract theological truth, but it's meant for us to live in it.

It's meant for us to come to it over and over again. It's what we talked about in Psalm 1, that there's a model that we run our hands along over and over that we could learn it. God is not as interested in efficiency as we are.

God is not an American. And so, he gives us the same themes over and over. He forces us to see them over and over because that's the way that we learn.

It's a slow process. The Psalms sort of model the Christian life for us. So, Psalm 1 and 2, we see the introduction. Psalm 150, we see the end. It ends in praise. And everything between is all the agonies and joys of the Christian life.

[7 : 21] And many of those are joys, but also many of them are agonies. And so, that's why God provides us over and over again, Psalms of lament.

Psalms where the psalmist cries out and says, this is the situation I'm in. It feels overwhelming, and I need your help. And it's interesting because we have the introduction in Psalm 1 and 2, and the very first prayer in the Psalms, because Psalms 1 and 2 are not prayers, the first prayer is Psalm 3, which we're about to come to.

The very first prayer, after we've been reminded that there are two ways to live, and after we've been taught that the King is going to come back and make everything right, the first prayer is a prayer of lament.

Not a prayer of victory from Psalm 2, but a prayer of crying out to God. And so, it's with that that we're going to turn to Psalm 3. You can follow along with me.

It's printed in your worship guide near the end. You can follow along in your Bibles, or you can also follow along on your phones. But I would ask that you read with me, because this is God's Word. And God tells us that His Word is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.

[8 : 28] In other words, God has not left us alone to stumble in the dark, but instead, He's given us His Word to show us the way to go. And so, because of that, we're going to read now, starting at verse 1.

O 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.

Verse 3. 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.

Verse 5. 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.

Verse 7. Arise, O Lord. Save me, O my God. For you strike all my enemies on the cheek. You break the teeth of the wicked.

[9 : 30] Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing be on your people. Please pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word. Dear Father in Heaven, we thank You for Your Word, that You've given it to us.

That You know that we face challenging and sometimes overwhelming situations in this life. that as we're surprised by it, You're not. And You have packed our bags.

You've given us what we need to face those things when they come. We ask that You would help us this morning, that You would help us to understand and see and to believe and trust everything that You've written for us in this psalm.

And we ask these things in the name of our King, Jesus. Amen. When we talked about Psalm 2, the psalm that comes before this, I mentioned that this is a psalm that, first of all, talks about King David.

So it looks forward to Jesus, but it is first about King David. That's what the people of the Old Testament would have known. He was the model king, the great king. And there's a superscript to Psalm 3 that tells us that this comes from an event in King David's life.

[10 : 49] He was the greatest king of Israel. He was the model that's pointed to throughout the Old Testament as a man after God's own heart. And yet he was not a man without sin. And he was not a man without difficulty and challenges.

And this psalm tells us that it comes at a very specific time in David's life. So David had periods of success at the very beginning of his time as a king. He was able to bring all of Israel under his control.

But there was a later time in his life when he faced many troubles. Now these troubles, if you're familiar with the story, know, you know that they start with his affair with Bathsheba. And it was at that point that things in his family start to turn south.

And there comes one point where things get so bad that David's son, and this is in 2 Samuel chapters 15 and 16, if you're interested in reading the story later, David's son, who's named Absalom, decides that he's going to revolt and rebel against David.

And so he builds this coalition around him of people who are going to join him. He tells them his grievances against David. He builds a group slowly by complaining and talking about how good his kingship is going to be.

[11 : 54] And then ultimately he revolts. And so David has to, as the king of Israel, leave his own city. He has to flee from Jerusalem. He's fleeing from Jerusalem for his life with just a few people.

And rather than praising him when they see him, people in other places curse him. And so while David has been familiar with being chased, remember before he was king, Saul spent plenty of time chasing him.

It's now after so much victory that he faces this great challenge, not from some enemy from another country, not from a political rival, but from his own son.

And it's with that that he writes Psalm 3, this Psalm of Lament. If you were with us in December, you know we looked at another Psalm of Lament. We looked at Psalm 13, and the flavor, the timbre, the color of that psalm was slightly different.

That was a psalm for when we feel that God has forgotten us and abandoned us. And this psalm, Psalm 3, it's not a psalm for when we feel like God has abandoned us or forgotten us.

[12 : 59] He doesn't say how long, O Lord, like he does in Psalm 13. But instead, it's a psalm for an overwhelming situation, where the psalmist knows that he desperately needs God's intervention.

And so this psalm answers for us, how do we function in an emergency? How do we function when life's circumstances are overwhelming and seem to surround us from every side?

David tells us that he has many foes that are rising against him. And in verse 6, thousands of people have surrounded him. Psalm 2 tells us that God's going to deliver.

Psalm 3, we still wait for that deliverance. Now, I just want to name up front, most of us, hopefully all of us, do not have a son who's trying to kill us. And most and many of the Israelites who sang this song over and over again in the Old Testament did not have a son trying to kill them.

At the same time, many Israelites, God's people in the Old Testament, and many Christians, God's people in the New Testament, have come to this psalm over and over again for help and wisdom.

- [14 : 23] Even if we do not have a son trying to kill us, God has given us this psalm as a guide to help us know how to walk when we face those kinds of situations. And so, one of the ways that we use the psalms is we use them as templates.

This is a general prayer that we can apply to specific situations. It's a general prayer that we use when we face situations, maybe not as severe as David faced, but situations that are overwhelming where we feel under attack.

Maybe we're specifically under attack. This is the kind of prayer that we could use. Maybe you're a Christian of the early reign, Christian Covenant Church in China, and you're under attack. Your leaders are being put in prison.

Maybe you've been accused of something falsely at work, and you're afraid you might lose your job over something that's not true. Maybe someone's brought a frivolous lawsuit against you, and you know that it's going to waste enormous amounts of your time and your money.

Maybe you've been deployed overseas, and someone is actually trying to kill you, like David faces here. Maybe you're like David, and you have a family member who is actively trying to destroy you.

- [15 : 36] Maybe it's not in your family. Maybe outside of your family, you have a personality who has it out for you. They long to see your end. We can pray this prayer specifically when we face situations that we're under attack.

It's general enough, though, if you follow along, that we can apply it to any situation where we need faith in the midst of overwhelming circumstances. So maybe someone isn't attacking you.

Maybe you don't have enough money to pay your bills. And you look at Psalm 2, and you say the king's coming back to make everything right, and yet that's not what I'm experiencing right now. Maybe you do have enough money to pay your bills, and you realize that doesn't matter because the problems that you face can't be solved with money.

Maybe your job situation is getting worse and worse, and you can't seem to find a way out. Maybe you don't have a job, and it feels like nothing that you do is working.

Maybe no one in your family is trying to destroy you, but the needs that you are facing are overwhelming. The needs of your relatives, the needs of your children, it feels like the world is closing in on you.

- [16 : 51] People inside of the church and people outside of the church face overwhelming circumstances. And those of us who are inside of the church and those of us who are outside of the church have ways of dealing with those circumstances, and even for those of us in the church, often our way of dealing with them has nothing to do with God.

And so this psalm, Psalm 3, is going to give us a template. It's going to help us understand how it is that we walk. What do we do if we want to have faith and trust in God in the midst of overwhelming circumstances?

First, we see in verses 1 and 2, the psalmist just lays it out. He just talks about what is going on. Oh 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. He is honest about bringing the situation to God. And the psalms remind us that God knows that there are times we're going to face circumstances that feel very overwhelming.

God's not surprised by that. He's not alarmed by that. He's so aware of it that he has given us psalms for when those situations come.

[18 : 09] God also knows that there are times when people will believe that our faith in him is foolish. That's what we see in verse 2. Many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God. And perhaps, if we're honest, at times we are tempted to believe that our faith in God is foolish.

And yet the psalmist refuses fear on the one hand and self-reliance on the other. And instead, he comes to God in overwhelming circumstances. And so what do we do when we're facing overwhelming circumstances and we want to face them with faith in God?

The first thing is simple. We just come to God. We don't stop talking. We start talking. We tell God the situation that we're in.

We don't shut down, but instead we talk to him. We tell him what's on our hearts, what's going on in our lives. Now this may sound too simple.

Right? We're facing, David's facing someone trying to kill him. Maybe you're facing someone trying to destroy you and the pastor has just told you. The first thing I want you to do is just tell God what's going on. Maybe you think, that is so little compared to the challenges that I'm facing.

[19 : 25] It has almost nothing to do with what I need to get done. And if that's what you're thinking, I want you to think about this. This sounds too simple. I recently spoke with a friend of mine and this friend is currently actively involved in a recovery program for an addiction that he's been facing.

And as I talked to him, he was sharing some of the things that he's been learning in this program and one of the most profound insights for him was he said, this is what's been most helpful for me is that I've learned that the opposite of addiction is not sobriety.

The opposite of addiction is connection. The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection.

Now don't hear what I'm not saying. I'm not saying if you struggle with a serious addiction, it's going to be solved simply and easily by beginning to pray. What I am saying is this.

When we live life apart from our connection with God, it will show up in our lives. When we live life apart from our connection with God, it will show up in our lives.

[20 : 38] We were not meant to live lives apart from God and when we try, we will have consequences for it. Maybe it's an addiction. Maybe it's that we numb ourselves in that way.

Maybe it's something that other people find attractive. Maybe we're extremely competent, we're extremely competent because we know how to control and manage situations and people rather than trust God.

Maybe it's that we've learned to be stingy and hoard resources so that we'll never be without the help that we think that we need. Maybe it's controlling people rather than loving them.

Maybe it's scrolling through image after image on social media, not even thinking or realizing the images that we're looking through because it's a way to turn off our minds. The opposite of addiction is connection and God is telling us here in his word that when we face these things that feel like they're too big for us, the first thing he wants us to do is come and talk to him to tell him what it is that's going on.

Verse 1, O Lord, how many are my foes? Many are rising against me. And so we start by talking to God.

[21 : 55] Thankfully, that's not where we stop. Verses 3 through 6 take us to the next step. Not only do we begin our conversation with God, but we have to remind ourselves over and over again of what is true about God and his character and also what's true about his faithfulness to us in the past.

So verse 3, the psalmist reminds himself what's true about God. God is a shield. God's the one who protects him. It's not his military ability or power.

It's not his financial resources. That's his shield, but it's God. God's also the glory and the lifter of his head. God is the one who gives him victory. God's the one where he finds his dignity and his purpose and his meaning.

So he reminds himself of the truth about God. That what's true about God is more true than his circumstances. Second, he lists the ways that God has been faithful to him in the past.

We go back in time in verses 4 and 5. I cried aloud to the Lord and he answered me from his holy hill. In other words, I have been in bad situations before. And if you know the story of David, you know he certainly has.

[23 : 04] And when I was in those bad situations, you know who came and helped me? It was God who came and helped me. God showed up. Verse 5, I lay down and slept.

I awoke again for the Lord sustained me. In other words, there have been times in the past where without God and his strength and his help, I would have been sleepless. Another way to think about this outside of the category of addiction would be to think about it in sleeplessness.

What keeps you up at night? And if something keeps you up at night, what do you do to go to sleep? Maybe you don't.

Maybe you stay up working through the night. Maybe you're like some friends of mine, the only way that you know to fall asleep is to smoke a bowl. Maybe the only way that you know to fall asleep is to congratulate yourselves for the ways that you've succeeded in the past and to numb yourself to the pain of what you're facing.

The psalmist here, though, lays down and sleeps for the Lord sustained him. In other words, he's able to fall asleep because he's reminding himself of who God is and what God has done for him.

[24 : 24] And therefore, verse 6, I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. many of you know that I was out of town last week and part of the week I was in Lake George with some friends of mine from seminary.

We spent time together to reconnect and share our joys and our heartbreaks and also to pray for each other and have fun with each other. And one of the things that we did was we cooked together. So we put together a meal schedule and each person was responsible for a meal.

and one of my friends was responsible for breakfast one morning so he made French toast and he decided we were also going to have whipped cream with this French toast. So we made up this fancy whipped cream.

We put in, you know, vanilla extract and some other things in it but it wasn't already whipped for us and so he was sitting there at the kitchen just whipping over and over and over. If you know anything about whipped cream, it's easy to buy, it's hard to make, right?

And if you want to make it, you have to have this diligence and this persistence moving back and forth over and over and over again. Now, I helped him a few times. I offered that I would be happy to jump in and do a little whipping for him.

[25 : 33] I didn't want to do that too much though because I really wanted him to be able to use his gifts. So I let him do most of the whipping. But if you know anything about whipping cream, if you've ever done it, you know that it is long and excruciating and hard.

And if you want hard peaks, you have to whip it over and over again. If we want to have the hard peaks of faith and confidence and trust in God in the midst of trials, then we have to over and over again remind ourselves of who God is and what he has done for us in the past.

faith and hope and confidence in God are not things that happen magically. They're things that God gives to us by his grace, but he's given us ways that we grow.

We call these the means of grace. So one of the reasons that there are so many water lilies in the book of Psalms, one of the reasons we have so many Psalms of lament is that God wants us over and over again to remember and retell and recount what he has done in the past.

There are many Psalms where the psalmist talks about the things that God has done. If we want to face trials with fate in our lives, then we have to sit down as families and talk about the ways that God has delivered us in the past.

[27 : 10] We have to meditate on the ways God's provided for us in the past. We have to remind ourselves of Psalm 2 that God is the great king. And it's as we do that over and over again that God builds the kind of faith and hope and trust that we need to be verse 5 people.

People who are able to lay down and sleep and then wake up again because God sustains them. It's by remembering God's faithfulness over and over and over again that we get the hard peaks of trust and hope.

And so it's Christians are people of the past who are always remembering what God has done for us. We can look back as a church as we face trials and see what God has done, how he's provided for us in the past, how he's been faithful to this congregation.

We can look back as families. And most importantly, we look back as a people of God around the world. We look back to God's faithfulness to the church throughout history. And most of all, we look back to God's great act of faithfulness, his faithfulness to us through Jesus.

While it's encouraging and helpful and important for us to remember what God has done for us in our lives, it is of most importance to remember what he did for us before we were born, which is that he sent his son as a man who lived as a real person on this earth.

[28 : 46] He lived a life where he had many foes and many people were rising against him. He didn't deserve it. He was without sin. He lived a perfect life.

And yet, because of God's faithfulness, because he's a shield about us and a lifter of our head, when Jesus went to the cross, he refused to lift Jesus' head.

He abandoned Jesus so that he could be with us. The psalmist didn't know this when he wrote it.

David didn't know exactly how God was going to redeem his people. And so, as we face trials, first of all, we probably face a much less trial. My guess is you don't have thousands of people surrounding you.

You could. And while we face a less trial than David faced, we also face a greater hope. We have a greater thing in the past to remember, which is that for people who have faith in Christ, Jesus has died and risen that we would have life with him.

[29 : 54] Now, as I mentioned last week, faith is not something that everyone has. Some people have faith and some people do not. And faith has three components to it.

First, it's knowledge. It's knowing the facts about Jesus, the fact that he came and lived a perfect life, that he died for our sins, that he rose again from the dead.

He was actually dead and he was actually alive. But it's not just knowledge. Many people know that, but they don't believe it. And so faith is also belief. It's believing that those things are true, that what God tells us is true, that we're sinners, that we have no hope outside of Jesus' death for us, that outside of his death, we are going to face God's full and final justice.

And then finally, it's not just knowledge and trust, but it's also, not knowledge and belief, but it's also trust that we live our lives as if these things are true. And so we live our lives following Jesus' commands, not to earn something from him, but in gratitude for the sacrifice that he's made for us.

So we look back, we remind ourselves of what's true, we remind ourselves of what God has done in the past, and more than anything, we remind ourselves of his faithfulness to us in Jesus.

[31 : 13] This is the path that God's given us as we walk through trials in this life. We talk to him, we cry out to him. We remind ourselves over and over again of the truth.

And then we see our last step in verses 7 and 8, we cry out to God for help. This is what the psalmist does here, Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God, verse 7, for you strike all my enemies on the cheek, you break the teeth of the wicked.

It's not enough to talk to God, it's not enough to list his faithfulness to us, but he longs for us, he asks us, he commands us to pray to him and to tell him what we need to ask for his help.

Whatever situation we're in, that we come to God and we ask for his deliverance, God promises us that prayer changes things. One of the things that the psalms do is they teach us how to pray.

If you don't know how to pray, you can take a psalm like Psalm 3 and you can make it your own. You can say, O Lord, how many are my foes?

[32 : 24] My friend, I thought was my friend, is trying to destroy me. Sometimes I think it's foolish to have faith in you and sometimes other people think it's foolish too.

Verse 2. Verse 3. But you're the God of the universe. You're the Psalm 2 king and you're coming back one day to make everything right.

I remember another time in my life when I faced a circumstance, not this exact one but a similar one. That other time, maybe it was the time I was without a job. And I prayed to you for months and you worked through your people and you provided.

And I remember another time when I was having difficulty sleeping. But my trust in you was what was able to get me through. So, verse 6, I will not be afraid of this friend who's coming up against me.

Finally, verse 7, I ask that you'd help me. Vindicate me in this situation. Whether it means revealing the truth about the lies that are being told.

[33 : 33] Whether it means taking this friend and bringing the justice that he needs and deserves if he's not willing to repent. And then finally, verse 8, salvation belongs to the Lord. In other words, you are the one who saves.

Not armies, not people, not bank accounts, not competencies, not degrees, not resumes. It's God that has our salvation.

And so that's what Psalm 3 teaches us. It teaches us how to pray. It teaches us how to face trials in our lives with faith. Not with pie-in-the-sky faith, but with the faith that comes from the hard work of praying and crying out to God.

Faith that comes from the hard work of reminding ourselves over and over again of how God's been faithful in the past. And faith that comes from the hard work of asking God to intervene.

Now, this is challenging for many reasons. One of the reasons it's challenging is that we're not always sure exactly how God is going to answer.

[34 : 40] So, salvation belongs to the Lord, right? Psalm 2, God is coming back to make everything right. It's on the one hand. On the other hand, we do not experience God's salvation fully in this life.

In other words, there are some things in this life that we are walking through right now that we want God's deliverance from that we will walk with for the rest of our lives.

There are some things that we are walking through right now that we will walk with through the rest of our lives. David experienced physical salvation in this specific situation.

He was saved from Absalom. If you know the end of the story, Absalom dies. We will not experience that same physical deliverance in every situation. And this is part of what's hard about faith.

What do we do with that? What do we do with Psalm 3 if the enemies don't disappear? What do we do with Psalm 3 if we pray to God and the situation that we want deliverance from we are not delivered from?

[35 : 51] How do we have faith then? This is one of the most challenging questions about being a Christian, living life in this world.

There's lots of clinical theological answers I could give you. But the most helpful way of understanding it comes in a story from a friend of mine that I come back to as a way to help me walk in this world when I know that God will not always bring the physical deliverance that we long for.

So this friend of mine he's I believe in his mid-40s now he was probably maybe he's in his yeah mid-40s and he was early to mid-40s when this happened. He was diagnosed with cancer unexpectedly.

He felt like he was very young for this to happen. And he had three kids. He had a seven-year-old daughter and then he had two twins who were four. And he had the kind of conversation with his children that no parent wants to have.

He sat them down and he felt that he needed to explain to them in ways that they could understand what was going on with their father. And as a good and faithful shepherd of his family he wanted to help them know how to pray.

[36 : 59] And so as he talked with his seven-year-old and his two four-year-olds he said you can pray to your heavenly father that he would heal your earthly father. He wanted to prepare them for what might come ahead for their family.

You can pray to your heavenly father about your earthly father. father. And he told them that they should pray that God would heal their earthly father. That he would have many more years with them.

He also reminded his children that God may not answer their prayer in the way that they wanted. So he was teaching them to pray. He was also preparing them. But he told them God wants you to come to him with the desires of your heart because he's your father.

He's your heavenly father. And he said no matter what God answers us when we pray for this as a family. It's ultimately for our good and he loves us.

He's going to provide for us and he will always be with us. And finally he told them there are things that we can pray for that we know that God will answer.

[38 : 08] God wants us to grow in faith and grace and love so we as a family can pray for that. He wants us to trust him more. So we can pray for that knowing that he will cause us to trust him more.

And we can pray for the fruit of the spirit because God has made it clear that that's something that he wants. He wants that fruit to be born in our lives and he's going to grow us in those ways. And so I want you to pray to your heavenly father about your earthly father.

Your heavenly father may not answer your prayer in the way that you want. But whatever way he answers it is ultimately for our good. he loves us. He's going to continue to provide for us and he's with us.

And he didn't say this but he could have added and we can also recount the ways that God has been faithful to our family in the past. Brothers and sisters, we have a heavenly father.

father. When we face difficult circumstances, he wants us to come to him with our fears and our doubts and the desires of our heart.

[39 : 17] He wants us to grow in our faith and our grace and our love and our trust in him. He wants us to grow and no matter what happens we know that what he does is ultimately for our good.

he loves us. He will provide it for us and he is always with us. And so it's with that hope and that guarantee that we can cry out to God, telling him the situations that we're in, remembering his faithfulness to us in the past and asking for his intervention now because we know what the psalmist tells us in verse eight.

Salvation belongs to the Lord. Lord, please pray with me. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you that we're your children and you are our Father and that you care for us and you love us.

We ask that you'd grow our faith, that you would help us to be Psalm 3 people, people who trust you and cry out to you no matter what. We ask that you'd grow us in those ways.

And most of all, we ask you these things not because we earn them or deserve them but because salvation belongs to you and you've given it through your son. And so we ask these things in his name. Amen.

[40 : 34] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.