PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS
Psalm Fifty-Four: Handling The Trauma Of Being Betrayed By Those We Have Helped
(Psalm 54:1-7)

I.   **Introduction**
   A.   It is a fact of life that former acquaintances can turn sour. However, we expect that some friendships will not work out as a fact of the human experience.
   B.   However, when one we **aid** at even great **cost** then **rewards** us with **betrayal**, what then? This experience is so unexpected that it can cause one to wonder if he cannot **relate** to people correctly!
   C.   Psalm 54 addresses this mental challenge with answers:

II. **Handling The Trauma Of Being Betrayed By Those We Have Helped, Psalm 54:1-7.**
   A.   The background to David's fifty-fourth psalm reveals his being betrayed by people he had helped:
      1.   The introductory notes to the psalm, which comprise verses 1 and 2 in the Hebrew Bible, tell us that David wrote this psalm when the Ziphites revealed to Saul that David was hiding among them.
      2.   David had experienced betrayal by these Ziphites even after he had helped them at cost to himself:
         a.   1 Samuel 23:1-5 records David's following God's leading to attack Philistines who were bothering the Hebrew border town of Keilah belonging to the Ziphites. He put his life and the lives of his 600 fighting men at risk to deliver these people from their Philistine enemies.
         b.   When Saul was told that David was in Keilah, a town with bars and gates, he felt it was a good sign as David could not escape were he to get the town's inhabitants to turn David over to him, 23:7-8.
         c.   David got wind of Saul's knowledge of his residency, and sought the Lord's insight on whether the inhabitants of the town he had just helped would betray him to Saul now that their king was putting the pressure on them to turn David over to him, 1 Sam. 23:9-11.
         d.   When God revealed that the town would betray David to Saul, he and his 600 men fled, 23:12-13a.
   B.   Because of this betrayal, David wrote Psalm Fifty-Four as a prayer to God as follows:
      1.   David besought the Lord to rescue him from the people who would betray him so unjustly, Ps. 54:1-2.
      2.   David realized that these people were without ethics and morals because they had no fear of God, v. 3.
      3.   As such, since David feared the Lord, he was confident that God would be a "screen-cover" to hide him from Saul in spite of the efforts of the Ziphites to betray him to Saul, Ps. 54:4.
      4.   David asked that the calamity so unjustly designed for him would return upon the heads of his betrayers due to the faithful reliability of God's steadfast righteousness, Ps. 54:5.
      5.   Confident in God's faithful goodness, David closed his psalm with the hope that he would yet sacrifice a freewill offering in the tabernacle complex due to God's rescue from his present enemies, Ps. 54:6-7.
   C.   As it happened, 1 Samuel 23:13b-29 reveals a very interesting series of providential deliverances for David:
      1.   At first, Saul could not find David as he hid in a wilderness wooded area, and the Lord continued to conceal David from Saul's efforts to find him, 1 Sam. 23:14-15.
      2.   God also brought Saul's son, Jonathan along to encourage David, and that friendship would have countered paranoia in David by affirming that the problem was not in David, but in the Ziphites, 23:16f.
      3.   Then the Ziphites who knew the terrain offered to scout David out for Saul and inform on his whereabouts so Saul could capture and kill David, 1 Sam. 23:19.
      4.   This effort led to a close call: at one point, Saul went along one side of the mountain and David went along the other side trying to get away, 1 Sam. 23:20-26. God allowed the Philistines to invade Israel in another location just then which drew Saul's attention away from David, and David escaped to the Engedi stronghold by the Dead Sea, 1 Sam. 23:27-29 with The Macmillan Bible Atlas, p. 62.

Lesson: When betrayed by those whom we help, deal with temptations to wonder if WE somehow are at fault by (1) noting who really FEARS God--us or the other party, Ps. 54:3-4: that is the CRITERIA for putting the blame where it belongs. (2) Then, trust God and call for His assistance to reverse the betrayal cost to ourselves upon those who have done the injustice, Ps. 54:1-2. As the Ziphites and Saul had to deal with attacking Philistines as just retribution for their trying to attack David for David's delivering the Ziphites from the Philistines, God has His way of countering such injustices. (3) God can provide godly friends to confirm our uprightness and counter any feelings of self-doubt.