

**TRUTH B-P CHURCH**  
**Adults Sunday School**

**PSALM 55 – DEALING WITH BETRAYAL (PART B)**

**I. RECAPITULATION**

The context of Psalm 55 is on a friend's betrayal. David was already the established king of the united kingdom of Israel. But unfortunately, his son Absalom cunningly won over the people and made himself king. He disregarded his own father David who was rightfully the king. And then, it was a double blow to king David when his trusted advisor Ahithophel was also found on Absalom's side and not his. While pondering over this heart-breaking disappointment, he has to run for his life. And so it was a very humbling experience for David as the king of Israel! But God is the Source of his comfort and strength. God is the only hope for him. And he pleaded the Lord for divine deliverance.

Thank God David did the right thing. He was dealing with 2 betrayals at the same time. These betrayal can be fatal and his life can be taken anytime. But he knew only God can deliver him, as such, he pleaded for God's deliverance to come upon him. However, at the same time, he knew that he has done nothing wrong to deserve all these injustice and unfairness. And therefore, David was desperate for divine judgment. For wrong must be addressed and right must be set in place again. Therefore, the desperate call for divine judgment is justified.

**III. DESPERATE FOR DIVINE JUDGMENT (verses 9 to 15)**

**Verse 12, “For *it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him:*” (synonymous parallelism)**

This verse reveals the intimate and close relationship which he had with this betrayer who was once upon a time someone whom he can trust very much. Prior to this betrayal, there was no such conflict, separation and hatred whatsoever existed between them. Suddenly the relationship became such as what this verse had said. Suddenly he became my enemy. Suddenly he became someone who hated me.

The word reproach means to abuse, to slander. Suddenly this person whom he regarded as friend began to abuse him and slander him. It was not done directly to his face. According to 2 Samuel 15:31, words came to David how Ahithophel was one of the conspirators with his son Absalom who were responsible for the treason. Surely it must have hurt him very much. He could not bear it since he was genuine in his friendship with Ahithophel. If he has revealed himself in the first place, he would not have felt so hurt like now. And so we can imagine how deep the friendship had developed between them. And there was no hint at all between them that David should keep his guard on when they together. The word “magnify” means to lift up or show off. If Ahithophel has shown himself or lifted himself as someone who hates him, David would have avoided him in the first place. But no, there was nothing of this sort existed. That's why it hurts. That's why it bothers David so much.

**Verse 13, “But *it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.*”**

The word “but” here reveals a great contrast. And it expresses a big disappointment which David was experiencing. But it was thou. Of all people, it was you. Though no name was mentioned, the assumption was Ahithophel. It was not his son Absalom, seeing the way David described this man who was a man his equal. Equal cannot be term of status, position and authority. For David was king and as king he was the highest. No other man is above him. And so the equal here refers to in terms of treatment.

In other words, though Ahithophel was not the king, it was as though he was king. David gave him such a privilege to come before his presence not as an inferior officer but like equal rank which enjoyed the same privilege as what the king would enjoy. David shared this privilege with him. Mine equal. No one can come into the king's presence anytime, but not you, Ahithophel. You can come anytime. You can eat with me on my table. We can walk together side by side. You don't have to walk behind me. I regarded you as mine equal.

My guide. The word "guide" means someone who provided counsel. In other words, there is trust. Whatever you say, I will not doubt at all. I know your counsel is good for me. Your counsel will build me up. Your counsel is for my good. You are my guide. This is how I regarded you.

My equal. My guide. Mine acquaintance. The word "acquaintance" comes from the word "to know." In other words, Ahithophel, you can know me. I open myself to be known by you. I share with you my thoughts, my feelings, my heart. Everything. There is nothing I hide from you. You are my dear friend. I make myself known to you. Everything you know about me. That was how close David was with Ahithophel.

**Verse 14, "We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company." (synonymous parallelism)**

In this verse, their relationship is mutual. Their attitude towards each other is also mutual. Both David and Ahithophel spent moments of sweet counsel together. In other words, they enjoy each other, how they come together to discuss about the nation, about family, about self. How things can improve. How to fight a winning war. How to cope with setbacks. How to build up a stronger army. How to deal with family issues.

And walked unto the house of God in company. This part is significant because their friendship is built not without God. God is in their midst. There is Christian fellowship between them. It is more than social, or even a working relationship. They were brothers in Christ. They walked to the tabernacle to worship God. In company means also including their families. Even their families were joined together because of their closeness.

**Verse 15, "Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, *and* among them." (synonymous parallelism)**

Why so harsh? David is a man of war. He knew that enemies must be dealt with accordingly and no mercy will be given to them. Now that Ahithophel, together with all those with him, had rebelled against David. They had made themselves enemies to him. The fellowship among them had broken. Not only Ahithophel had turned his back on David, he has also turned his back on God. Surely he knew that David is a man after God's own heart. To forsake their friendship and fellowship, and become a betrayer, such an act is definitely against God's will. All wickedness must be judged. How about Absalom? Is he included also as David uttered this prayer? We know from the account in 2 Samuel how David instructed his men to spare Absalom's life. It seems to exclude Absalom since he was his son. This is my personal view on how I would explain this verse. I believe David when he uttered this prayer, it included Absalom as well. Without Absalom, there is nothing Ahithophel and the rest could have done to harm David. And to create such great upheaval in Israel. Absalom was the one responsible. And he made all the decision, though back up with evil counsels he received from Ahithophel and other counsellors. And so then, how to explain David's instruction not to kill Absalom? Will it not contradict what he did over here since he prayed to God, let death seize upon them and let them go down quick into hell. This is calling for divine judgment. And it is a harsh call of judgment. There is no contradiction at all.

David has his weaknesses, though he is a man after God's own heart. Over here, when he was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to pen down these words, it reflected his desperation for divine judgment to come upon all the wicked included his dear son Absalom and his dear friend Ahithophel. However, in 2 Samuel chapter 18, he specifically instructed Joab his general to be gracious to Absalom. To be gentle with him. In other words, to spare his life. Right here, it was the weakness of his flesh as a father to his dear son for making such a command. In other words, yes David was desperate for God's judgment to come. He is calling for God to deal with all his enemies. On other hand, he has a soft spot for his own son which he should not. For that would be impartial on his part. And so David was wrong to do that. In fact, after knowing his son Absalom had died, David mourned for him uncontrollably. He kept mourning until Joab has to rebuke him (see 2 Samuel 19:4-6). At the time of writing Psalm 55, David was full of spirit. And it was right of him to call for divine judgment even against his own son and good friend. Due to weakness of the flesh on account of his relationship with his son, David stumbled and fell. It can happen to us as well.

#### **IV. TRUST IN DIVINE VINDICATION (verses 16 to 23)**

##### **Verse 16, "As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me." (synthetic parallelism)**

While his enemies would rather devise evil and wickedness in their plan, David could do the same but he did not. He did what many did not do and that is to call upon God. It is this simple yet important step which many of us had failed to do when troubles fall upon us. We panic when we come to a dead end. We begin to look for escape routes. We begin to look at what we have and what we do not have. In other words, we count on ourselves what solution are out there for us. Where is our trust in God? David could have counted on his faithful men who were willing to die for him and with him anytime. David could have relied on his past victories and fight now. Surely, he is a man of war and most experienced by now with so many battles fought and won. This domestic war is peanut to him. No, David has none of this attitude in him. He called upon God. And his call is a call of trust, for he believed with his whole heart that God will save him. This is trusting in divine vindication.

There is no call without trust. It is important to trust God for what He has promised us. Did He not say, Vengeance is mine, I will repay? If David is the author of Psalm 94:1, then it would confirm David's trust in God's vindication, saying, "O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself." What an assurance we have to be able to trust God for what He will do for us!

##### **Verse 17, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice." (synonymous parallelism)**

We remember Daniel who prayed 3 times a day. And also in psalm 119:164, the psalmist praised God 7 times a day. Is there a significant on the number of times? I do not think so. Moreover, David did not say he prayed 3 times only at evening, morning and at noon. It could be several times. It is not the number of times but the devotion to God in prayer. Pray without ceasing is what it means. And especially when there is a great need for God to intervene. Therefore the psalmist has shown to us the importance of prayer. It is our breath and life. Prayer shows how much we depend on God. The more we pray, the more we rely on God. The less we pray, the less we trust in Him. The crying aloud does not imply that God is hard of hearing or He may be busy some where that we have to call Him louder or keep calling Him until He hears us. Even without a sound, God can hear. By crying aloud reveals the urgency and desperation for God to hear. Not because God has problem hearing us. It is always us who are the problems. Oftentimes we fail to trust God enough. And so by crying aloud reveals our great and strong need for God to hear our cry. Some cannot be bothered as they go through the motion. They read their prayers that have been drafted. They uttered the prayer without the heart and immediately forgot what they had prayed. Is that our attitude? Not the psalmist! He depends on his prayers.

And this is important. No prayer, no life. More prayer, more life. Let us learn to pray without ceasing.

**Verse 18, “He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was against me*: for there were many with me.” (synthetic parallelism)**

David was remembering God’s goodness and faithfulness unto him in the past. Even though he was not counting on past victories for his present battles, he encourages himself to keep trusting in the Lord as he has done so in the past. David acknowledges God’s part in helping him in all his battles against the enemies. No battle is the same. Every battle comes with new experiences. And David continues to trust God no matter how easy or difficult the battle can be. David did not rely on his strong army of soldiers. He may have a formidable and powerful army under his command and control. But no battle is to be fought without God. That was David’s policy.

When you honour God, God will honour you. This was what happened when David honoured God by trusting in Him. God honours him by raising support to help him. David acknowledged those that were with him were indeed God-sent! They were there to encourage him and strengthen him.

**Verse 19, “God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.” (antithetic parallelism)**

God also heard the voice of the enemy, not just the psalmist (see verse 3). And since they were words full of evil, God will afflict them. This is God’s judgment and vindication for His people. There have been accounts after accounts how God has judged the wicked for their sins, these should serve as warnings not to rebel against God but to make peace with Him and His people. Yet, their heart continued to be hardened. They refused to repent. All because they fear not God. They have no regard of God in their heart. They just want to go their own way, not realizing that they were heading to the end of destruction. This is judicial blindness. They could not see why they should change from their evil ways. Therefore, they continue to do evil and to them they did not see anything wrong. They probably think they are doing the “right” thing. But God will punish them one day and they will realize how sinful they have been.

**Verse 20, “He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant.” (synonymous parallelism)**

Ahithophel is still in the thoughts of David as he comes to verse 20. The “putting forth his hands” means to smite with the intent to hurt. And such was Ahithophel’s sudden attack came upon David when all was well. They were probably been spending time together before this attack comes. Therefore David had no preparation at all that such a thing would happen to him. Ahithophel had broken his covenant. It was the covenant of friendship between them. Overnight, this friendship was destroyed. Suddenly David lost a good friend, for he could not regard Ahithophel as his good friend anymore but his enemy.

**Verse 21, “*The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*” (synonymous parallelism)**

David remembered probably the last few times he had met with Ahithophel how they enjoyed the sweet counsel together. But as he looked back, he cannot help but to express his disappointment with him. According to David, there was no hint at all that Ahithophel was already scheming with Absalom against him. Everything was as per normal. Ahithophel managed to hide his true self from David so that he did not suspect anything amiss at all. But inside of Ahithophel, he was already out to betray him and have no qualm at all to get rid of him. These were what had been described in this verse.

**Verse 22, “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” (synonymous parallelism)**

Who is speaking over here? I believe David is speaking to his own soul. He is encouraging himself to do the right thing in the midst of the betrayal which had been devastating to him. He was carrying a great burden in going through all these internal turmoil and struggle within him. He is still recovering from the hurt since the betrayal comes from someone dear to him. As such, David is calling upon his own soul to cast his burden upon the Lord.

The word “cast” means to lay down. Interestingly this burden means “what is given.” The burden is given by God. But, what does it mean to lay down the same burden which God has given and back to Him again? It means that God will give us the necessary strength and wisdom to overcome this burden. We are not to carry this burden by our own strength. The purpose for this burden given by God is to drive us closer to Him so that we will learn to depend on Him for strength and wisdom. This burden will become heavier when we try to carry it on our own. But the moment we lay it before the Lord, the burden becomes light. That is how He is sustaining us. We still can move on and move forward by God’s help.

Nothing will shake us as long as we are walking close with God. Since the burden has become lighter, it is manageable and therefore we will not fall down easily. The opposite is true. When the burden becomes heavier due to the lack of trust in God, we can stumble and fall very easily. Therefore, it is important and necessary to cast all our burden upon the Lord. That is the secret to perseverance and victory in the end.

**Verse 23, “But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.” (synonymous parallelism)**

Finally, the psalmist knew that God will surely vindicate him in due time. None will escape from God’s judgment unless they repent before they perish. Let us note that the enemies of David in Psalm 55 are not from the pagan nations who do not know God. They were among God’s people who were taught the law of Moses and thereby not ignorant of what is the right thing to do before God. But they chose to rebel and walk in darkness rather than light. They hardened their heart and turned against those who follow the Lord. We are living in the last of the last days and we know that the signs of times tell us that Christ is coming very soon. And therefore, God’s final judgment is not far away from those who refuse to repent.

As God’s people, we must press on and not give up easily. Like David, even when he was betrayed and deeply hurt inside, he continued to trust in God. May God help us to learn also to trust in Him no matter what happens. May God help us. Amen.