

## Psalm 55

Part of Christian living is surviving our mistakes. We can find ourselves in bad situations. God can forgive us; but there will still be consequences. Our past should humble us when dealing with our fellow man. We try to be better than those who live in a dog eat dog life. People see Christians as hypocrites; because they know our past. We are trapped in our warped minds and deviant hearts. The Christian walk is not linear. We veer into the weeds; and need to get dusted off and back on track.

We all have things that humble us; no matter how much success we experience. David is an example of a man after God's own heart; and yet he did a lot of damage. He ruined a marriage and killed a man in this psalm. One bad move leads to more. David was previously confronted about taking Bathsheba (another man's wife); and then murdering her husband. Nathan the prophet confronted David about this.

*Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3 But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. 4 And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." 5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this [a]shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity." 7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! 9 Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. 10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your*

wife.' **11** *Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. **12** For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun. ' " **13** So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."* (2 Samuel 12:1-13)

The legacy of the Bathsheba event did not go away when her husband Uriah was murdered. Bathsheba's dad was also devastated. Bathsheba's dad was David's friend and his strategic counselor. In fact, he was David's top strategic military advisor!

*A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle. (Proverbs 18:19)*

David remained King over Judah, but the results of his poor decisions would haunt him. The Bathsheba event would have multiple aspects of consequences. David's rule was blessed; but now it would also have many complications. David would not be allowed to build the temple; because he had bloody hands.

*But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.' **4** However the Lord God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel. **5** And of all my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. **6** Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. (1 Chronicles 28:3-6)*

Bathsheba was the daughter of Ahithophel. (2 Samuel 11:3, 2 Samuel 23:34). Ahithophel was one of David's long-time key counselors. After this event; Ahithophel secretly wanted to kill David. David had killed his son in law; and commandeered his daughter as his wife. Ahithophel's plan became aligned with David's prideful son Absalom who wanted to steal the kingdom. A day would come when David's son Absalom would form a coup; to take over his father's throne. Ahithophel sided with Absalom; and became his counselor against David.

This psalm is to be played with a stringed instrument, with understanding of its significance. How should I live; given the fact that I have wronged others? Am I disqualified to speak on spiritual matters? It is like a drunk driver who killed someone on the highway teaching driver's education. It feels uncomfortable; but it has to be done.

**Read Psalm 55:1-7:** Why is David praying? The immediate problem is that people are trying to kill him; and steal his nation. In fact, he has lost much of his staff and cabinet and military. How could that happen to Israel's hero? David is motivated to pray out of: *a restless heart, horror oppression, pain, terrors, fearfulness and trembling*. Behind the obvious present circumstances; stands a series of David's bad decisions in his history. David has created his own monster.

David has an enemy (Ahithophel) who secretly hates him. David stole his daughter and killed her husband. Ahithophel had all of the kingdom's secrets. He was the top military advisor, who David relied heavily upon. This close enemy has made a plot to kill David; and his plan seemed to be working well. What do you do when you have been *a good scout*; but you blow it really badly? You lose all of your convictions. You feel like a fraud. Satan scores major points by incapacitating you. David wishes that he could just fly away and hide. God does not give us wings or a place to hide from our problems. He is just trying to produce a confession; and changed heart. You can frequently feel like a disqualified Christian. As long as you see yourself as entitled or free to go your own way; you will be facing a loss and humbling.

David is asking God to stop their violence. We all need supernatural assistance and intervention. Ahithophel was a master at planning; and now he was guiding David's power-hungry son Absalom. The whole kingdom turned on David. It's hard to imagine the most powerful king on earth having to run away from his castle; and hide by the creek. He was living like a hobo. Country people were throwing rocks at him and cussing him out.

It is God's mercy to let us continue to serve him. In the end, none of us truly have clean hands. David stuck his neck out for God; and he exhibited great faith. God had protected him from jealous King Saul; and he gave him his throne. David had passed many faith tests. After all of that, he stumbled badly. God gives us freedoms that we can handle. Sometimes we mischaracterize a blessing with a change in direction. Eve took a beautiful

tree; and she tried to manipulate it to bypass God's prescribed place for her. We have a tough time not misusing things that we have power over. Some celebrities and billionaires lose themselves and become estranged; because they have lost all accountability. Sometimes we do better at direct assaults and hard times.

Faith is healthier under siege; than living the good life. God wants to bless us; but who can receive it? Solomon received more than others; and he veered right off of the highway. He was very stable and humble until he got more freedom. He married 700 women, brought in idolatry, violated God's mandate about foreign trade, riches and the proper usage of wisdom. The easy times and blessings can spoil us. That history of David's faithfulness was all well and good; but now there was a fly in the soup.

*Dead[a] flies [b]putrefy the perfumer's ointment, And cause it to give off a foul odor; So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor. 2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand (Ecclesiastes 10:1-2)*

David knew that he was guilty. That may be one reason that he did not really fight back. David was tied up in knots. God's rescue ranger was now shipwrecked, and in hiding. Satan will revisit you to remind you of sins from long ago. There is no need to accuse a guilty conscience. He ran away; and left his throne; when Absalom came with many of David's counselors and warriors. Absalom's plan was evil; and needed to be stopped. Ahithophel was entitled to be angry over his daughter's life; but that did not entitle him to kill God's anointed king by supporting an evil king (Absalom). Life gets complicated when two sinners are at odds. Both may feel entitled; but both are still wrong. It is like trying to unravel the Hatfields and McCoys. Regardless of the conflicted thoughts;

**We should never play the role of accuser. That is Satan's job.** When we call out the shortcomings of each other, we are bringing the same level of scrutiny into our lives. We need to think that over when we are calling for a review of the condemning evidence. If our logic is just; then we should be subject to the same interrogations. When we rub our fellow believer's noses in their failures, we will surely experience mental, emotional and physical results. Our failures may not be the same as others. They may even seem harmless to us. They are not harmless. The mercy that we show our fellow man will come back to us.

*For with what [b]judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:2-5)*

**Read Psalm 55:8:** The Holy Spirit is an unpredictable driver. Our lives take twists and turns that we could not predict. God wants us to mature in our faith; and become productive and full of joy. For that to happen, we might need to experience some storms. David experienced many such things. So did Joseph and Daniel and Abraham.

It is easy to turn our blessings into idols. We may have a good job, or a good spouse, or a good business, etc... Those things can become idols to us. God needs us to understand that they are temporarily from his hand. God is a shelter in a storm to us. David had to run in and seek God's protection. He became adept at hiding in caves and holes in rocks from his enemies. The idea is that we should get tired of running for cover. We should just freely stay near God.

**Read Psalm 55:9-15:** Many pastors tell stories about being sabotaged from the flock. David was the victim of a lot of friendly fire as well. We need to stay close to God to protect our minds and emotions. We can feel like we are losing; but actually be winning. Satan wants us to add up our problems. In reality; we cannot carry on without God. We need to understand that God wants to take us further; but we keep jumping off of the boat.

David was not in a position to solve the problem. He was now a man without an army or guides. How could he stop his son's army? Absalom convinced the people that he was a better king. David's main counselor was now working on killing David. David was fighting his own machine. He only had God to do a supernatural work.

In general, this psalm is about when David took too much latitude to please himself. There are consequences for our hard headedness. We may force our agenda on others when we can. It is poetic justice when others force their agenda on us.

Regardless of David's mess; he still knew that he needed to act against the evil uprising in his kingdom. It is difficult to do your job with a convicted conscience. You feel drained and distracted and depressed.

**Read Psalm 55:16-23:** As believers we are not sinless; but we are still considered to be righteous. It is the presence of God in our sinful body that gives us a redeeming quality. On the outside, we look similar to the unbeliever. Once we receive Jesus as our savior; his Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of us. It is like a dirty old cup filled with gold. The cup is disgusting; but it holds something highly valued. There are some parts of scripture that we need to be forced into, or live out to engage. It is all a distant poem, until we get stuck in the reality of what's being taught.

It seems like some kind of a trap, to be a sinner in need of God's intervention. It is like being a thief, needing police protection. We have reservations about asking for help. We do not trust, because we are not fully trustworthy ourselves. We are victims of having small faith. Otherwise we would stop looking over our shoulder. God has our back.

We strive for perfection, because we trust our own ability to hold on to things in an organized way. We cannot. We try to force our agenda over waiting on God. It is like being ready to make a mess; and having God interrupt me. I find myself holding on to the verse 22: 'Cast your burdens on the LORD, and he will sustain you. There are a lot of things that have to come together in the right way and at the right time at work. This coordination is with multiple parties; and some seem to be distracted. I sometimes feel out of control; and that makes my anxiety level rise. God always sends me a helper. God always protects me from carrying out my own plans. That may be why my prayers to walk closer to God are often times of all kinds of conflict and hassle. God may be pushing my agenda out of the way, just in time to prevent unseen bigger problems.

This psalm is based on the consequences of David's sin...while he is asking God to wipe out the bad guys. Satan would say there is no distinction between David and those who are confederate with Absalom's attempt to overthrow the nation. Sinners can see sin in others pretty clearly. David knows what his enemies are up to. He has brought this problem upon himself; but now he needs to prevent his sin from destroying a nation of people.

The only thing worse than being subject to an evil plot; is to be the cause of the problem to begin with. The bible speaks of how God takes completely messed-up lives; and somehow makes something good. We are prisoners to our bad decisions, and prideful stubbornness. Are you brokenhearted? Do you feel like you are a prisoner to your own intentions and inventions? Are you depressed or melancholy? God is waiting to rebuild the old ruins in your life. The question is: Are you ready for him to step in and knock down the worthless creations; and build something lasting?

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to [a]heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3 To [b]console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.” 4 And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. (Isaiah 61:1-4)*

Most construction requires some amount of demolition before construction can begin. David speaks of redemption. The redemption process is to take something that has been ruined, worn down or repurposed; and restore it. Think about dropping a coffee cup in the toilet. You don't want to drink out of it; and neither does anyone else. God has a process to wash away our filth. We probably won't forget our past selfishness. We are not to live in self-loathing. We need to focus on the cup washer. There are a lot of other cups that need to get washed; and come into the master's use.