

## **STING OF BETRAYAL**

Friday, April 20

Reading: Psalm 55

**Psalm 55:20** *My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant. 21 His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords. 22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.*

He was a hero of the American Revolution. He had won several important victories for the Continental army and been wounded twice in battle for his country. George Washington called him his “fighting general” and did everything he could to support his military career and efforts. Even the British Secretary of State Lord Germaine called him “the most enterprising and dangerous” of all the American generals.<sup>1</sup> Yet in 1780 Benedict Arnold betrayed his country. His name is synonymous with traitor to this day.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing worse than being betrayed by someone close to you. In the previous psalms David had been assailed by a wicked Doeg (Psalm 52) and by his own countrymen (Psalm 54). But nothing hurt him more than this betrayal by a close friend. Though we are not told the exact situation of this psalm it was likely written during the rebellion of David’s son Absalom who stole the throne and forced David to flee for his life. Many of those he considered friends joined Absalom in this treachery including his most trusted advisor Ahithophel (see 2 Samuel 15-18).

We can see the severe aching of David’s heart as he pours out his lament to the Lord. He is in anguish and terror grips his soul (55:4-5). He even considers giving up and fleeing from the trouble that surrounds him (55:6-8). He is devastated by the betrayal of his friend. They had been close and even worshiped together in the house of God (55:12-14). Now this “friend” had betrayed David’s trust and was using his “slick tongue” to war against David (55:20-21).

What do you do when you feel like giving up? Note David’s example.

1. He was honest with God about how he felt. He doesn’t try to hide anything. God already knows our heart and so we can be open and honest with Him about our thoughts and feelings.
2. He took his feelings to the Lord in prayer (55:1-2, 16-17). This was not a “one time and done” prayer. He cries out to God all day and night seeking his salvation.
3. He is confident that God will hear and answer his prayers. With his closing words David proclaims “I trust in You” (55:18-19, 23). Even though all looks dark, David trusts in God’s mercy and justice.
4. He casts his cares on the Lord (55:22). The word “cares” speaks to the burdens of life. It literally means “what has been given you.” When we give our cares to the Lord He “sustains” us. This word has two aspects” God holds us and He provides for us! In His arms we are secure and strengthened to fly through the storms. God will never betray or fail us! He is the One “enthroned from of old, who does not change” (55:19).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.history.com/news/9-things-you-may-not-know-about-benedict-arnold>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/benedict-arnold>

**THRU THE BIBLE Reading: 1 Samuel 7-9; John 12**