

Psalm 54 • Delivered from every trouble

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Psalm 54. This is another short one. I entitled this one, Delivered from every trouble. Let me just read through this short Psalm.

- “O God, save me by your name,
and vindicate me by your might.*
- ² *O God, hear my prayer;
give ear to the words of my mouth.*
- ³ *For strangers have risen against me;
ruthless men seek my life;
they do not set God before themselves.*
- ⁴ *Behold, God is my helper;
the Lord is the upholder of my life.*
- ⁵ *He will return the evil to my enemies;
in your faithfulness put an end to them.*
- ⁶ *With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you;
I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good.*
- ⁷ *For he has delivered me from every trouble,
and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.” (ESV)*

Very short Psalm there. We're told in the title of this Psalm that it was written when David had been betrayed by some people living in the desert of Ziph. They referred to them as the Ziphites, and those people— again, we're back when David was running from Saul, and David was hiding in the desert of Ziph, and the Ziphites heard of it, and they sent intel to king Saul to say, David is hiding in the desert, come and get him.

Essentially that was a betrayal of David, and this Psalm is a very simple expression to God, asking Him for His help and for His deliverance from enemies that are bent on seeing him destroyed. And what was probably so difficult for David is the Ziphites were showing, at this particular point, such incredible and extraordinary lack of discernment by turning him in to Saul

because Saul had murderous intentions that had nothing to do with justice and righteousness.

A lot of the people in Israel knew it, and a lot of them were defecting and coming over to David. And almost every day, David was getting new people coming to him from the army, from other places, and they were saying, Saul is out of his mind, and I'm done. I'm done running after you to try to kill you, David, because I know you've done nothing wrong, and Saul is a crazy man, and I'm not doing it anymore. They started coming over to David, and they were very disenchanted with the way things were going in Israel under Saul's leadership.

But then you have these Ziphites; then you have these people living in the desert of Ziph who refused to see through Saul's insanity of what was happening. They decided to divulge David's whereabouts. Come and get him; we know where he's hiding; we'll give you all the information you need.

Incidentally, the desert of Ziph is located within the allotment that went to the tribe of Judah, which was David's tribe. It's probably made this betrayal that much more painful for him because these are his people. This is like his family; these are extended family. And so, this is a very personal betrayal.

I don't know if you've ever been betrayed, but betrayal—I mean you hear that word and it just resonates betrayed. You ask, wow, why is betrayal so painful? Well, it's painful because it's personal; and not only is it personal, it's a personal violation of trust.

You see, it's someone that ought to have cared for me, someone who ought to have had my back, and instead of watching my back, they put a knife in my back. That's a betrayal, you see, and that's why betrayal is so hard.

I think most people would agree that personal betrayal is probably one of, if not the most painful form of emotional distress that we can go through in our lives. I think some people would rather have physical violence done to them rather than to go through a personal violation of betrayal because it's just haunting, and it does such damage. It obliterates the trust that existed at one time between two people. It just blows it out of the water. There's nothing left.

And frankly, as we get into the next few Psalms—which we're not going to do tonight, but as we get into them, David is going to be talking elsewhere. For example, in Psalm 55, as we get to that, he's going to talk about betrayal again, so we'll have an opportunity to deal with it.

But we remember something about betrayal. Jesus suffered betrayal. What that means is He understands the pain that's associated with it, and if you've been betrayed, you can go to Him, and He knows what it feels like.

But I want to share with you the good news. The good news is that you can overcome the devastation and the pain that goes along with betrayal. But here's the challenging part: You got to be willing. You got to be willing. It's not a—there's no fix in the Bible that's automatic. You have to embrace it, but it is possible. You can be healed; you can be restored. And I want to share with you some keys to that, being able to overcome betrayal.

The first key is what we're really seeing David do over and over again here in the Psalms every time he's betrayed, and that is, he cries out to God. That is done and given for you and I as an example. So many times, we get betrayed and we don't go to God. We either get mad at God for the betrayal. We take it out on God as if it's His fault, and then we wonder why we're really in a stew now. But listen, every time it happened to David, he went to the Lord. He cried out to God. He told God about his pain. He told God about the suffering that he was enduring because of the betrayal.

And that is such an important key. Don't ever step over that key. It's so easy to do. We get betrayed; we immediately go to our friends who we think are going to help us lick our wounds, and we tell them about it. You're not going to believe what so and so did to me. What we end up doing is just spreading gossip and never really inviting any level of healing into our lives. Listen, that healing has to start with God. It's not going to start with another human being. Stop looking to human beings to heal your heart. Look to the Lord. God can heal you, but cry out to Him with all of your heart.

Next key to overcoming betrayal is remember and never forget that we have an example that Jesus gave us. Let me put up on the screen from Luke chapter 23 what that example is:

Luke 23: 33-34 (ESV)

And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

And when they came to the place that is called The Skull (or Golgotha, or Calvary, if you will), there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his

right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

And that's the example that we've been given. You say, well, now, wait a minute, pastor Paul, He was the Son of God. I know that, but Jesus came to live His life as an example to you and I about how to live His dependence on the Father, His quickness to go to prayer, His willingness to forgive.

Here's the point, you see: Because Christ now lives in you and me, His example is more than just a nice example. His power, the power to do what He did, is now living in you. Jesus even told His disciples, you will do the things that I did, and greater things will you do because I go to the Father.

Jesus was saying, because I go to the Father, My very Spirit is going to come and reside in you, and the things you saw Me do, like forgiving people when they betrayed Me.

You can do that. You can do that. It's not you doing it. It's His power doing it through you. But now you can do that. You can forgive. Remember, it's never ever your power. It's His, and He has given you the God-given ability to forgive.

Let me show you some other passage from Philippians. You guys know this:

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

And that means forgive people who've betrayed me; forgive people who've hurt me badly; forgive people who've abused me.

Corrie Ten Boom tells about, after the Second World War, ministering to people who had been abused horrifically by the Nazis. She talked about the camps that they had set up for people to live together. It was the modern-day equivalent of an in-house treatment center, although they didn't call it that. They lived in—these people lived in barracks probably because their homes had been destroyed bombed out or whatever.

Corrie spent a lot of time ministering to those people after the war, and she said in one of her books: The people who are able to forgive and move on were the

ones who got healthy; the ones who refused and wanted to stay connected to their bitterness, they remained emotional cripples the rest of their lives.

And she said it was as horrible and as simple as that. Wow! I mean, such a powerful reminder. You and I, we can do that. We can become bitter when people have hurt us. We can become bitter at God. We can become bitter toward other people. But it's only going to hurt you. Bitterness has been described as— we drink poison and think it's going to hurt the other person which is really a great picture. It only hurts us.

While no one is going to tell you that forgiving betrayal is easy, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ tonight, it is an absolute must— if you're going to be used by the hands of the Lord or anything.

Let me show you one last passage from Hebrews chapter 12; it says:

Hebrews 12:15 (ESV)

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

What he means by that is that bitterness has the incredible ability to spread from person to—it's literally communicable, and people will take up an offense for someone else's hurt and they become bitter for someone else, and then it defiles. It defiles. It defiles relationships to the point where even if somebody doesn't take up your cause, you can't have a healthy relationship anymore because you're just full of bitterness.

And so, there is a mandate for those of us who are in Christ: to walk in obedience as it relates to the Word of God, even concerning those people who have hurt us, betrayed us and abused us, to forgive in the grace and power of the Lord.

And again, I'm not suggesting that anybody here forgive in their own power. In fact, I'll even go as far as to say you can't do it. And that's an okay thing to confess to the Lord: I can't do this. I can't forgive my enemies, Lord, but through the power of Your Holy Spirit living in me, You now have given me an ability that I didn't possess before, and I know that You are able to give me the grace to forgive, and so, I'm going to give You permission to do that work through me.