

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith LV: The Godly Response To Betrayal By A Former Close Associate (Psalm 55:1-23)

I. Introduction

- A. Being betrayed by a former close associate is an intensely difficult trial to face, for the pain caused by this trial brings a great temptation to lash out against the former close associate in personal revenge.
- B. Psalm 55:1-23 reveals the godly response to such a betrayal, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. The Godly Response To Betrayal By A Former Close Associate, Psalm 55:1-23.

- A. The introductory remarks in the English Bible comprise the first verse in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1021), so we stay with the verse numbering system of the English Bible for clarity with this lesson.

- B. We thus translate Psalm 55:1-23 as follows:

1. "Give ear to my prayer, O Elohim, and do not completely hide Yourself from my supplication," Psa. 55:1.
 2. "Hearken unto me, and answer me. I wander restlessly with my musing, and I am greatly disturbed" (v. 2)
 3. ". . . at the voice of the enemy, at the snares of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me, and in their anger they bear a grudge against me," Psalm 55:3.
 4. "My heart within me is in anguish; the terrors of death fall upon me;" Psalm 55:4.
 5. "Fear and trembling have come upon me; shuddering has overwhelmed me," Psalm 55:5.
 6. "So I said, 'Oh that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest;" Psalm 55:6.
 7. "Behold! I would flutter in fleeing far away and spend the night in the desert! Selah," Psalm 55:7.
 8. "I would go to my place of shelter, far from the wind and storm," Psalm 55:8.
 9. "O Adonai, confuse (and) divide their counsels, for I see violence and strife in the city," Psalm 55:9.
 10. "Day and night they prowl about on its walls, and troublesome thoughts and mischief are within it," v. 10.
 11. "Destructive forces are at work in the city; and threats and lies never leave its streets," Psalm 55:11.
 12. "For it is not an enemy that was saying sharp things against me -- then I could endure it; it was not a foe who was raising himself against me -- then I could hide from him," Psalm 55:12.
 13. "But it is you (emph. pron.), a man like myself, my companion, and my acquaintance," Psalm 55:13.
 14. "With whom I enjoyed sweet counsel in the house of Elohim as we walked with the throng!" (Psa. 55:14)
 15. "Let death come deceitfully upon them (*nasha'*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 674); let them go down alive to Sheol, for evil finds lodging among them," Psalm 55:15.
 16. "I myself (emph. pron.) call unto Elohim, and Jahweh saves me," Psalm 55:16.
 17. "Evening and morning and noon I cry out and am greatly disturbed, and He hears my voice," Psalm 55:17.
 18. "He ransoms my life principle in peace from the battle against me though many are against me," v. 18.
 19. "El(ohim), Who is enthroned forever, will hearken and afflict them. Selah," Psalm 55:19.
 20. "My companion attacks his friends -- he violates his covenant," Psalm 55:20.
 21. "His speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, but, behold, they are drawn swords," Psalm 55:21.
 22. "Release unto Jahweh your portion [of care] given to you (Ibid., p. 396) and He (emph. pron.) will sustain (*kul*, Ibid., p. 465) you; He will never let the righteous totter," v. 22.
 23. "But You, O Elohim, will bring them down into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half of their days, but I (emph. pron.) will fully rely (*batah*, Ibid., p. 105) on You," Psa. 55:23.
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 1. This psalm can be divided into three parts where David "prays in anguish (with respect to himself, vv. 1-8), in anger (with respect to his enemies, vv. 9-15), and in assurance (with respect to God, vv. 16-23), Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 55. This is the example to follow if facing a painful betrayal.
 2. The psalm's lesson is given in verse 22: if we by prayer release to God the care put on us by the betrayal, God will sustain us, never letting us even totter in spiritual defeat. However, we must **pray in faith!**
 3. One can discern if he is subtly being betrayed by closely evaluating the words of the betrayer, v. 21.
 4. We should select our friends carefully to avoid ruin due to needless betrayals, cf. Proverbs 18:24 NIV.

Lesson: David exemplified the need to respond to a betrayal by giving the crisis by faith to God in prayer to handle.

Application: May we handle difficult betrayals by close associates by following David's example.