

As we open to I Samuel 23 we are coming to the final stages of David's life on the run. From the desolate wastelands of Israel's geography we hear the cries of David's heart from desert where he now find that added to danger, deprivation, and despair are the twin struggles of betrayal and loneliness.

That is what happened next in David's life. He has survived a fight with the Philistines. He is surviving daily advances against him by King Saul. But now after those he had risked his life to protect and save from the Philistines, turned against him. David now shows for all the world to see, how does a godly person deal with:

The Loneliness and Pain of Betrayal

One of the painful situations in life is betrayal. The pain of one in whom we trusted, who hurts us at a level others cannot. When we trusted someone and they turn on us it makes everything come slightly loosened in our lives. We begin to wonder who else out there is secretly on the side of our enemies. This pain and hurt gets compounded when those who betray us are family members.

So for all of us, if we live long enough, we will feel what David felt and if we want to, we can find comfort like he found.

When this Ziphite region in the tribe of Judah (that means David's kin, David's clan, and David's relatives), turns on David and betrays him; David faces a new level of loneliness, mixed with the bitter poison of betrayal.

Not only had the men of Keilah planned to deliver David over to Saul—even though he'd just rescued them from the Philistines—but he now he was also being betrayed by men he trusted in the Wilderness of Ziph.

As we open to I Samuel 23:14, if you have ever had your marriage partner cheat on you and betray the vows of your marriage, you know the bitter poison David tasted.

If you have ever poured your life into your work, given far beyond what was asked or paid for, and then with no reason had your job stripped away and given to someone else, you know the loneliness of betrayal David felt.

If you gave the best years of your life to your children and or spouse, and they used you and then cast you off when you were no longer useful to them, you have felt the stab of betrayal and the wave of loneliness David felt. What can God do with betrayal and loneliness? He can make beautiful songs out of them.

Songs of God's Faithfulness

From this passage come two of the sweetest Psalms of David's life. As always grace prevails, God is good, and David finds Him closest in the fiery trials of life.

Please join me as we read the next backdrop God uses to paint another beautiful picture of his great faithfulness in 1 Samuel 23:14-29 (NKJV):

v. 14 *[God protects us even when we are not aware of it.]* And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. **Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.** 15 So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest.

v. 16 *[God wants to use people to help and encourage us.]* 16 Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. 17 And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." 18 So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

v. 19 *[People will always disappoint and hurt us.]* Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? 20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand." [Setting for Psalm 54] 21 And Saul said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. 22 Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, and who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. 23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the clans of Judah." 24 So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men were in the Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. 25 When Saul and his men went to seek him, they told David. Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. 26 Then Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them.

v. 27 *[God always has things under control.]* But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" 28 Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape. 29 Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.

David Was Betrayed by Men He Trusted

If you have ever been betrayed or maligned by someone you trusted, you know how David felt when the Ziphites turned against him. He probably thought that his recent rescue of the inhabitants of Keilah would make a difference in how he was viewed, but it didn't.

This time of betrayal prompted David to respond to the event of v. 19-20. That response became Psalm 54: birthed in the lonely fires of betrayal. Here we'll find David appealed to the Lord for deliverance and vindication in this betrayal—praising God that he is good and would hear his prayers!

**Psalm 54:
A Cry for Help
When Betrayed**

To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments, A Contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, “Is David not hiding with us?”

Verses 1-3 give us point one: Like David I will Seek the Lord First I am deeply hurt.

*¹ Save me, O God, by Your name, And **vindicate me** by Your strength. ² **Hear my prayer**, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. ³ For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. Selah*

Verses 4-5 give us point two: Like David I will Allow the Lord to Repay my Betrayers, instead of getting even.

*⁴ Behold, **God is my helper**; The LORD is with those who uphold my life. ⁵ He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth.*

Verses 6-7 give us point three: Like David even when betrayed I will wait, and watch, and pray until I find something to praise the Lord about.

*⁶ I will freely sacrifice to You; **I will praise Your name, O LORD, for it is good.** ⁷ For He has delivered me out of all trouble; And my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies.*

Did God hear David's prayers? Look back at I Samuel 23.

This Psalm is a prayer, it is flowing from David's heart, and while David was calling, God was answering.

Here's the really neat part— just as Saul and his men were encircling David and his men, “a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!” Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David and went against the Philistines; so they called that place **the Rock of Escape**” (1 Samuel 23:27-28).

Don't you just love to see the Lord's sovereignty at work like that? It's so comforting to know that nothing can come into a believer's life without first passing through the Lord's hands—and then He promises to work good through it (Romans 8:28)!

**Romans 8:
Three Markers for Life**

Open to Romans 8 and mark three markers with me.

- This chapter opens with: **No Condemnation because He bought me.**
- This chapter closes with **No Separation because He loves me.**
- This chapter is filled with **No Frustration because I trust Him.**

The God who meets us in our loneliness and betrayal is the One who has promised if you follow me there is no condemnation, as you trust me there is no frustration; and as you love me there is no separation.

While Saul was off chasing the Philistines who had invaded Israel, **David and his men safely relocated to the Wilderness of En Gedi** (1 Samuel 23:29). Jot somewhere in the margin of your Bible, Psalm 63 belongs around this time in David's life.

As we find David's change of address recorded in v. 29, we find the state of his soul captured in Psalm 63. As David takes time to write **Psalm 63**—he is teaching us at God's request, how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are insecure. This was a time of no sure place to live, no reliable source of income and provision.

What stands out most of all in this Psalm is that we see David seeking and finding the abundant satisfaction that only God can give.

This Psalm is full of meaning for those separated from family and friends, or isolated from fellowship by handicap or disaster. The truth that God alone, with no one else around, and with nothing else needed: can provide joy for our souls, satisfaction for our hearts, and strength to go on!

Some Bible scholars have those Psalm 63 goes along with the psalms of David fleeing his son Absalom; that is possible and would align this Psalm with Psalms 3, 4, and 5. But it seems to fit better here so that is where we will mine out the blessings included in these 11 verses.

While running for safety, hiding from danger, and aching over the loss and betrayal of friends: David gets lonely.

So in that moment of loneliness he has a choice. David learns that loneliness is actually when God takes everyone and everything out of my life so that He can be closest.

Sociologists say that loneliness is the most painful of the emotions because it seeps in everywhere, and drains the joy out of everything.

So David used this lonely time to find God in new places. The 63rd Psalm is really a call to revive our devotional life no matter where we are in life, to always look for and find the Lord.

**Psalm 63:
A Cry for Help
From Deserts of Loneliness**

Psalm 63

A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

First, David never stops seeking God devotionally no matter what his circumstances.

Application: decide that you will make a sacred vow to meet with God no matter where you are or what is going on in life. Listen to verses 1-2:

- 1 O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
- 2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.

The key to these two verses is in the word in v. 1 “seek” which comes from the word for “dawn”. It means that the first activity of my day is restoring, rekindling, reviving, and stirring up the fires of devotion for You my God. The way that we express our worship is by what is our first pursuit as we start our day.

Is it self or God? Is it temporal or eternal; is it our first desire to stir up the fire of our hearts and get it back to full flame of passion for Christ? If you have ever camped in the wilderness and awakened on a cold morning, that fire is always a delight to stir, fan, and see it burst to life.

Just so in the daily dark, cold world, we get to rise and stir to flames the altar of our hearts. You may study God's Word better at noon or night, but devotions speak of seeking what ever means most to your heart FIRST. That is what David did, and what all who love the Lord should do!

Second, David never stops worshipping God no matter what his circumstances.

Application: decide that you will cultivate the spiritual fruit of joy, where my soul's feeling are detached from circumstances and attached to God. This may have to become a daily ritual, and at times a moment-by-moment discipline. But the Spirit of God bears the fruit of joy in every heart He controls. Listen to verses 3-5:

- 3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,
My lips shall praise You.
- 4 Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.
- 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

Third, David never stops trusting God no matter what his circumstances.

Application: this is faith over fear. Fear Not is the most repeated negative prohibition to believers in God's Word for a reason. We tend to fear as a default setting of our flesh. Obey God, never stop trusting. Ask like the disciples, “Lord increase my faith”. Listen to verses 6-8:

- 6 When I remember You on my bed,

I meditate on You in the night watches.
7 Because You have been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.
8 My soul follows close behind You;
Your right hand upholds me.

That word in v. 8 “follows close” or “clings” was used of Ruth when she stuck with Naomi and went on the follow God’s plan. Nothing could daught or dislodge her. When we find the Lord to be good and satisfying our deepest needs, we don’t want to let go.

Finally, David always gives his need for revenge to the Lord. He lets God get even, so he won’t get bitter.

Application: have you been betrayed by friend, family, or some other part of life? Take it to the Lord. Hebrews 12 reminds us that vengeance is solely God’s prerogative not ours. When we give our hurts, mistreatments, betrayals, and all other pain-causers to the Lord He is freed to take what ever action in whatever time frame is needed. Remember Romans 8: No condemnation because we are forgiven; No Frustration because we are trusting; and No Separation because God’s love is unconditional. Listen to verses 9-10:

9 But those who seek my life, to destroy it,
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.
10 They shall fall by the sword;
They shall be a portion for jackals.

And what was the result when David cried to God from the desert of betrayal and loneliness? Listen to him in v. 11, it is precious and powerful:

11 But the king shall rejoice in God;
Everyone who swears by Him shall glory;
But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

So we come right back to where we started.

If you have ever poured your life into your work, given far beyond what was asked or paid for, and then with no reason had your job stripped away and given to someone else, you know the loneliness of betrayal David felt.

If you gave the best years of your life to your children and or spouse, and they used you and then cast you off when you were no longer useful to them, you have felt the stab of betrayal and the wave of loneliness David felt. What can God do with betrayal and loneliness? He can make beautiful songs out of them.

Songs of God’s Faithfulness

From this painful time came these two sweet Psalms of David’s life.

As always grace prevails, God is good, and David finds Him closest in the fiery trials of life.

Why not sing as our prayer to the Lord with hearts overflowing with gratitude to our God that song we all know so well: Great is Thy Faithfulness # 43