

The Right Response

Psalm 55

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil^[b] of David.

¹ Listen to my prayer, O God,
do not ignore my plea;
² hear me and answer me.
My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught
³ because of what my enemy is saying,
because of the threats of the wicked;
for they bring down suffering on me
and assail me in their anger.
⁴ My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen on me.
⁵ Fear and trembling have beset me;
horror has overwhelmed me.
⁶ I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
⁷ I would flee far away
and stay in the desert;^[c]
⁸ I would hurry to my place of shelter,
far from the tempest and storm."
⁹ Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their
words,
for I see violence and strife in the city.
¹⁰ Day and night they prowl about on its walls;
malice and abuse are within it.
¹¹ Destructive forces are at work in the city;
threats and lies never leave its streets.
¹² If an enemy were insulting me,
I could endure it;
if a foe were rising against me,
I could hide.
¹³ But it is you, a man like myself,
my companion, my close friend,

¹⁴ with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship
at the house of God,
as we walked about
among the worshipers.
¹⁵ Let death take my enemies by surprise;
let them go down alive to the realm of the
dead,
for evil finds lodging among them.
¹⁶ As for me, I call to God,
and the LORD saves me.
¹⁷ Evening, morning and noon
I cry out in distress,
and he hears my voice.
¹⁸ He rescues me unharmed
from the battle waged against me,
even though many oppose me.
¹⁹ God, who is enthroned from of old,
who does not change—
he will hear them and humble them,
because they have no fear of God.
²⁰ My companion attacks his friends;
he violates his covenant.
²¹ His talk is smooth as butter,
yet war is in his heart;
his words are more soothing than oil,
yet they are drawn swords.
²² Cast your cares on the LORD
and he will sustain you;
he will never let
the righteous be shaken.
²³ But you, God, will bring down the wicked
into the pit of decay;
the bloodthirsty and deceitful
will not live out half their days.

But as for me, I trust in you.

1. The Turmoil Within

Psalm 55 describes a time of much tumult: it was time of rebellion led by Absalom who steered the power struggle against his father David; which caused the city to be besieged with violence and strife. Furthermore, David's trusted friend Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15-17), was the chief counsellor of the rebels. David was deeply wounded. The betrayal and treachery of a loved son and a trusted friend, the terrors plaguing the city and the drawn sword for his life were the bitter ingredients mingled for this deeply-tried soul.

¹ Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; ² hear me and answer me. My **thoughts trouble** me and I am **distraught** ³ because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger. ⁴ My **heart is in anguish** within me; the **terrors of death** have fallen on me. ⁵ **Fear and trembling** have beset me; **horror** has overwhelmed me.

1. There are times in our life where we are overwhelmed by the challenges we face in life. This Psalm is ascribed to David's deep struggle. He does not know how to cope with what is happening: he is betrayed by his own son as well as a close friend. We have all faced such moments where we are floored because people who are close to us are working against us. The situation could be so intense that we feel that this is the end of me.
 - a. The Psalmist pours out his soul to the Lord.
 - b. He longs for God to hear him and answer Him.
 - c. He is troubled and distraught by the word of His enemy
 - d. He is in deep anguish.
 - e. Pain and fear has overcome him.
2. It was a difficult time for the Psalmist, how does he respond?

3. We have also known of this kind of disappointment and anguish and are able to understand the distress that David experienced. This Psalm helps us to think about our responses and conduct in times of emotional upheaval and mental anxiety. How would we respond?
4. Our responses are based on our belief system.

2. A Desire To Run Away

⁶ I said, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.
⁷ I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm.”

1. The Psalmist wishes for a way out: he wants to run away from what is happening, he desires to shut all these things out.
2. Psychologists tell us that there are two instinctive reactions to threat: fight or flight. What have been our responses in such troubled times?
3. Here the Psalmists response is to flee.
4. God understands our temptation to flee pain and adversity. He also knows our broken heart when we are rejected.
Even Jesus prayed, “Father....take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will” (Mark 14:36)
5. Would this response help?
6. Flight is a temptation and it actually does not help: running away or changing the scene does not make a difference to what is happening within us.
7. *If the brain and heart be unquiet themselves, neither society nor solitude can give them rest. If the peace of God be in the soul, the world’s most tumultuous and trying scenes cannot deprive us of it. Peace, love and hope are only found in Him.*

⁹ Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words, for I see violence and strife in the city. ¹⁰ Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it. ¹¹ Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets.

1. It is David's greatness that in turning to the Lord. He knows that he cannot handle this on his own, he looks to God to fight his cause.
2. The Psalmist begins to call on the Lord to confuse and confound the works of the wicked like what He did with the tower of Babel.
3. The city is taken over by treacherous people with treacherous words.
4. His response has changed.

3. Endurable vs. Unendurable

¹² If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide.

¹³ But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, ¹⁴ with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers.

1. David can endure insult and even perhaps hide to evade the enemy as he did when Saul pursued him but the nature of this betrayal i.e. one that arises from his own family, his own ranks, his fellow worshiper, he cannot handle.
2. The anguish Jesus has to endure when people whom He loves turn against Him.
 - a. Judas – betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48)
 - b. Our betrayal – from the Garden of Eden.

4. My Prayer and Belief

<p><i>For My Enemies</i> May those who resist God be cast out of His presence.</p>	<p>¹⁵ Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the realm of the dead, for evil finds lodging among them.</p>
<p><i>For Myself</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The battle is the Lord's. My refuge is the presence of God's grace. The enemies oppose God for they have no fear of Him. Even though they come after me by waging war and opposing me they cannot come against God's design for me because it is God who is enthroned from of old. 	<p>¹⁶ As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me. ¹⁷ Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. ¹⁸ He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. ¹⁹ God, who is enthroned from of old, who does not change he will hear them and humble them, because they have no fear of God.</p>
<p>Trusting God We see it in David's response.</p> <p>We see it in Paul's response. 2 Corinthians 4: 8-18.</p> <p>⁸ <i>We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. ¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is</i></p>	

temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

²⁰ My companion attacks his friends;
violates his covenant.

²¹ His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in
his heart; his words are more soothing than
oil, yet they are drawn swords.

²³ But you, God, will bring down the
wicked into the pit of decay; the
bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live
out half their days.

But as for me, I trust in you.

5. He Will Sustain Me

²² Cast your cares on the LORD and he will
sustain you; he will never let the righteous
be shaken.

My response and God's faithfulness
in my life!

Conclusion

David has had the alternatives of fight or flight. In fact, he chooses neither, but throws himself upon God and places his life and his enemies in God's hands. It is God who will fight for him. Likewise, Jesus refused to flee the Cross or to fight His enemies. He put Himself into the Father's hands and thereby defeated all of His foes through His submission to the Father's will. We will never understand why God allows certain troubles or challenges into our lives but we can be certain that He is with us and remains faithful. He calls us into His presence to find rest, strength and hope so that we too can submit to the Father's will.

Prayer Items

O Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality,
More present to Faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen,
More near, more intimately nigh,
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.

Church

1. God's presence and grace on our Sunday Services.
2. An intimate desire to be in His presence in prayer and worship.
3. God will bless the ministry of His Word.
4. God will continue to shape our lives through His Word, allowing truth to build us as a Church.
5. Give us strength to live as ambassadors for Christ in the world. Where we will extend help, be compassionate and kind and take every opportunity to shine for Christ.
6. A revival in the market place, God will raise leaders after His own heart. People with compassion that can lead change and transformation in the corporate setting.

Rohan & Carrie's wedding, 11th Dec.

Santhana

Yee Leng

Priscilla

Covid-19

1. Economy and the people's livelihood.
2. Wisdom and good governance.
3. People will continue to be vigilant in doing their part.
4. Children attending school.
5. Mental health, stress, domestic violence.

Malaysia

1. God will guide the leaders of this nation.
2. Racial reconciliation
3. Salvation for this nation
4. The Church will be God's instrument for unity, integrity and racial harmony.
5. God will convict the hearts of the people of the damage that greed and corruption brings to the nation.
6. Justice, compassion and mercy especially towards the poor, the foreigners and the weak.