

Sermon 67: Cast Your Burden on Your Unchanging God: Psalm 55

Text: Psalm 55:9-23 "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city. 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. 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. Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them. 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. 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. 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..."

Introduction:

Psalms 52, 54, and 55 are all lament Psalms:

- **A lament Psalm has five distinct elements:**
 - **Element 1:** A direct address to God.
 - **Element 2:** A passionate complaint.
 - **Element 3:** A petition rooted in the complaint.
 - **Element 4:** A basis for the request.
 - **Element 5:** A personal resolution.
- **A lament is not an irrational venting session.**
- **It is a deliberate yet deeply transparent way to approach God.**
 - **Psalm 52 laments the deceit of a godless enemy.**
 - **Psalm 54 laments the betrayal of fellow countrymen.**
 - **Psalm 55 laments the betrayal of a close companion.**

Summary: In our desperation, we must cast our burden upon the Lord and find stability in our eternal hope.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Part 1: David's lament: 55:1-8

- **He cried out to God: 55:1-2** "Give ear...hide not thyself...Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise..."
- **He was overwhelmed: 55:3-5**
 - **He felt smothered:** "Because of the oppression of the wicked..."
 - **He felt as if he had been trapped in a net:** "They cast iniquity upon me"
 - **He felt a boiling animosity directed at him:** "In wrath they hate me..."
- **His emotions felt inescapable: 55:4-6**
 - **The pain was crippling:** "My heart is sore pained within me"
 - **He was terrified of death and the way he might die:** "The terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me..."
 - **He felt as if there was no hope:** "Horror hath overwhelmed me..."
- **All he wanted to do was run away and hide: 55:6-8** "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..."
- **It is shocking to see a man like David in such a pitiful state:**
- **This is the same man who as a young man said: 1 Samuel 17:45-46** "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel..."
- **Emotions are powerful motivators:**
 - They are transitory, easily twisted, and often misguided.
 - David was being driven by his emotions.
 - These emotions were not baseless.
 - There was real reason for these deep responses.

Part 2: David's lamentable context: 55:9-15

- **Specific reasons God should intervene:**
 - **The likely context: 2 Samuel 15-19**
 - Absalom's Rebellion
 - Ahithophel's vindictive counsel.
 - **This was not just a personal issue between two people:**
 - David was their rightful king, established by God in that role.
 - Absalom and Ahithophel were fighting against God's order for the nation.
 - Their ambition, manipulation, and consuming lust for revenge were going to divide families, a city and nation.

- Many people would die in a vicious war because of their actions.
- **David's request:**
 - **Confuse their coordination like you confounded the rebellion at Babel:** "Destroy...and divide their tongues..."
 - **Make an example of these rebels like you made of Korah when he led the elders to rebel against Moses:** "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell:"
- **David's reasons:**
 - **The city has become filled with violence: 55:9** "I have seen violence and strife in the city.
 - **There is now no rest from this violence: 55:10** "Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it..."
 - **The rebellion has led to a total breakdown of government: 55:11** "Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets..."
 - **This treachery came from David's closest companions: 55:12-14** "It was not an enemy that reproached me...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..."
- **Three possible ways to look at these requests:**
 - It is not someone overwhelmed with anger over personal insults.
 - It reveals how we grieve and process traumatic experiences as we move toward a more deeply grounded perspective.
 - It is an example of a leader whose cause is just, carries the weight of defending the innocent, and is determined to re-establish peace and order through a just use of lethal force.

Part 3: David's trust: 55:16-21

- **Two Contrasting Worldviews/Attitudes toward God:**
 - **David's attitude toward God:**
 - **He purposed to cry out to God and believed he would be answered: 55:16** "I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me..."
 - **He believed God was always available: 55:17** "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice..."
 - **His confidence was built on a life of past tests: 55:18-19** "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..."
 - **His enemies' attitude toward God:**

- **They refuse to repent:** "They have no changes..."
- **They do not reverence God:** "They fear not God..."
- **They return evil for good:** "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him..."
- **They break their word:** "He hath broken his covenant..."
- **They use deception to set up their victims:** "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..."

Part 4: David's strength: 55:22-23

- **He knew how to talk to himself:**
 - **He told himself to pour out his burdens to God:** "Cast thy burden upon the LORD..."
 - **He reminded himself that God is with him and for him:**
 - **He reminded himself that God is his comfort in this life:** "He shall sustain thee..."
 - **He reminded himself that God is his comfort in the life to come:** "He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved..."
 - **He reminded himself that God is just and against the wicked:**
 - **God will judge the wicked eternally:** "God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction..."
 - **God will bring them down in this life:** "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days..."
- **He knew he had to walk by faith:** "I will trust in thee..."
 - **1 Samuel 30:6** "David was greatly distressed...but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God..."
 - **Psalms 42:5, 11; 43:5** "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God..."
 - **Psalms 23:1, 6** "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever..."
- **This is what we must do in similar situations:**

Application:

- **To the unbeliever:**
 - This is a fallen world, and the best you ever get is temporary.
 - One day we will face the misery of this broken world.
 - When it happens, we will have no real confidence.
 - Turn to Christ and find your hope in Him now and forever.
- **To the believer:**
 - This is a fallen world, and the best you ever get is temporary.

- One day we will face the misery of this broken world.
- When it happens, turn to Him.
- Pour out your burden to Him and roll it on His shoulders.
- Speak the truth to yourself.
 - **Psalm 55:22-23** "He will sustain us...and never allow the righteous to be moved..."
 - **Psalm 55:22-23** "He, will bring down the wicked into the pit of destruction...and bloody and deceitful men will not live out half their days..."
 - **1 Corinthians 10:13** "He is faithful, and will not allow you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it..."
 - **Hebrews 12:1-2** "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you, and run with patience the race that is set before you, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of your faith..."
 - **Hebrews 13:5-6** "He will never leave you, or forsake you..."
 - **1 Peter 1:5-6** "He will exalt us in due time...He cares for us..."
- **Walk by faith, for He is a worthy object of faith.**