



ALL SAINTS

PRESBYTERIAN

## SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

### FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

“Praying the Psalms in Betrayal” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | September 9, 2018

#### **Psalm 55:1-4**

Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan, because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

#### **Psalm 55:6-9**

And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest." Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see violence and strife in the city.

#### **Psalm 55:17-18**

Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.

#### **Psalm 55:22**

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

#### **Hebrews 4:15**

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

#### **Matthew 11:28-30**

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my **yoke** upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my **yoke** is easy, and my burden is light.

#### **Philippians 1:12-13**

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

#### **Intro Question**

We possess many beliefs that do not often produce Christian character. Our Christian practices are intended to transform beliefs into strong Christian character. Praying the Psalms is an important practice aimed at transforming what we actually believe into character. By example, Psalm 55 greatly equips our character to handle betrayal. If we were to take Psalm 55, pray it and apply it to lead us, what character might Psalm 55 produce in us in the face of handling something awful as betrayal? What might we learn about the wounds of betrayal from Psalm 55 that would prevent us from betraying another? Where might we place our trust in the midst of betrayal?

#### **Background**

Consider three parts of the Psalm. In part one, David identifies being betrayed. His enemies are grudge holding people and drop trouble on him (v.3). David is in anguish from betrayal (v.4) to the point of fear and horror. This act of betrayal has broken him. Consider his anguish to reflect on avoiding betrayal of another.

David narrows his focus to one person that is near to him (v.12), Ahithophel - a familiar friend and companion (one with whom you share bread). David is hurt because of this broken covenant and it feels like death - the loss of a previously shared life with this person. Ahithophel is now part of this group troubling David (v.19) and will not change back. Does this sound familiar to you? You know David's betrayal. If so, you are familiar with the urge to cry as David does in v.6-8. The urge that betrayal brings is to fly and run away.

The second part, David desires to fly away (v.6) from the situation. Psalm 55 makes a point for David to resist the urge to fly and a call to prayer. Aimless wandering is temporary and not a place where life is sustained (v. 7). Flying away is hasty and hurried (v.8). David prays that his trouble makers be moved on from Jerusalem (v.9) and that David would remain and be sustained. This prayer becomes his conviction. The main question being asked, who is going to move on and who is going to be sustained? Staying put now becomes David's resolve.

In part three, David calls on the Lord (v.16) in the morning, noon and evening (v.17) and trusts the Lord will save him. Specifically, David trusts the Lord will sustain him and keep him where he is (v.22). David's character reminds us to cast our burden (our lot) on the Lord (Matthew 11:28-30). The urge is to fly and move on. Leaving a dangerous situation may be the best action but don't make flying away the first reaction without first going to the Lord in prayer. David models this behavior in Psalm 55 and points us toward John 13 when Jesus was betrayed. Jesus knew the sting of betrayal and repeatedly His character produced forgiveness and a place for our burdens (Heb. 4:15). The NT reading, Paul's letter to the Philippians discusses his time in prison facing betrayal. Instead, Paul speaks of joy, peace, thankfulness and contentment because he has cast his lot on Jesus. Paul's suffering advanced the Gospel (Phil. 1:12) and his imprisonment is for Christ (v.13)

#### **Discuss:**

1. How do you respond to betrayal? Do you direct anger toward the betrayer or cry to Jesus for healing? Do you unconditionally trust in His power to rescue you?
2. How does it impact you to read how David felt when he was betrayed? What are his emotions? How does it impact you to read about how Jesus was betrayed?
3. How can the Holy Spirit help discern flying from a situation or being sustained where you are?
4. Betrayal destroys the foundation of trust. How do you begin to rebuild this through forgiveness? Do you turn to prayer three times/day or do you retaliate, gossip and desire wrath?
5. Is there anyone you have betrayed? Commit to ask them to forgive you or forgive someone who betrayed you.

#### **Conclusion/Application**

Heavenly Father, teach us what it means to pray the Psalms. Convict in our hearts the sin of betrayal. Enable us to cry out to You, hear Your voice, discern moments where we are to run from danger or be sustained by Your presence in the midst of suffering. Reveal how we can encourage and support one another and avoid betraying others. Please forgive us and sustain us. Amen.

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