

# Psalm 55 • When a close friend hurts you badly

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Psalm 55. You may have noticed that I put a title on this one called: When a Close Friend Hurts You Badly, because this is what the Psalm is about. It's a Psalm of David. We don't know the event that took place that inspired David to write this Psalm. There are some people who wonder if it was the betrayal that he endured from his close counselor, a man by the name of Ahithophel, when his son Absalom, David's son Absalom, tried to wrest control of the kingdom out of his father's hand. David and his men, and so forth, essentially ran from the city of Jerusalem to find a place of safety. (2 Samuel chapters 15-17)

And it's possible it meets some of the markers. Unfortunately, there's no way that we can know for sure. All we know is that David wrote this Psalm when he had been hurt badly by someone that he cared about very much, and someone with whom he had once shared very close and intimate fellowship. And that's a very hard thing to deal with. We're going to talk about it tonight, so hopefully the Lord will speak to hearts. Let's go ahead and read through the Psalm. We're just going to read through it. I might have a couple of quick comments here and then we'll pray and we'll see what the Lord has. Verse 1:

*“Give ear to my prayer, O God,  
and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!*

*<sup>2</sup> Attend to me, and answer me;*

*I am restless in my complaint and I moan (Or as the NIV puts that verse: 'My thoughts troubled me and I am distraught.' Verse 3)*

*because of the noise of the enemy,  
because of the oppression of the wicked.*

*For they drop trouble upon me,  
and in anger they bear a grudge against me.*

*<sup>4</sup> My heart is in anguish within me;  
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.*

*<sup>5</sup> Fear and trembling come upon me,  
and horror overwhelms me.*

*<sup>6</sup> And I say, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove!*

*I would fly away and be at rest;*

<sup>7</sup> *yes, I would wander far away;*

*I would lodge in the wilderness;*

<sup>8</sup> *I would hurry to find a shelter  
from the raging wind and tempest.”*

<sup>9</sup> *Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues* (which is a way of saying confound their speech. David is praying here that the Lord would thwart the enemy's ability to talk about their plan, their evil plan, and so forth. So, he's praying that they would succumb to confusion and be unable to communicate. He says here) ;  
*for I see violence and strife in the city.*

<sup>10</sup> *Day and night they go around it  
on its walls,*

*and iniquity and trouble are within it;*

<sup>11</sup> *ruin is in its midst;*

*oppression and fraud*

*do not depart from its marketplace.*

<sup>12</sup> *For it is not an enemy who taunts me—  
then I could bear it;*

*it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—  
then I could hide from him.*

<sup>13</sup> *But it is you, a man, my equal,  
my companion, my familiar friend.*

<sup>14</sup> *We used to take sweet counsel together;*

*within God's house we walked in the throng* (meaning to say we used to walk among the worshippers who gathered to worship the Lord. Verse 15.).

*Let death steal over them;*

*let them go down to Sheol* (which is the grave) *alive;*  
*for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.*

<sup>16</sup> *But I call to God,*

*and the Lord will save me.*

<sup>17</sup> *Evening and morning and at noon*

*I utter my complaint and moan,*

*and (he hears me) he hears my voice.*

<sup>18</sup> *He redeems my soul in safety*

*from the battle that I wage,*

*for many are arrayed against me.*

*19 God will give ear and humble them,  
he who is enthroned from of old,  
because they do not change  
and do not fear God.*

*20 My companion stretched out his hand against his friends;  
he violated his covenant.*

*21 His speech was smooth as butter,  
yet war was in his heart;  
his words were softer than oil,  
yet they were drawn swords.*

*22 Cast your burden on the Lord,  
and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit  
the righteous to be moved.*

*23 But you, O God, will cast them down  
into the pit of destruction;  
men of blood and treachery  
shall not live out half their days.  
But I will trust in you.” (ESV)*

Let's pray.

Lord, there's a lot going on here: a lot of emotion, a lot of drama, a lot of hurt, a lot of pain. And these are the kinds of things that we deal with from time to time, and we need wisdom to know how to deal with these things.

I pray that You would help us to really see in the Scriptures what is happening here, what's going on, and how we can understand these things and apply them. Holy Spirit, we look to You, as always, as the bearer of light, the one who opens our heart to see the revelation of God's Word, who causes us to understand, to lay hold of the Word. And, Lord, we pray also for the courage to apply what we learn in the Scriptures tonight. Lead us in the way that is right and true and good, and may we walk it out for Your namesake, for we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

I think as I looked through this Psalm and read through the various verses, I think one of the most significant statements that David makes is probably in verse 12, where he reveals the fact that the person that he's—that has caused all

this angst and all this concern and all this fear—is not an enemy. In fact, he says, if it was an enemy, I could handle it. If it was an enemy, I could deal with it, deal with it because we expect our enemies to be against us. We expect our enemies to do and say things that are hurtful. We expect people who would be, we would consider, enemies to act like enemies.

But when you have friends whom you've shared sweet fellowship with, you have an expectation that they're going to act like friends. And then when they turn and they act like something quite different, quite the opposite, it is not only disheartening, but it is incredibly discouraging and can cause all kinds of issues of hurt that are very difficult to let go of.

David refers to this person as a trusted friend. And that's what makes it that much more painful. There are some interesting insights that we get from this psalm that help us to understand, I think, how the Lord would have us deal with things like this when someone who's very close to us turns out to be very much against us for whatever reason.

And by the way, sometimes you can't figure out the reason—that's the really difficult part. And if you're going to wait for an answer, you might just be waiting a long time or you might find yourself completely dissatisfied with the whole process because there are some times when it's just unexplainable. There can be spiritual attacks, there can be unknown personality misunderstandings. It can be something that you said years and years ago that tips somebody off, and then they remember it and it's just like a trigger and boom, they're back in the land of hurt. And, oh man, I tell you, it can be so many things. So many things.

What we're going to look at here is—we're going to look at, and I'll put this up on the screen, and we'll start with a title of what we're going to deal with. And these are going to be steps to take when someone you love has hurt you badly. And obviously, this could be anyone that you care about. It could be a family member; it could be a spouse; it could be just a friend or whatever—it really doesn't matter because the hurt is the hurt and you have to deal with the hurt regardless of where it came from. We're going to look here at some of the steps that we've put together based on this Psalm.

And the first one is number 1.

### **Steps to take when someone you love has hurt you badly**

1. Cast your burden on the Lord/ He will sustain you

Cast your burden on the Lord.

And this is something that David makes reference to. If you look with me, we find this as we skip way down to verse 22 in your Psalm. And David not only tells you what to do, but then he even gives you a promise. And we'll come back and actually look at that promise again a little later. But he says, *“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you...”*

There's this picture that we get, and it's a picture that we see not just in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament as well: *“Cast your burden on the Lord...”*

Peter gives us a very similar statement in his New Testament letter. Let me put it up here for you from 1 Peter chapter 5. He writes:

**1 Peter 5:6-7 (ESV)**

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

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Similar term, you got to wonder if Peter even knew — well, certainly he knew the Psalm, and he repeats the idea through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And you also have to wonder if Peter is thinking about his previous occupation as a fisherman, because it's an interesting word that he uses here. And it's only used in one other place, frankly, in the New Testament. And it's not typically the word that they use to describe the casting of nets, but you got to wonder if he's thinking about that process.

But the whole idea of just taking — and they didn't fish, by the way, back then with rods and reels; they did it with nets. And so you would go out into the open water with your boat, and here's your net, and it's there and it's probably soggy because they've been cleaning it previously, and it's heavy.

But you got to lift this thing up and then throw the thing out and hopefully use it to catch some fish. But what a great idea of what it means to just cast your burdens on the Lord, just throw them out there sort of a thing. And the Greek word that he uses here for cast literally means to throw upon or place upon. So to cast your burdens on the Lord is to place them on His shoulders.

I think that there's probably a lot of Christians who hear passages like the one we see here in the Psalms, where David says, *“Cast your burdens on the*

*Lord...*” Read also the New Testament connection that we've shown here from Peter about casting our anxieties on the Lord. And they wonder what is actually involved in that process.

I mean, you hear the words, and we'll tell people sometimes, and we do people a disservice when we don't think about it, but we'll say to somebody, hey man, you just really need to cast your burdens on the Lord. And what would you say if somebody looked you in the eye and just said, well, what does that mean? I mean, what is the process of casting my burdens? Because that sounds really good.

But if I don't know how to do it, I'm stuck with just a neat phrase that's from the Bible: “*Cast your burdens upon the Lord...*” Okay. Talk to me here. What am I supposed to do?

I think it's probably a good question. And there are a lot of things that we're going to talk to you related to this, but I want to show you a passage from Matthew 11 that begins to answer the question for us, and he says.

**Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)**

*Come to me, all who labor 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.*

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden* (Jesus is talking here), *and I will give you rest* (and then He says). *Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me* (And there's a process to that whole thing too, in finding rest, learning from Him. And the Lord responds by saying, it's okay. You don't need to be afraid because you see), *for I am gentle* (I am a gentle teacher) *and lowly in heart, and* (you will find rest) *you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

But I want you to know that one of the key things that is stated here is this whole idea of come to me. That's very important, isn't it? Come to me.. First of all, what is a burden? What things might even happen in your life that you might classify as a burden that you would need to bring to the Lord?

Well, a burden is obviously something that we're carrying. It's usually about things that we're not sure how to respond to, or what to do. People come to me all the time with some sort of issue in their life and say, I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do about this. I got this situation in my life, and I don't know what to do about it.

And that's a burden. And we're burdened with that. We become burdened with just the lack of understanding, the lack of knowing which way to turn, the lack of direction. It becomes this weight that we're carrying, and it can be a hurt or a disappointment or even a decision that we have to make. I have to make a decision here pastor, and I just don't know what to do. And I've got this heavy burden.

Most often, I find that the burdens that people carry involve fears. Not every time, but probably most often there's some sort of fear, and it's usually a fear of some pain that is looming in our present or very near future. And even the fear of pain can become a weight as well, a burden on our hearts. It might be the pain of a broken marriage or the need for a job because I don't have any income, or the burden of wayward children that just have not bowed the knee to Jesus and are doing their own thing, going their own way. And we're burdened, or there's the burden of just our own poor health, or maybe the health of a loved one who is close to us, and any number of other issues that might cause that kind of fear.

And David tells us here in this psalm that there's a promise that we have from the Lord, but there's something that we must do, and that is we come back, we must cast our burdens on the Lord. And again, what does that mean? It means come to Me, come to Him. And so what we're saying is that casting your burdens on the Lord is not just simply trying to talk yourself out of it.

I think sometimes people try to do that. They try to give themselves a pep talk. They come, or they get together with somebody and say what's going on. And then they'll try to say something semi-positive or something like that, God—I know it's going to be okay. That's not casting your burden on the Lord or even saying things like, well, I know God's going to take care of it. I mean, that's probably true, but you're not casting your burden on the Lord.

And coming to Him as Jesus said, *“Come to me, all you who are weary...”* That's not coming to Him. That's just talking about Him in the third person, like you haven't gone to Him at all. Do you understand the difference? We need to actually come to God and we need to remember something: We can only come to God through Jesus Christ. Do you guys remember that? The only reason, the only way, that we have to approach God is through Jesus and through His blood.

And what I mean by that is when we approach the Father, we approach not in our own righteousness. We approach the Father in the righteousness of Jesus that has been imputed to us. In other words, we are literally robed with His righteousness. And here's the reason why I bring that up. Here's the reason why I make that point: I think when people are going through difficult times, they

hesitate to come to the Lord because maybe they're aware of their own issues. Maybe they've been hurt, and they're struggling to forgive, and they know that they probably should—well, not probably; if they're a believer, they know they should forgive—and they know they're not there yet. And so coming to the Lord can be a challenge from the standpoint of, I know I'm not responding probably the way I really need to about this thing, but I know I need to come to the Lord, but I know that I'm also not really worthy.

Well listen, if you're going to wait around for yourself to be worthy, you've got a long wait ahead of you. And so when we come to Jesus Christ, we come in this knowledge: I am given freedom and ability to approach the throne of grace through the blood of the Lamb. And it is through Him I come. And when I come before the Lord, I usually announce myself that way in my own prayer time. I announce that I'm coming not in my name, not in my power, and not in my righteousness. I come to the Father and I say, Father, I approach you now in the authority and the freedom of your Son. I approach you now robed in the righteousness that is not mine but is imputed to me through Jesus Christ, my Lord. I approach you now in His name, right?

I want it known, not that God doesn't know, but I want to announce my entrance into His presence, knowing that Paul doesn't deserve to be there, but through Jesus Christ, I am enabled to be there. And I am welcomed into the presence of God because my sins have been atoned for through Jesus Christ. And I come knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that what Jesus did on the cross was enough for me to approach, right? If I don't have that in my heart, I'm not going to come. Jesus can say all day long, “*Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden...*” and I won't get around to coming because I won't feel that I can come.

This is an important first step, and it's where it has to start. When you and I have been hurt, when you and I have been wounded, when you and I have received a mortal wound in our heart from someone whom we love, it must start with coming to Him. Let me show you Hebrews 4:16 as a reminder.

**Hebrews 4:16 (ESV)**

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

People, what is our confidence? Well, it's multifaceted. But as I said, it starts with the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus. And then our confidence is in the

faithfulness of God, the mercy of God—that He delights to show mercy, right? I'm confident we need to be confident walking into His presence.

It's like if I'm not confident in those things, it's like one of my daughter's cats. My daughter, my youngest daughter has 3 cats. They're all dumb, but one of them is particularly dumb, and his name is Ron. What a dumb name for a cat! If that's your name, I'm sorry. I said it's a dumb name for a cat. I call him Ronald McDonald, but he is the typical, quintessential fraidy-cat. How we get that term! He'll maybe start to approach me or something if I'm sitting down. But the moment I stand up, he's just—he's out of the room. I see some people responding to God that way because, obviously, Ron doesn't have any confidence that I'm going to treat him right.

The interesting thing is, since he's been a little kitten, he's never been mistreated. My youngest daughter is about the nicest cat owner in the world. She's got patience to burn. But this little cat, for some reason, is not confident. And so what does he do? He runs. And I think there's a lot of Christians who even come to church, even read their Bibles once in a while, but they're not confident. They're not confident in God's mercy. They're not confident in God's love.

When you go before the Lord, do you ever say to Him, Lord, I know that you love me? Do you ever say that? Do you ever just let those words come out of your mouth? Lord, I know that you love me, and I know that you receive me now because I am robed with the blood of Jesus Christ. Those are good things to say as you approach the Father. That's why I love this passage: *“Let us then with confidence... come.”* Because Jesus told us to come. Now, come with confidence.

All right. Next, what do we see David doing throughout the Psalms? We see him laying out his requests. As he comes to the Lord, he asks God to do various things, and we need to have the confidence to lay out our requests in prayer. If you're coming to the Lord because of a marriage, ask God to heal the marriage. If you're asking or if you're coming in to restore a broken relationship, then ask Him to restore the broken relationship. Ask Him to provide you a job. Ask Him to restore someone's broken body or broken mind or soul, or whatever the case might be. And then, trust Him to do what's best.

It doesn't mean that fear and fretting won't come back. People—oh man! So many times people will come to me and say, I prayed about it, I prayed about it, but then I really feel like for a while I gave it to the Lord, but then I took it back. And then they look at me with this look on their face that's, without saying it, asking, so now what do I do? As if I have an answer beyond going back and doing it again.

And what people forget is that we're in a battle. We're in a battle of faith, and yeah, sure, you're probably going to take it back because the enemy is going to tempt you to do that. He's going to accuse God to you, or you're going to have something else happen, or you're going to see something else happen to somebody else, and all kinds of temptations arise. Did you really think you were going to be able to pray about it and it would be gone forever and ever? I mean, if that ever happens to you, God bless you.

But most of the things I have to pray about, I have to pray about repeatedly. I have to continue to bring them to the throne of grace. I have to continue to ask God to take care of the situation because my humanity gets the best of me, and I'll be trusting Him for a season. Then, all of a sudden, I'm just gulping it all back down again and wondering why I feel so rotten. And the Lord's like, hey Paul, guess what's going on? You stopped trusting Me.

Don't you think we can be like Peter? Sure, we can walk on the water for a while, but then we get our eyes off the Lord. We start looking at the wind and the waves, and then what happens? We start to sink. But it doesn't mean the Lord's not there to lift you up. At least Peter had the smarts to say, Lord, help me, as he's sinking into the water. And there was Jesus—boom, right there, giving him a hand. Oh, Peter, come on, keep your eyes on me, bud (Matthew 14:30-31).

But the wind and the waves are going to come, and you're going to be tempted to take your eyes off the Lord, even though you were, and sometimes it feels like we're walking on the water when we have the peace of God. When we feel like we've really truly cast our burdens on Him, we feel like, wow, I'm walking on the water. Praise the Lord. But you know, hey, we're human and we do get our eyes off.

Don't go to somebody at a time like that and say, well, I prayed, but then I sank. Because there's no secondary answer. It's like, do it again. Bring it back to Him and say, Lord, me again. Back. Yeah. Yeah. You blessed me before. I want to thank you for that. It was wonderful. But you know what? I frittered it away in my own fear. I frittered it away. I took my eyes off you, and now I'm frightened again, and I need you again. The Lord's not going to get angry with you about that.

Just remember you're in a battle, and sometimes the battle goes back and forth. Sometimes the battle goes back and forth, and you just—you got to fight the fight of faith until your heart is once again strong. It's a fight of faith, you guys. We're in a battle, and we can't let go of that. We can't ignore that we're in a battle. It's very rare in a battle situation that one volley of missiles completely wipes out the enemy. Usually, you have to go back and keep fighting.

Next step. Number 2, let's go to number 2 on our list here.

**Steps to take when someone you love has hurt you badly**

1. Cast your burden on the Lord/ He will sustain you
2. Complain to God...NOT to people! (Do not speak evil)

Complain to God, not to people.

And what I mean by that is a twofold thing. You notice that 2 times in this particular Psalm, David said, I'm bringing my complaint to you. Here's what we do when we're hurt, when we've got something going on, when there's just a thing that we're fearful about or hurt about or struggling with: we go and talk to people. And I'm not saying that going to someone and praying with someone is a bad thing if you're going to pray with somebody.

But can I just tell you in all honesty, there are times when people say to me, pastor Paul, I need you to pray with me about something, and we rarely—I mean, it's a long time before we get around to actually praying. And I want to say, I thought you said you wanted to pray. Sometimes they just, they're just, they want to complain. I can't do anything about that situation, but God can. And sometimes, depending on who you go to talk to, it can be a dangerous thing to talk and not pray because we end up either gossiping or we end up grumbling. And we have to be very careful about that.

Do what David did: take your complaints to God and be careful about what you say about the person who has hurt you. And let me show you why from Titus chapter 3, verse 1.

**Titus 3:1-2 (ESV)**

*Remind them...to speak evil of no one...*

*Remind them (Paul wrote to Titus)...to speak evil of no one...*

It's a very important reminder. He says, hey, remind the people to speak evil of no one. When somebody comes to you and says, I need—would you pray with me about a situation that's going on in my life? If they start getting into details and start with, you're not going to believe what this guy did to me, or whatever, just stop them. Just stop them. Say, hey, I am more than happy to pray with you, but the Bible says, don't speak evil of anyone.

And so, if we're going to approach the throne of grace, let's not disqualify ourselves by violating the Word of God so that we might just eventually or after that come to God.

I mean, you can't roast somebody in one moment and then pray for help the next moment. That's just inconsistent. In other words, you can't ignore the Word of God and then go to God and say, but I need your help. It's like speeding 120 miles an hour down the road and praying for God to protect you. There's a little, there's a little stupidity involved there, so don't put yourself in a vulnerable situation. We just, we need to be careful when we've been hurt because our natural tendency is to spill. When I've been hurt, I want to take that hurt and spill it on other people.

And not only can it do the things I said before, which precipitate gossip and grumbling, but it can do something else that you need to be careful about. And that is, you can actually give your burden to a brother or a sister, and they end up taking an offense for you. And now they're mad at that person, and they weren't even there and they've only heard one side. It's very rare when somebody says to you after you get done spilling stuff like that, well, I'm going to go talk to the other person and see what their side of the story is.

People don't do that. They just instantly rush to judgment. And because they do, they could easily take up an offense on your behalf. And now you've basically drawn people into the poisonous accusations that are going on, and they're hurting from the venom and all that stuff. And what have you gained?

I love the fact that David comes to the Lord and says, God, I'm going to complain to you. I offer up my complaint, right? Complain to God and lay it out. Notice what he says in verse 2: look with me again, "*Attend to me, and answer me* (he says) *I am restless in my complaint.*" I'm restless. I'm restless in this complaint that I have. And it's just, it's eating me alive. And I got to talk to you, Lord. I got to talk to you about this thing.

Can I just tell you very quickly that God will never be offended by your complaining? When you go and you offer up those things to the Lord, just know that He loves you. He loves you. He's not going to abandon you. He's not going to say, well, you need to sit in the corner, or put the dunce hat on you or something like that. Don't worry about it. People might get offended at your complaining. God's not going to; He's not going to be burdened. He's not going to go, oh, I can't believe what you're saying. He saw your heart in the first place. He knew the pain, and He knows what the pain can cause, so bring it to the Lord.

Next step, number 3.

### Steps to take when someone you love has hurt you badly

1. Cast your burden on the Lord/ He will sustain you
2. Complain to God...NOT to people! (Do not speak evil)
3. Tell the Lord EXACTLY how you feel

Tell the Lord EXACTLY how you feel.

And this is another one of those things that David does so well. And I don't think we do very well. I'll be honest with you. Look at verse 4. Look what David says, "*My heart (he says) is in anguish within me...*" I know that's poetic language, but the New King James puts it this way: "*My heart is severely pained within me...*" which is fairly descriptive too. But what's going on here?

David is talking about how he feels to the Lord. He goes on in that verse to say, "*...the terrors of death have fallen upon me.*" That's a very nice poetic way of saying, I'm afraid I'm going to die. The terrors of death. I'm afraid I'm going to die. I am so brokenhearted over this. I'm not sure I'm even going to survive.

Now, in David's case, there were literally people sometimes wanting him dead. And that may not be the situation with you, doesn't really matter. The point is, David is telling the Lord what's going on inside his heart. He's letting it out to God, not to people, to God. Lord, this is how I feel.

Look at what he says in verse 5: "*Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me.*" Have you ever told God like that? I bet you've been in a situation where horror overwhelmed you, but did you tell the Lord? It's interesting about these statements by David. They seem almost a little strange for a man who, as a young boy, slew a Philistine by the name of Goliath, who was an incredible warrior. And yet David acted with such incredible confidence during that season. I mean, he went there simply sent by his father to bring some provisions to his brothers who were in the army and to give word back to his dad on how the battle was going.

And David no sooner gets there, and Goliath comes out and bellows this taunt and challenge to the army of Israel, which he'd been doing, we learned, for 40 days. And this is like the 41st day, and David's there to hear it. And he's just incensed, and the whole army, it says, as soon as Goliath came out and started to bellow, the whole army, it says, they ran backwards. Some of them even dashed into their tents. These are warriors.

And David, this, like, probably 16-year-old kid, he's like, who is this jerk who's speaking against the God of Israel? He's like, and isn't anybody going to go up

against this guy in the power of the Lord? And they're all like, you kidding? The guy's nine feet tall. He's been doing this for years. He's a mighty warrior. David had the confidence; he said, but God's mightier. I mean, he's shooting off his mouth so much that people are hearing him talk. And they finally said, we got to take this guy to the king. They haul him into Saul's tent, and they say, hey, we got this kid here that says he can beat Goliath.

What would you have done if you were the king? I'd have said, go home, son. But you know what? This has been going on for 40 days, and we're looking, and we're desperate for some kind of a solution. And David is so confident that Saul, there was nothing really else he could do but just say, hey dude, God be with you. (1 Samuel 17:1-58)

Isn't it interesting now to hear what appears to be almost the opposite of this confidence? I mean, the things that David is saying here: “...*the terrors of death have fallen upon me...*” I want to look at David and go, is this guy bigger than Goliath? Has he got a bigger sword? Is he meaner, more experienced, whoever you're—why is your heart in anguish, David? You went up against Goliath.

But you see, life presents different situations, different circumstances, different feelings, and if you're going to sit and try to analyze it, well, why aren't, why am I not as confident as I was before? Who cares? Tell God how you feel. Tell Him what's going on.

Don't sit and beat yourself up for the fact that last year you dealt with a similar situation or maybe even a bigger one and you conquered it with great faith and confidence. Don't sit there and whip yourself over the fact that you're no longer walking in that same faith. Just admit it to God. Lord, I seem to have conquered things in the faith of Jesus Christ that were much bigger than this, but I got to be honest with you right now, my heart is melting like wax and I have no idea why. But I'm scared, and the terrors of death overwhelm me. Wow! Talk about honesty.

Can you be that honest with God? That's called relationship, right? It's called a relationship. That's not religion where it's, oh, thou is God of the heavens. This is just getting down and just dirty with the Lord and just saying, I'm scared and I need you. I need you. I need you today. I need you right now in my life. And that's why David was praying this prayer. He needed the Lord, so don't ever be afraid to tell God how you feel.

Step 4.

### **Steps to take when someone you love has hurt you badly**

1. Cast your burden on the Lord/ He will sustain you
2. Complain to God...NOT to people! (Do not speak evil)
3. Tell the Lord EXACTLY how you feel
4. Give voice to Faith in God

Give voice to faith, faith in God.

Now, what I'm saying when I say that is in your prayer — and this is something I'm just learning to do, and I don't think very many Christians do it, to be honest with you — is that particularly when you're fearful, when you're struggling, and so forth during your prayer time, express statements of faith in God.

I want to tell you ahead of time: you're not going to feel like doing it. You're not going to feel like making statements of faith to the Lord in prayer. You're going to feel like screaming, crying, and carrying on. But I really think it's important. I don't think David necessarily felt like making statements of faith when somebody makes statements like, my heart is in anguish and the terrors of death have overwhelmed me. That doesn't sound like somebody who's just bubbling over in faith, you know what I mean? That sounds like somebody who's actually at a pretty low point as it comes to faith. And yet, we see in this Psalm statements of faith.

Now, we've brought this out before in our study of the Psalms, and I truly believe after studying the Psalms, that this is what David did. I believe that David came to the Lord, not because he had faith, but because he needed faith. One of the ways he built up his faith was by making statements of faith to God in prayer. For David, prayer presented him with an opportunity to speak words of faith or, in other words, to give voice to faith. And that's what I like to call it. I call it giving voice to faith. These faith-building statements are sprinkled throughout this psalm. In fact, they're sprinkled throughout most of David's Psalms.

But let me show you some examples. Look in your Bible at verse 16, he says, *“But I call to God, and the Lord will save me.”* That's a statement of faith. I'm willing to bet people David didn't feel like he was necessarily being saved at the moment. Again, when the terrors of death are overwhelming you, I feel like screaming. And yet David allows his mouth to speak these words of faith, and he says, I call to God, and He will save me.

Have you ever thought about saying that in your prayers? In the midst of your prayer, lay it out, tell Him exactly how you feel, and then say this: Lord, I call

out to you and I know that you're going to save me. I know that you're going to answer me. Again, don't wait for the feeling to rise up. Just say it because God is faithful.

Then skip down to verse 19. Look what he says there. He says, “*God will give ear and humble them...*” And then at the end of verse 22, we made a mention of this earlier. He says, and this is at the end of verse 22, he says, “*...he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*” That word moved, by the way, means shaken, shaken to the core.

And you might be shaking to the core while you're saying this, but it's important to express faith in God, right? Because apart from faith, it's impossible to please God. We need to be willing to speak words of faith, even when we don't feel those things, and they express such wonderful promises in God's faithfulness.

Because, guys, can I just — when you're calm, when you're not going through a time like that and somebody asks you, is God faithful? — you're going to say, well, yeah, sure He is, of course He is. Does God love me even when I mess up? Yeah, of course He does. See, when you're at a place of calm in your life, you know the answers to those questions, don't you?

When I call out to God, is He going to respond? When you're at a time of calm, you're saying, yeah, of course God's going to respond to me when I cry out to Him because He's faithful. He's merciful. He has loving-kindness. He's filled with patience. We say these things when things are going good. Why don't we say them when things are going bad?

You know why? It's because we don't feel like it. In other words, our feelings rule our tongue. David allowed faith to control his tongue, not his feelings. And I'm not talking about the name it, claim it nonsense that goes on in the body of Christ. David is simply speaking forth truths about the character of God — the faithfulness of God, the long-suffering of God, the goodness of God, the mercy of God. See?

And he knew those things to be true. He knew them to be rock solid. But when he wasn't feeling like they were rock solid, he allowed his tongue to say them anyway: God is faithful. God is able. I call to the Lord, and He answers me. He will never permit the righteous to be shaken.

By the way, I recommend that you prepare for times of difficulty in your life by going through the Psalms and underlining David's declarations of faith — where he gave voice to faith. Just underline them in your Bible, and you might even put a little mark by it or write them in the back or the front of your Bible.

Headline it, David's Voice of Faith, and then write them down. Start to memorize some of them as promises of God. And then, when you're going through a difficult season, add them to your prayers. Speak them into your prayers. Just go to the back of your Bible and start reading them, and just pray them to the Lord. Speak them to the Lord as you're going through prayer. I just really think that there's something to this, people, this idea of giving voice to faith in God.

Finally, step 5.

**Steps to take when someone you love has hurt you badly**

1. Cast your burden on the Lord/ He will sustain you
2. Complain to God...NOT to people! (Do not speak evil)
3. Tell the Lord EXACTLY how you feel
4. Give voice to Faith in God
5. Forgive as you BEEN forgiven

Forgive as you have BEEN forgiven.

Now that's not really outlined in this particular psalm. In fact, what you're going to find in this psalm is, God, kill him! In fact, take him down to the grave alive. That's what we probably want to pray and so forth. But as we get into the New Testament, we find out that Jesus has some important things for us to learn about forgiveness. You guys know there's no shortage in the Bible of statements related to forgiveness and parables. Let me show you a couple. Matthew chapter 5, beginning at verse 43:

**Matthew 5:43-45a (ESV)**

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”*

*“You have heard that it was said (Jesus talking here), ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”*

Somebody's hurt you. Somebody said something nasty about you. Somebody dragged your name through the mud. Somebody did something that was just abhorrent. Pray for them. Pray for them. Start praying for them. And don't pray that God would kick their teeth in. Pray for them, that God would bless them.

That God would open their hearts to Him. That God would save them, if need be, or maybe bring them back to Him, or whatever the case might be.

If somebody has hurt you, there's a really good chance they're hurting themselves because people who are hurt often do the most hurting. And so rather than just licking your own wounds, recognize that they probably have some pretty serious ones of their own. Pray for them, love them.

Wow. Lord, here's a problem though: God, I don't. You told me to love my enemy, but I don't. I don't love them. That's okay. He knows that. Tell Him: Lord, I don't love this person, but Your word tells me to love my enemies. Would you give me that love? Would you help me to love that person? Because in my flesh, I don't have it in me.

It's okay to tell God in your flesh you don't have it in you because He knows it already. It's just, I think, a comfort to hear you say it. Because otherwise, you end up thinking you're Superman, or you got to be Superman or Superwoman, as the case might be. And God doesn't expect you to be. He does expect you, though, to come to Him for the power that is needed. Let me show you Ephesians chapter 4:

**Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV)**

*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (Those things shouldn't even be around believers.) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

In other words, the same way you were forgiven, forgive them. Forgive them back that same way. And sometimes we have to just ask ourselves or be asked maybe to be reminded: how much was I forgiven? Lots and lots and lots. In fact, way more. I was forgiven for way more than what this person did to me.

And if I am unwilling to let go of the offense, or the issue, or the hurt, or whatever they have foisted upon me, and yet I'm expecting God's to remove the stain of my own iniquity, I'm in trouble. Because now I've got this issue going on in my life where I'm not being obedient to the Word of God, and I'm not truly appreciating what Jesus suffered for me on the cross.

Let all bitterness and bitterness, by the way, is what happens when hurt turns to anger and is never dealt with, it goes underground and it becomes bitterness. And it's sad because sometimes I will sit down with people and they'll start telling me about their complaints. Sometimes it's even about me. I do get people complaining about me.

And sometimes they'll say, well, they'll start telling me about a situation. And I'll stop them and say, brother, that was six years ago. Yeah, I know. I said, where were you six years ago? I'm not saying this because it hurt me more in that six years, but what has this been doing to you? What has it been doing to you to not deal with it?

Can I just tell you something? Unforgiveness makes people sick. Sick in their minds, sick in their spirits, and sick in their bodies. And we ignore the call to forgive to our own great peril. And we need to get serious about being obedient to God. And we need to repent. Say, Lord, how much damage have I done to my life by not being obedient to you and forgiving the people who've hurt me? How much damage have I done to my relationship with you? How much damage have I done to my relationship with other people? Wow! What a waste. What a waste.

I actually put a note up on my pastor Paul page on Facebook that talked about forgiveness or the lack of forgiveness as basically doing time in jail for somebody else's crime. It doesn't hurt the other person when you don't forgive, but it hurts you. It's like drinking poison, expecting the other person to be affected. And it truly is poison. And we have to recognize it.

Bitterness is a terrible, terrible thing. As the scripture talks elsewhere, that when a root of bitterness is allowed to grow up, it defiles many. In other words, because it's a root, it branches out and affects the entire tree of your relationships and so on and so on.

And then 1 Peter chapter 3 says:

**1 Peter 3:9 (ESV)**

*Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.*

*“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling...”* Do you use the word, revile on a daily basis? I don't either. Do you know that the word 'revile' means to criticize somebody in an abusive manner? Have you been criticized in an abusive manner? Yeah. Or somebody has insulted you through criticism, that's what reviling is. Peter says don't pay back reviling with reviling. If they criticized you abusively, don't criticize them abusively.

One of the things the Lord told me to do one time years ago when I was being criticized abusively, and people would come to me and they would tell me how they had heard these criticisms of me, and people somehow they love to just talk about it.

They'll come to me and say, pastor Paul, I was talking to so and so, and man, I tell you, he was really roasting you over an open flame and he was saying this and saying that, and the Lord told me one time, he said, Paul, you keep your mouth closed and if you're going to say anything, you speak words of grace about that person, and people don't know what to do with it.

When somebody comes to you and they say, yeah, so and so was really mad at you and they were saying this and saying that, if you respond by going, you know what? He's just, she's hurting or he's hurting, but you know what? He's a good guy. He's a good guy. The Lord bless him, people don't know what to do with that. They're like, oh, okay. Not going to get any satisfaction here. I have to go tell that to somebody else. That's a tail bearer.

Peter says don't repay somebody criticizing you with criticism back to them, he says, “...*on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing* (that you may obtain a blessing).” Sow seeds of blessing so that you may receive a blessing. Sow seeds of blessing so that you may reap a harvest of blessing. Somebody is criticizing you, bless them. Speak words of blessing to them or even about them. He's a good guy. He's a good guy. He's going through a hard time. We need to pray for him, pray that God would strengthen his heart. And he'll get over this. The Lord's faithful. He's a good guy. We need to pray for our brother. Bless him in the Lord. Let's pray for his blessing.

Do that with somebody when they come to tell you about their criticism or whatever like that and say, hey, would you take my hand here and let's pray for that brother right now? Let's pray. God would bless him. That'll shut them up.

I love that verse though. I really do: “...*on the contrary, bless...*” Forgiveness, what an incredibly important responsibility that we have as believers and you might think to yourself, well, I don't know. I'm not very good at forgiving. I don't care. That doesn't have anything to do with it, whether you're good at anything. Here's the question: Can God do it through you?

Do you know the one who hung on a cross and looked out upon the people who were mocking him and who had nailed him up on that cross said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing (Luke 23:34). That one, that guy who said that, He's now living in your heart. He has now taken up residence in your heart and the power to say that very thing and to mean it is now resident in you.

If you and I will just be free enough to let Him have His way. The problem is if you and I go, if we restrict the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the power of God to bring forgiveness, in other words, if we simply choose to say, no, I'm not going to forgive, well, that power is not going to flow.

The reason we don't forgive people is because we don't want to forgive people. It's not because we can't, we, you never could to begin with. Just admit that to the Lord, I can't forgive this person, but I am willing to let you do it through me because you're the one who said, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. And they were doing something far worse to you than what this person has done to me. And so I invite you to work that kind of power in my life, that kind of forgiveness, that kind of restoration.

Do you know what these five steps will do? They will make you healthier. They will make you healthier, they will bring you closer to God. They will bring you closer to people. They will help you to understand people and all their faults and failings. And instead of getting angry and gulping down bitterness and anger and resentment, you—instead you just lay out your complaints to God. You cast them upon him. You take up his yoke, which is easy and light, and you just start walking in obedience. Just start walking in obedience. And that's not to say that's an easy thing to do. I'm not trying to suggest that it is.

But you know what? It's the best thing to do because therein lies spiritual, emotional, and physical health. I'm not giving you a recipe for a perfect body or never being sick in your life. I'm not suggesting that. I'm just saying the things that would otherwise cause problems because of bitterness and anger are not going to be there, because you've released it to the Lord. You've prayed for those who hate you, you've prayed blessing for those who criticize you, and you also have the favor of the Lord.