

## Psalm 55:1-23

Betrayal is one of life's most difficult and bitter experiences, particularly when it comes from the hand of someone close to us.

Psalm 55 is about one such painful betrayal. David's suffering is a foretaste of that experienced by his great descendant, Jesus Christ.

### Summary

**Psalm 55 records David's grief in the affliction of a personal betrayal but also shows how his faith enabled him to recover by turning to God in prayer and seeking shelter in the Lord.**

#### 1. Fearful Cry vv. 1-8

David's prayer begins with an admission of his need to feel God's presence (**Psalm 55:1**). He felt alone and therefore he opened his heart to a God, whom he could not see, and asked for a sense of gracious presence and help" (**Psalm 55:2**).

David breaks down completely, expressing his terror (**Psalm 55:3**). Not only does David face evil in general, but wickedness is personally directed against him.

It is not inconsistent for a true and living faith to experience fear before great dangers. We think of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, of whom David in Psalm 55 is a type.

In Psalm 55:6-7, all David can think about is escaping his dreadful ordeal. God did not give David wings to fly out of his troubles and responsibilities, however. When David longs "to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest" (**Psalm 55:8**), he will find it in prayer with God.

#### 2. Furious Outburst vv. 9-15; 20-21

David did not flee but rather express his outraged fury against his foe. The enemy was found within the walls of his own city, probably Jerusalem (**Psalm 55:9-11**).

**In vv. 9-11**, David speaks of Jerusalem's vices using human figures of speech (personification):

**First**, violence and strife prowl the city walls like intruders.

**Secondly**, "iniquity and trouble are within it," along with "ruin."

**Thirdly**, "oppression and fraud" are the rule of the marketplace.

David goes on to lament that 'this is personal' (**Ps. 55:12-13**).

David vents his anguish over the intense violation he has experienced (**Ps. 55:20-21**).

What causes a person to betray in this fashion?

A power play, greed, pride, and lust.

How we respond to betrayal is critical with regard to what our life looks like afterwards.

First, David prayed for God to confuse his opponents so as to overthrow their evil plan (**Ps. 55:9**).

Secondly, David desired the utter destruction of those who had hurt him (**Ps. 55:15**).

### **3. Confident Faith vv. 16-19; 23**

David draws to a close in this psalm with an expression of confident faith.

First, he knew that God heard him when he prayed (**Ps. 55:16-17**).

Secondly, he learned he could trust that God would save him from the destruction he feared (**Ps. 55:18-19**).

Thirdly, David learned to take solace in knowing that God will judge evildoers who refuse to repent (**Psalm 55:23**).

Nevertheless, it seems to have been hard for David to let go of his outrage against the betrayal he suffered. David's heart could rest only when he was sure that God will make things right and that high-handed abusers will not profit from their evil.

He concluded by realizing that he must now leave the matter in God's hands: "But I will trust in You."

### **4. Wise Advice vv. 22-23**

As he concluded, David offers his counsel to those who have experienced betrayal as one who knew that bitter experience himself.

"Don't seal up your heart," David warns. "Don't resolve never to trust anyone ever again."

Rather, take your heart and offer your trust to the One who is truly worthy of it.

"Cast your burden on the Lord."

Though all others on earth would fail or betray him the night before his death, it was enough for Jesus that the Father in heaven would not fail or betray him. Jesus assures us that we will find the same assurance and comfort if we will trust in him (**Heb. 13:5-6**).

If we will cast our burden on the Lord in prayer, we may still have many troubles but what peace it brings to know that the God who sustains us "will never permit the righteous to be moved" (**Psalm 55:22**).