

Psalm 55
Betrayed by a Close Friend
A Psalm of Disorientation (William Varner)

Introduction: From book 2 of the Psalms. Focusing on the reign of the historical David. It describes how David's rule extended to the nations.

Superscription: *For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Maskil of David.*

1) Prayer amidst FEAR—55:1-8 (Don't ignore me, however inconvenient)

a) **Prayer—55:1-3**

i) **His prayer—55:1-2a** ¹ *Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. ² Give heed to me and answer me;*

ii) **His reasoning—55:2b-3** *I am restless (the outward display of my inner attitude) in my complaint and am surely distracted, ³ Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they shake wickedness down upon me And in anger they bear a grudge against me.*

b) **Fear—55:4-8**

i) **What David senses—55:4-5** ⁴ *My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. ⁵ Fear and trembling come upon me, And horror has covered me.*

ii) **His responses to restlessness (v. 2)—55:6-8**

(1) **The desire for remote isolation:** ⁶ *I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. ⁷ "Behold, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah.*

(a) Like Elijah in 1 Kg. 19.

(2) **The desire for secure shelter:** ⁸ *"I would hasten to my place of refuge From the stormy wind and tempest."*

(3) Remember the words of pastor Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) who wrote: no wings of doves or eagles could bear us away from the sorrows of a trembling heart.

2) Prayer amidst BETRAYAL—55:9-15

a) **Prayer for effective justice—55:9-11**

i) **His prayer for hindering their ability to communicate—55:9a**
⁹ *Confuse, O Lord [Adonai], divide their tongues,*

(1) Cf. David in 2 Sam. 15:31.

- ii) **His reasons in general**—55:9b-11 *For I have seen violence and strife in the city. ¹⁰ Day and night they go around her upon her walls, And wickedness and mischief are in her midst. ¹¹ Destruction is in her midst; Oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets.*
 - b) **Specific betrayal is the center point**—55:12-14
 - i) **Negatively**—55:12 ¹² *For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has magnified himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him.*
 - ii) **Positively**—55:13-14 ¹³ *But it is you, a man my equal, My close companion and my familiar friend; ¹⁴ We who had sweet counsel together Walked in the house of God in the throng.*
 - c) **Prayer for swift justice**—55:15 ¹⁵ *Let death come deceitfully upon them; Let them go down alive to Sheol, For evil is in their dwelling, in their midst.*
 - i) Note the plural pronouns. It's not just one man.
 - d) James Hamilton wisely writes: Not only is David personally betrayed by a former friend, by opposing David this former friend opposes Yahweh's cause in the earth. Justice demands that righteousness be done upon him.
- 3) Prayer amidst SIN—55:16-23**
- a) **Faith in God**—55:16-19
 - i) **Prayer**—55:16-17 ¹⁶ *As for me, I shall call upon God, And Yahweh will save me. ¹⁷ Evening and morning and at noon, I will bring my complaint and moan, And He will hear my voice.*
 - ii) **God's response**—55:18-19a ¹⁸ *He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, For they are many who strive with me. ¹⁹ God will hear and answer them—Even the one who sits enthroned from of old—Selah.*
 - iii) **Reason for prayer**—55:19b *Because they do not change, And do not fear God.*
 - (1) Perhaps fits better with the next verse?
 - b) **The unrepentant sin of his former companion**—55:20-21
 - i) **Sinful behavior**—55:20 ²⁰ *My companion has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has violated his covenant.*
 - ii) **Sinful speech**—55:21 ²¹ *His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.*
 - c) **Outcomes**—55:22-23

- i) **Call to prayer**—55:22 ²² *Cast your burden upon Yahweh and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.*
- ii) **Confidence in God**—55:23 ²³ *But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of corruption; Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You.*

4) Things we need to remember:

- a) William Varner writes: It is easy to condemn the harshness of the sentiments in this imprecatory Psalm, but we need to recognize the seriousness of the betrayals and the vicious acts of those in rebellion against God's anointed king. These were not just rivals in a sports contest!
- b) Warren Wiersbe reminds us: When we find ourselves in the midst of trouble, our first thought is, "How can I get out of this?" But the dedicated believer needs to ask, "What can I get out of this?"