

Anyone who loves God will discover that there will be times in your life when, for no apparent explainable reason, people who have nothing to do with anything will turn against you.

There will be times when you have not done one thing to someone, but they will do negative things against you. It may happen on your job, it may happen in your school, it may happen in your neighborhood, it may happen in a relationship and it may even happen at church.

If you love God you can count on the fact that there will be those people who don't like you and actually do deceitful things against you in an attempt to hurt you and destroy you. At such times you will feel helpless to stop the attacks. But there is one key thing you can do which those enemies cannot do—you can pray to God for help and you can expect God will come to your assistance.

That is precisely what this Psalm is all about. Let us carefully observe the superscription:

- 1) This Psalm is for the choir director—this Psalm was to be publicly communicated.
- 2) This Psalm is to be accompanied with string instruments—musically communicated.
- 3) This Psalm was a “maskil”—designed to give instruction and was to be carefully studied.
- 4) This Psalm was written by David—he certainly knew about having enemies.
- 5) This Psalm was written when the Ziphites came to Saul about David hiding among them.

Now the Ziphites were a group of people who inhabited a city named Ziph, which was located approximately four miles S.E. of Hebron. This city was surrounded by a wilderness area, which made it a great place to hide. Twice, for no apparent reason, the Ziphites went to Saul and told him that David was hiding in their vicinity (I Sam. 23:19; 26:1). David had done nothing negative to these people at all, but they certainly were trying to destroy him.

Psalm 54 is written in this context. Now at this time in Israel's history you were either on the side of David or you were on the side of Saul. If you were on the side of David, you were on the side of God and if you were on the side of Saul, you were on the side of the Evil one.

Now David was surrounded by all kinds of people who wanted him gone. There was no way that he could even know all of the people involved. But he realized God knew and one thing David did in such moments of his life was to go to God in prayer. In fact, that is the point of this Psalm:

WHEN WE FIND WE ARE SURROUNDED BY THOSE WHO ARE DOING AND SAYING NEGATIVE THINGS AGAINST US, WE MAY PRAY TO GOD AND EXPECT GOD TO DELIVER US FROM TROUBLE AND DESTROY OUR ENEMIES.

There are two main actions that David takes in regard to his negative circumstances:

ACTION #1 – David prays to God. **54:1-5**

In the first part of the Psalm, David prays to God, concerning the negatives surrounding His life.

There are two parts to this:

Part #1 - David makes his requests to God. **54:1-2**

There are three requests David makes to God:

(Request #1) - David asks God to save him.

God's name was on the line in protecting David.

(Request #2) - David asks God to vindicate him.

God's power was on the line in preserving him and vindicating him. God had chosen David and the only way he could be vindicated from all those against him would be the power of God.

(Request #3) - David asks God to answer him. God sees all and hears all.

What David is actually saying is this: God, you have a stake in my life and I need your help. Your name is on the line. People are attacking me and they are ruining my reputation and I need your power and help.

In all reality, David is reminding God that His work in his life is on the line. That is apparently something that David learned that could get God's attention.

It is clear that the first thing David does when in difficulty is usually the last thing most people do. David would always go to God first and pray about things. When we are hurting or under attack, typically the first thing we want to do is talk to other people. David always wanted to talk to God. It is no wonder that he was a man after God's own heart.

There was a minister I know who went to confront someone from his church who was in blatant sin. The minister went and did his best to gently confront the individual, who flew into a violent rage. The man said, "I am not going to listen to anything you have to say and what are you going to do about it?" The minister said, "Well, I am going to pray to God about you and your response."

That is the kind of thing David would do. Go to God in prayer.

Part #2 - David states his reasons for his requests to God. **54:3-5**

There are two reasons why David made his requests to God:

(Reason #1) - Because of the character of his enemies. **54:3**

There are three main character traits spelled out about the enemies of David:

Character Trait #1 - David's enemies were strangers. **54:3a**

The actual word "stranger" refers to one who has become estranged to the true ways of God. The word literally means to be scattered away or dispersed. So this person has wandered away from God's Word and God's ways.

These enemies were not in tune with God and were not doing God's will. This word would indicate they were not even intimately connected to David, but they were his enemies. So here were some people who were never even close to David, who became his enemies.

There will be times when you scratch your head and say what in the world did I ever do to him or her that made him hate me so much? Sometimes the answer is nothing. In those times, one of the best things we can do is pray.

Character Trait #2 - David's enemies were violent. **54:3b**

David's enemies had no scruples and they would use any means, including violent means, to destroy David. Now keep in mind that David had done nothing to instigate this; Satan just raised up this group to turn against David.

Character Trait #3 - David's enemies were not God-seekers. **54:3c**

These people were religious people, but they were not interested in being right with God. They were not led of God in any way.

David's enemies sought David's life, but they did not seek the will of God. God's Word and ways were not part of their thought process.

Notice that when David gets done saying this, he says, "selah." He wanted God's people to stop and pause and think about this.

When you are faithful to God, it is obvious that your enemies are not faithful to God. They aren't interested in God's Word or will. Dr. Swindoll said remember when you are standing for what is right and true and getting kicked in the teeth for it; the energizing power behind it is not God. But remember you always have God on your side.

(Reason #2) - Because of the character of his God. **54:4-5**

There are four character traits that are brought out:

Character Trait #1 - God was David's helper. **54:4a**

What this means is that God is the one who aids, helps and assists in the sense of even making one strong (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 619). What God wants us to realize is that when you pray to me in this context, I will help you and strengthen you. God is a present tense God who is able to help and strengthen us in our present tense needs.

Character Trait #2 - God was David's sustainer. **54:4b**

This is a very interesting Hebrew word which means to prop up something or someone by resting it on yourself (*Ibid.*, p. 591). The promise here is that God will sustain and hold up one who is in need of it.

Character Trait #3 - God will pay back those evil. **54:5a**

What those who do evil do not realize is that it will backfire.

Character Trait #4 - God will destroy those evil. **54:5b**

I so appreciate the words of Dr. Chuck Swindoll on this point:

“As I first read verse 5 of Psalm 54, it seemed awfully severe. Surely it doesn't mean what it says, I thought. Surely God won't actually destroy the enemy, I said to myself. How wrong I was. I looked up the term destroy in the Hebrew text. Do you know what it actually means? It is taken from the Hebrew verb *tzahmath*, which means 'to exterminate'! In fact, the verb appears in this verse in the *hiphil* stem (causative stem) meaning, literally, 'to cause to annihilate'! What I am pointing out is that David is actually declaring, by faith, that God will cause those who have become his enemies to be totally, completely, thoroughly removed! But I remind you that David doesn't do the removing; God does.

It is so easy, under pressure, to play God, isn't it? We have thought about the temptation to take our own vengeance before. Romans 12:17-19 warns us against doing that: 'Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord.

Living beyond the daily grind of difficult people requires our leaving the vengeance to the One who can handle it best.”

But we may be assured God will destroy those evil.

ACTION #2 – David worships God. **54:6-7**

Two specific ways David worshipped God:

Way #1 - David willingly sacrificed to God. **54:6a**

When surrounded by difficulty, keep the focus on God. Keep serving, keep giving, keep faithful.

Way #2 - David continually gave thanks to God. **54:6b**

Continually give thanks to God, for God is good and it is a good thing to do. We can always thank God for who God is.

Now as he comes to **verse 7**, he says the reason why I can give thanks to God is because I have the confidence that God will deliver me from all my trouble and I will see Him take care of my enemies.

Parting Thoughts:

- 1) We can always pray for those who have wronged us and commit them to God.**
- 2) We can always look at our enemies and realize God will settle the score.**
- 3) We should always maintain a sacrificial worship of God as we wait for His intervention.**
- 4) The fact that God does destroy enemies is a theme that needs to be publicly taught.**
- 5) Times of great trouble can lead to times of great triumph.**