

Psalm 55

The theme of this Psalm is the expression of deep dismay over the treachery of a close friend. When friends hurt us the burden is too difficult to carry alone.

This Psalm was most likely written during the time of Absalom's rebellion and Ahithophel's betrayal, [2 Samuel chapters 15-17].

Some verses are Messianic because they also describe Judas' betrayal of Jesus Christ, [Matthew 26:14-16, 20-25].

Psalms 55:1-3 [New King James] *"Give ear to my prayer, O God, and **do not hide Yourself** from my supplication. Attend to me, and hear me; I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the **oppression** of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me, and in wrath they hate me."*

The words *"do not hide yourself"* is a direct reference to the command given by the Creator God, [Deuteronomy 22:1-4], makes David's prayer an appeal to God's self-consistency as well as His mercy.

The Hebrew word translated *"oppression"* is *"âqâh"* meaning constraint, *"boxed in."*

Psalms 55:4-5 [New King James] *"My heart is severely pained within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me."*

David was so traumatised by events he felt he was on the edge of death.

Psalms 55:6-8 [New King James] *"So I said, 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.'"*

Even spiritual giants like David, who are close to God, have moments when they want to escape their problems and pressures.

Another example was that of Elijah, [1 Kings 19:1-4].

These were desperate moves to escape into fantasy. They would change conditions altogether, dwelling in quiet places remote from other human beings and the trouble and pain they bring.

The urge to escape reality is a perversion of a universal desire to be at rest.

This thought of fleeing away from duty and the discipline of the Creator God is very evident in scripture as a basic factor in human restlessness and discontent.

Yet no person has found such an escape, but yet another realm of temptation.

Psalms 55:9-11 [New King James] *"Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go around it on its walls; iniquity and trouble are also in the midst of it. Destruction is in its midst; oppression and deceit do not depart from its streets."*

While any good citizen is distressed at social breakdown and anarchy, David as king is directly challenged.

David's prayer is perceptive and a lesson for all of us as he remembers how God dealt with Babel, another arrogant city, by exploiting the divisiveness of evil human beings. Praying that when the too-clever Ahithophel became a counsellor of Absalom, [2 Samuel 15:31].

David's personal trials then give way to his public concern.

Jerusalem was God's city, whose walls should be a reassurance to His people, [Psalms 48:12-14], not the parade-ground for rebels and terrorists, [verse 10] and whose market place [verse 11] should be beyond reproach, [Psalms 144:14].

This prayer is founded on the strong ground of scripture and God's dealing with His people in the past, as all our prayers should be.

Psalms 55:12-15 [New King James] *"For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng. Let death seize them; let them go down alive into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them."*

We do not need to name this traitor, for it is the deception that matters.

David was unwittingly describing in this moving prayer the essence of his own treachery to Uriah, one of his staunchest friends, [2 Samuel 23:39].

Note the plurals in this outburst, [verse 15] the collective threat to the authority God had placed in him.

The phrase *"let them go down alive into hell"* is a clear echo of **Numbers 16:30**, where Moses had called for proof that in resisting him the rebels of his day were resisting the Creator God.

Psalms 55:16-17 [New King James] *"As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice."*

While *"seven times a day"* [Psalms 119:164] is doubtless a perfect rounded number, these three points have the look of a regular practice to which David had committed himself during the crisis.

Praying evening, morning and noon is certainly an excellent way to maintain correct priorities throughout every day.

Daniel followed this pattern of prayer [Daniel 6:10] as did Peter [Acts 10:9-10].

Psalms 55:18-19 [New King James] *"He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many against me. God will hear, and afflict them, even He who abides from of old. Selah Because they do not change, therefore they do not fear God."*

In its literal sense it will mean that these men are either too set in their sins or materially too secure to worry about the Creator God.

Moab is an example of this [Jeremiah 48:11] who refused to change as a result of the message that God's prophets brought them.

Psalms 55:20-21 [New King James] *"He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords."*

Both David's close friend and the nation had broken the covenant that had been made between them.

The heart of David's friend and the people were motivated by malice, in spite of all the "smooth" talk and "righteous" words, all were like sword thrusts to David's heart.

Psalms 55:22-23 [New King James] *"Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in You."*

Neither escapism, regret, indignation or bitter disappointment can provide a satisfactory avenue for life amid profound personal and civic upheaval.

The only right course of action consists of unburdening the heart's sickness and pain is to place it in the hands of the eternal, all-powerful Creator God, [1 Peter 5:7].

The Creator God wants us to cast our cares on Him, but often we continue to bear them ourselves even when we say we are trusting in Him.

2 Timothy 4:10-11, 14-18 [New King James] *"for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica, Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry." ... "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. At my first defence no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!"*

Paul constantly placed all his trials in the hands of the One he had come to love and obey, Jesus Christ. He was Paul's Saviour in every respect of life.

The same Jesus Christ is there for every true Christian to share the burden of their trials.

Matthew 11:28-30 [New King James] *"Come to Me, all you who labour 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."*

The use of the word "yoke" indicates that all things are shared with the lead "animal," Jesus Christ, as we follow in His footsteps in life. All of Jesus Christ's power and authority are available for us to share as we work alongside Him in life day by day, [Matthew 28:16-20].

How do we do this? –

Luke 11:13 [New King James] *"If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?"*

Ask for God to send the Holy Spirit to guide us and as we yield to Him eventually be in us, [John 14:17].

John 14:15-18 [New King James] *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."*

The Holy Spirit, who is God, will be Jesus Christ, also One person of the Triune God, working in us, seeking to re-live His life in us on earth now.

Galatians 5:22-25 [New King James] *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who*

are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

This is how we take on the very character of God, which is expressed in these "*fruits*" of the Holy Spirit, when we walk with Him under the "*yoke*" that Jesus Christ invited us to take on.

[Please download and study all the articles on the Holy Spirit on this website listed under main heading '*Holy Spirit*,' you will be eternally glad that you did.]