

Psalm 55:1–23 – Finding Refuge When Betrayed

Title: *To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. A Contemplation of David.*

This psalm was likely written during one of the darkest seasons of David's life: the rebellion of his son Absalom. What made the pain even deeper was the betrayal of his close friend and advisor, Ahithophel, who joined Absalom's rebellion (see 2 Samuel 15–17). This psalm is not merely an emotional outburst but a deeply reflective prayer, filled with raw anguish, spiritual wisdom, and an unshaken resolve to trust in God.

Psalm 55:1–3 (NKJV)

Give ear to my prayer, O God, and do not hide Yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and hear me; I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

David opens with an urgent cry for God to listen. He does not pretend to be composed; he confesses his anguish openly. His enemies are relentless, their accusations harsh, their hatred fierce.

Application:

When we are falsely accused or hated without cause, it is okay to be honest with God about our emotions. We don't need to approach Him with polished words—He invites us to pour out our pain before Him.

Psalm 55:4–8 (NKJV)

My heart is severely pained within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

David longs for escape. His desire is not cowardice but a very human yearning for peace amidst chaos. The heartache is so intense, he imagines disappearing into the wilderness to find rest from the storm.

Application:

We, too, may sometimes wish to run from our responsibilities or trials. But the answer is not flight—it is faith. God often calms the storm *in us* before He calms the storm *around us*.

Psalm 55:9–11 (NKJV)

Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go around it on its walls; iniquity and trouble are also in the midst of it. Destruction is in its midst; oppression and deceit do not depart from its streets.

David asks God to confound the schemes of the wicked, much like God did at Babel. Jerusalem, the city of God, is now filled with turmoil, treachery, and slander.

Application:

When corruption creeps into places that should be holy, such as churches or homes, we grieve. But David reminds us that our response must be prayerful dependence on God's justice.

Psalm 55:12–14 (NKJV)

For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng.

These are among the most painful verses in the psalm. David expresses the heartbreak of betrayal by someone he trusted deeply—a spiritual companion.

Application:

Betrayal by a close friend or ministry partner can be devastating. Jesus experienced this, too, in Judas. If you have been wounded by someone close, know that God understands your pain and will be your Healer.

Psalm 55:15–17 (NKJV)

Let death seize them; let them go down alive into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them. As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.

David releases his enemies to God's judgment. But in contrast, he commits to persistent prayer. Three times a day he seeks the Lord, confident that God hears him.

Application:

Prayer is not a last resort; it is a daily rhythm. When under pressure or attack, intensify your prayer life, not your arguments. God sees, hears, and acts in His perfect timing.

Psalm 55:18–20 (NKJV)

He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many against me. God will hear, and afflict them, even He who abides from of old. Because they do not change, therefore they do not fear God. He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has broken his covenant.

Though David was betrayed, he trusts that God will both deliver him and deal with the unrepentant. These enemies are not merely his opponents; they are covenant-breakers who defy the fear of the Lord.

Application:

God honors covenant loyalty. When others break trust or manipulate sacred commitments, the righteous must remain faithful. God will ultimately vindicate those who walk in integrity.

Psalm 55:21 (NKJV)

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

Here David unmasks the hypocrite: outwardly flattering, inwardly hostile. This is spiritual deception at its worst.

Application:

Not everyone who speaks kindly is trustworthy. Discernment is needed. But rather than grow bitter, we can take our pain to the Lord, as David did.

Psalm 55:22–23 (NKJV)

Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in You.

David closes with a timeless exhortation: *cast your burden on the Lord*. This is not a passive act; it is a decisive hand-off of our struggles to the One who sustains.

Final Application:

Are you carrying the weight of betrayal, sorrow, or injustice? The Lord invites you to roll that burden onto Him. He will not allow you to be shaken. He is your sustainer. Like David, may we declare with full confidence: *"I will trust in You."*