**Psalm 3 Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! Many *are* they who rise up against me. 2Many *are* they who say of me, “*There is* no help for him in God.” *Selah* 3But You, O Lord, *are* a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. 4I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. *Selah* 5I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me. 6I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set *themselves* against me all around. 7Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.
8Salvation *belongs* to the Lord. Your blessing *is* upon Your people. *Selah***

 Last week, we looked at the Prayer of Jabez – Jabez prayed with right humility, right faith, and right understanding, recognizing that God is high and lifted up, Omniscient – all knowing, Omnipresent – all seeing, Magnificent beyond understanding. Jabez knew he was blessed to have audience with God. We too are blessed to have audience with God. The question is – do we know we are blessed to have an audience with God?

 Rich and meaningful prayer is not about the right words, but the right relationship. It’s not about communicating our needs, but communion with God who knows our needs. It’s not about God strengthening our flesh, but about us surrendering in weakness to the Spirit. Life looks very different when we know God is in control – even when the job fails, even when our loved one is sick, even when things look out of control and scary. In today’s scripture, we find King David, things looking out of control and scary all around him, trusting that God is still in control.

 A little background on Psalm 3. Absalom, David’s son, has seized the throne from his father. David is fleeing from Jerusalem, he’s on the run, believing the hearts of the people are with Absalom. David is weeping as he ascends the Mount of Olives, but we find that he stops to worship God there (2 Samuel 15:32). David prays this prayer of deliverance in Psalm 3, from the top of the same mountain Jesus will ascend from in Act 1:12.

 In this prayer, in this time of trouble, we find three elements: Current Perception, Past Protection, Future Provision – Verse 1 & 2*Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say of me, “There is no help for him in God.” Selah****.*** Current Perception - David prays what he can see. He cries out, based on limited understanding. Absalom seems to have everyone with him. David is outnumbered, overwhelmed, and anxious. It’s not looking good from his worldly view. And so it is with us – we pray from a desperately limited comprehension of what God is doing. It would be similar to, every time we start to move our hand, every cell in the arm has to take a vote! We’re viewing God’s plan through our cracked and warped lens called perception. Some never leave this place. Night and day, they cry out their current perception, writhing and worrying and wrought in despair.

 David moves from Current Perception into appreciation of Past Protection. Verses 3- 5 *But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.**I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah 5I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me.* Selah just means pause. Remember that a psalm is a song being sung. Selah is a pause. David recognizes God’s protection. God is a shield and lifts up David’s head, hearing David, and, even as recent as last night, God sustained him (remember, the enemy is pursuing! Hushai is advising Absalom to not pursue the king and God has purposed Absalom’s defeat – 2 Samuel 17:14). We too must rest in God’s past protection! Current perception can distort but, when we look at the past Faithfulness of God, our vision clears, and we are prepared to trust His Future Provision.

 David had a Current Perception that he refused to get stuck in. He moved to remembering Past Protection. Now, he’s confident in God’s Future Provision. Verses 6-8 *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around. 7Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. 8Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah.* Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Literally, Faith is the foundation of hope and proof of things unseen. When we pray, we must trust in God’s Future Provision, in His ultimate goodness, in His perfect plan. David demonstrates the flow of prayer. He is humble, faithful, and understands – just as Jabez. He moves from Perception, through Protection, into Provision.

 This week, let’s look at the state of our prayers. Are we stuck in Current Perception? Are we thankful for Past Protection? Are we confident in Future Provision? Current troubles hold little sway when we know God will provide. Some say – God I trust your future provision, just as long as it looks like what I want and plays the way I want it to play. As long as my loved one recovers, my children succeed, my job holds out, and my health never suffers, I trust You. No – that’s trust in self. God, I lay my current situation at Your feet. I trust that You will provide and, come what may, I will worship you. Worried, writhing, wrought in despair or confidently waiting on God’s perfect answer to prayer? Our prayers reveal the state of our faith. What will prayers reveal this week?