

Sunday Night Message

February 16, 2014

Psalm 55 – Betrayed By a Friend

Series – The Psalms

Text – Psalm 55 (Read the text entirely before praying)

Introduction

"To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David."

"Neginoth" – most likely means stringed instruments. We have seen this word already in Psalm 4, 6, and 54. Here and in most other psalms the word is transliterated.

In Habakkuk 3:19, the word, Neginoth is not transliterated; but is rather translated into the phrase "stringed instruments":

"The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." – (Habakkuk 3:19)

It is also translated into the words "song" in Job 30:9, Psalms 69:12, Psalm 77:6, Isaiah 38:20, Lamentation 3:14. It is translated into the word "musick" in Lamentations 5:14.

"Maschil" – We have seen this word 7 times previously, and will see it again 5 more times for a total of 13 times, always in the introductory material in various Psalms. It is defined as a poem or song of contemplation. It comes from a root word that means to ponder or consider. Some have said that these Psalms are particularly intended to give instruction.

The context of this psalm cannot be dogmatically determined, but it is possible that the "friend" who betrayed David here was his counselor, Ahithophel, who betrayed David by joining up with the rebellion of David's son Absalom.

Turn to 2 Samuel 15

"And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. And there came a messenger to

David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom." (2 Samuel 15:12-13)

"And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." (2 Samuel 15:31)

Notice the counsel that Ahithophel gives Absalom:

"Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom." (2 Samuel 16:20-23)

"Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night: And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only: And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace. And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel." (2 Samuel 17:1-4)

Absalom did not heed Ahithophel's advice, however:

"And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father." (2 Samuel 17:23)

In the psalms, David is often a picture or type of the Lord Jesus. In this particular psalm, it may be that this "friend" is a picture of Judas. By the way, like Ahithophel, Judas also hung himself.

As we read through this passage the second time, we will break up the verses into separate categories, which may or may not be in the chronological order that they are in the psalm.

David Divulges His Prayer (vs. 1 – 2; v. 15)

Here we get a glimpse into David's personal prayer life. He is complaining to God about the situation that he is facing. It is OK to complain to God about others; it is not OK to complain to others about God, or about others.

"Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise; ... Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city. ... Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them." (Psalms 55:1-2, 9, 15)

Notice in vs. 9 and 15, David reveals his desire for God to judge his enemies. Again, this is OK, because David is leaving judgment in the hands of God.

David Describes His Problem (vs. 3 – 5; vs. 10 - 11)

You will notice in these verses that David doesn't specifically describe in detail the problem that he is facing. He speaks somewhat figuratively, but by doing so, he creates a scenario that many more can identify with.

"Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. ... Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it. Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets." (Psalms 55:3-5, 10-11)

David Dreams Up a Plan (vs. 6 – 8)

"And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." (Psalms 55:6-8)

David dreams about running away. Did you ever want to run away? Some people do.

- 1 Throw the bills in the drawer and hope they go away.
- 2 Ignore the phone because a bill collector is on the other end.
- 3 Go down to the bar and drink away your troubles.

- 4 Move away geographically because the grass is greener someplace else.

David Discovers the Pretender (vs. 12 - 14; vs. 20 - 21)

The pretender was the one who pretended to be David's friend, but was really only a friend to himself. It is satanic to love people only for what you get in return.

You will find out who your true friends are when you are down. Your real friends will remain with you, and the pretenders will be kicking you along with your enemies.

"For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. ... He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath 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 were they drawn swords." (Psalms 55:12-14, 20-21)

David Delivers His Principle (vs. 16 - 19; 22 - 23)

"As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me. God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. ... Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee." (Psalms 55:16-19, 22-23)

What do you do when betrayed by a friend?

Pray – don't take vengeance – just pray.

Pray for the pretender and then pray for yourself that you don't become consumed with bitterness. The betrayal cannot destroy you, but the bitterness that sets in will.