

**Word Notes Sunday 12/06/16**  
**Clare Reed: Psalms: Real Life, Real God. Week 2**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>.)

**Key Text: Psalm 3**

**Psalms 3 and 13 “Lifting my head”**

Psalm 3 was written by David when he was fleeing his son, Absalom. In brief summary, after some complex and traumatic family disputes, Absalom undermined David, telling visitors to Jerusalem that the King didn't have time to listen to them, but that if he, Absalom, were king, he would be sure to listen to everyone. Absalom sets himself up with his supporters to claim the throne. Hearing of this, David, unsure of just how much support Absalom has, flees to safety. This is when he writes psalm 3.

We might break the psalm down into 4 broad sections:

1. Despair (vs 1-2). David shares his fears with God. The safe place to face our problems is in God's presence. Others may discourage us, saying God won't help us, but we should bring that discouragement to God – He is the one best placed to know if he is going to help us!
2. Hope (vs 3-4). David states where his hope lies. We do not find hope in ourselves, we find our hope in God, it is he who lifts our head.
3. Peace (vs 5-6). If we have only considered our despair, and not looked to our hope in God, we will not lie down and sleep easily. Equally, if we only focus on our hope, and try to ignore our struggles, those nagging worries will still plague us. Having expressed his despair and his hope in the Lord, David knows that he can lie down and sleep, and wake again because it is God's job to watch over him while he sleeps.
4. Plea (vs 7-8). Note that David's plea to God comes after everything else –His hope and peace is dependent on this plea. David's plea to God is assertive, and we too can be assertive in our prayers. Hebrews 4:16 tells us that we can approach God's throne with confidence!

There are many, many psalms expressing the reality of life's challenges. Lest we think this model in Ps 3 is the only “right” way, consider too Ps 13. This psalm has a whole lot more despair and angst, and the psalmist seems to be struggling to find hope. If we find these kinds of struggles in the psalms that tells us that having such emotional battles is probably normal! The last few verses express a choice to trust in God and sing his praises. Sometimes that may be all we feel able to do, but that is enough. The effectiveness of our faith is not determined by how big our faith is, it is determined by whom we place our faith in.

**Application** (*this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points*)

- 1: When life is tough, where does the world encourage us to find our hope? How is this different from where David finds his hope?
- 2: Have you ever been in a situation where the natural response would be fear or anxiety, but God has given you peace? Can you encourage the group by sharing?
- 3: How do you feel about David's plea that God “Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked”? Is David right to pray in this way?
- 4: Which of the four elements of Psalm 3 (Despair, hope, peace, plea) would you say features most strongly in your walk with God? Are there any elements that you would find difficult or challenging? How can you encourage each other in these areas?

**Witness** (*this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News*)

How can the way we handle life's struggles be part of our witness?