

How to Thrive When Under Attack from False Friends in the Churchclick bit.ly/3txVoG7 to hear this lesson as taught (or scan QR code→)**Tuesday, June 14, 2022 • Read Psalm 55**

Questions from the Scripture text: To whom was this Psalm committed (superscript)? Who wrote it and gave instruction concerning it? What does David ask God to give (v1a)? To what? What does he ask God not to do (v1b)? What additional requests does he make in v2a? For what reason in David (v2b)? For what reasons in his circumstances (v3)? How do vv4-5 further describe his heart condition? What does he wish he could have and do (v6)? What does he suggest that he would then do (v7-8)? What does he ask the Lord to do (v9a)? To what, where, is he asking the Lord to respond in this way (v9b-11)? What about his opposers makes them unbearable and inescapable (v12-13)? What had they previously done (v14)? What does David ask God to do to them (v15)? What hope does he have for this not to happen to him (v16)? How will he act upon this hope (v17)? What will the outcome have been (v18a)? Why—what have they done (v18b), and how will God respond (v19a-b), to what reality (v19c-d)? What God-rejecting behavior does v20a identify? What else is God-rejecting behavior (v20b)? What else is God-rejecting behavior (v21)? If man is so treacherous, where can reliable hope be found (v22c)? How do we obtain it (v22a, 23c)? What supplies this hope (v22b)? By contrast, what will God do to the wicked (v23a)? With what result (v23b)?

How does one escape overwhelming storms of attack and betrayal? Psalm 55 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that the fear of God is better than the ability to fly, because He has all sight, hearing, power, and faithfulness to bear our burdens and make us stand immovable even in the midst of the trouble until He Himself destroys the trouble.

We are not to hide ourselves from a brother in need (cf. Deut 22:1, 3, 4). And God will surely not hide Himself from our prayers (v1). When it seems that His favor has been hidden in our circumstances, let us go to prayer, where He will not hide!

The Lord has put His saints through much in Scripture—particularly David, and his great Son, Jesus—so that we might be directed to lay hold of what has upheld them in trouble. And how great is the trouble in this Psalm! “moan noisily” (v2b). “hear severely pained” (v4a). “terrors of death” (v4b). “fearfulness and trembling” (v5a). “horror has overwhelmed” (v5). This is no small level of anxiety; the Holy Spirit has not left us with the option of thinking, “that’s well and good for David, but it wouldn’t stand up to the level of distress that I am facing.” And of course, Christ Himself has suffered even more greatly and as an example to us of the sort of situation in which we may yet entrust ourselves to Him Who judges justly (cf. 1Pet 2:19-25).

This is especially true when the hostility is masked with a friendly face at church (v12-14). When the gang violence (v9b-11) comes from fellow worshipers (v13) who say the right things (v14) but have no functional interaction with God (v19c-d), the gathering of the “saints” can become a place of the sort of pain and terror described above. It’s excruciating to be around people with smooth words (v21a, c) who are in covenant with you (v20b), but are determined to advance themselves and take you down (v20a, 21b, 21d).

We wish we could hide from it, but we still have to go to worship (v12). And it is understandable that one would wish for wings to escape such a church (v6-8)! This is a stark contrast to Psalms like 42 and 43, and others, where the Psalmist is actually in the wilderness and wishes that he could be back at public worship.

But the Lord has something far better for believers than escape. Men think they are building a great city and making a great name for themselves, but God judges them wicked and violent. By the Spirit, David makes the connection to Babel, asking that his attackers would suffer the same fate (v9a).

What does a believer do, when his co-worshipers don’t fear God? Do exactly the opposite. Take God into account. God hears them and will avenge (v19a). He’s done this before (v19b). The days of the wicked are numbered (v23a-b). So trust Him (v23c). Cast your burdens upon Him (v22a). He will sustain you (v22b). Your hope in Him will not be dashed (v22c).

God sees. God hears. God is faithful. God is powerful. He will destroy the wicked. And He is also merciful and compassionate. He will bear His people and their burdens. Whenever you are remembering those who are an agony to you, you don’t need wings to fly away; you need only to remember your God!

When have you experienced attack from a friend or church member? Why shouldn’t you be surprised when it happens? How would someone (or you!) end up doing that to someone else? What recourse do you have when it happens to you?

Sample prayer: O Lord, we thank You for Your worship, in which You present Yourself to us and call us to present ourselves to You. Help us by Your Spirit, we pray! For we are quite capable of honoring You with our lips and having hearts that are far from You. But make us to honor You from the heart, that we might know You not only in Your worship, but as our hope and our help in all of our life and forever, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP55A “Give Ear” or TPH55 “O Hear My Cry for Mercy”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Psalm 55. These are the words of God to the chief musician with stringed instruments, a contemplation of David. Give ear to my prayer. O God to not hide yourself from my supplication. Attend to me and hear me. I'm restless in my complaint and moan a noisily because of the voice of the enemy.

Because of the oppression of the wicked. For they bring down trouble upon me. And in wrath they hate me. My heart is severely pained within me and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me and horror has overwhelmed me So I said, oh, that I had wings like a dove.

I would fly away and be at rest, Indeed. I would wander off and remain in the wilderness, but he's in my escape from the stormy. From the windy storm and Tempest. Destroy O Lord. Divide their tongues for I've seen violence and strife in the city day and night. They go round it on its walls.

Iniquity and trouble are also in the midst of it. Destruction is in the midst, oppression and deceit, do not depart from its streets for. It is not an enemy who approaches me then? I could bear it nor is that one who hates me, who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide from him.

But it was you a man. My equal, my companion. And my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together. We walked to the house of God in the throng. Let death seize them. Let them go down. Alive into hell For Wickedness is in their dwellings and among them. As for me, I will call upon God and y'all, he shall save me evening and morning.

And at noon, I will pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice for. He has redeemed, my soul in peace from the battle. That was against me for their where many against me, God will hear and afflict them even he who abides from of old because they do not change.

Therefore, they do not fear. God, he has put forth his hands against those who are at peace with him. He has 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? They were drawn swords Cast your burden on your and he shall sustain.

You, You shall never permit the righteous to be moved, but you will. God shall bring them down to the pit of destruction bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days but I We'll trust here.

So far the reading with God's inspired and an airport.

So, this song is a little bit odd, when you compare it to some other Psalms, which is our other songs in which David is not able to be in the city or with the people of God or at the worship assembly. He's out in the wilderness and he wishes that he could be back where he used to lead the sacred thronged up to the worship of God here.

He's at worship and he wishes he could get away. He's in the city of God and he is These wishing that he could grow wings so that he can fly and go to the wilderness and hasten, his escaped.

Sometimes when you're among God's people, the contrast between what we ought to be and what we actually are, there's a painful one. We should not be surprised when there are those who are in the church. Who are persecutors and enemies earn a Thurman this week in which someone was trying to argue that Romans 12, especially in the second half of the chapter was, was, especially the talking about outside the church, loving your enemies outside the church.

No, it's true. We should love our enemies who are outside the church, but you can tell within the context of Romans 12. It's, it's talking about one another and it's talking about primarily relationships inside the church. I'm gonna talks about blessing those who persecute you. It's talking about the fact that there's persecution inside the church.

This is something that David experienced. This is not the only Psalm in which he talks about is familiar friend. Hasn't been too long somewhere in the 40s. I was just flipping back to look for it. I think it might be 41. Yes. Even my own familiar friend and whom I trusted who ate my bread has lifted up his heel against me a verse Psalm 41 verse 9 that the Lord Jesus quotes about Judas.

So, David experienced attack within the church and not frontal assault. But those who by gossip and manipulation still seemed to be participating at least superficially with a goodwill in the workshop and His words are smoother than butter verse 21 and softer than oil and so forth. So we shouldn't be surprised when there are people in the church who make being a church miserable, who make our hearts cry out to God about the pain and terror and oppression and horror and fearfulness of being among God's people because sometimes that's the experience of genuine believer.

All those words, Our words drawn, from the first five verses And yet, absenting the public worship. I'm sending the people of God is not the solution because David explains how it is that people can be among the worship of God, and still act like that. And be treacherous and betray one.

Another The answer is they do not fear God, verse 19 Now. God, hears, what they are actually liking God sees, but they are actually, like, sometimes it's supposed to be Jerusalem. It's supposed to be Zion but it's really like Babel, we're in the place where God makes His name to dwell.

But in the church, there are a lot of people who are trying to make a name for themselves. I would love if the Lord would call one or more of you boys into the ministry, but one of my greatest temptations in the ministry, one of the greatest struggles is the killing of that desire to make a name for myself to be thought, well, of, by others, when it, especially those who are trying to make a name for themselves who are treacherous towards others.

And so look at verse 9 and what David is saying He says destroy O Lord and divide their tongues. You remember when that happened The whole world? Spoke one tongue didn't it Up until when the city and the tower of Babel. And so his recognizing here that although, this is supposed to be the city of God, this is supposed to be the place of worship.

It's actually the place of violence and attack betrayal, and especially gossip manipulation catching people in things are getting them to say things that you can go and twist against them. And so the solution is not to escape the church or leave the city or absent oneself from worship to sprout wings and fly away.

Like he says, oh that I had the wings of the dove, The solution is to go to worship with eyes for God. The solution is to see God infinitely more than you see the others around. You particularly any up? Any? Who are mistreating you. So they do not fear God verse 19 but verse 22 cast your burden on yahweh and he shall sustain.

You, You shall never permit the righteous to be moved. This is where Peter gets the idea and well, he gets it from the Holy Spirit, though. The Holy Spirit builds. Upon this idea using what Peter says in first Peter chapter 5, he talks about the duties of elders, and he talks about the duties of those who are under elders, and he talks about humbling ourselves before the sight of the Lord, and letting him lift us up, Why?

Because it is those who are trying to advance themselves that that conduct themselves, not just wrongly before God, but treacherously towards one, another, in the church, and then he says, casting all your cares upon him because he cares for you, you see how those two things go together in first Peter 5.

And that's not the first place that the Holy Spirit gave us that. He gives it to us here. In Psalm, 55 past your burdens upon the Lord, Pastor burden upon the Lord. And he shall sustain you, he shall never permit the righteous to be moved. That's wonderful. It's true with whatever.

Your burden is whatever. Your care is whatever your anxiety is. But in both situations the actual care or anxiety, or in this case burden that was being treated in the local context was false friends. Among the people of God, We're supposed to be having this fellowship in the worship of God, the knowledge of God, the fearing of God.

And so, first of all, don't be this kind of false friend. Don't try to advance your name, that's completely and incompatible with worship, right? You go to worship you, find out that God's name is infinitely, good. You should come away like George Whitfield. Maybe not necessarily failing to do his duty, which it might have been to denounce.

Wesley, and lots of damages come from it. That you should at least have the same attitude. Let the name of George Whitfield Parish in the name of Jesus Christ. Be exalted forever. It was not interested and people thinking better of him. So when I go to worship, we should love the name of the Lord and the exalting of the name of the Lord.

And that should free us from a desire to be admired by others because we're too busy admiring. The Lord and we ought to desire that they would admire him to but desiring that they would admire him can't be accomplished by gossip and by saying things that cast you in a good light and by bragging and all those all those other things that we tend to do very stupidly because it doesn't really advance.

You ultimately a brighter negossip. Will their sins will find them out? So that's that's the first thing that we would fear. The Lord love his name and that by the by doing so that the Lord would bless it and make us true friends. If participating in that kind of a church culture, take puts our brothers and sisters in the church.

Our fellow worshipers in the church in a position where the interaction in the church. Becomes a terror and a horror and painful, and fearful and troubling and depressive.

If that does that to them, then how much more should we be careful? That that we not be manipulative and gossiping. And, and so forth. We can't allow our hearts to get caught up in this dynamic of obsessing over. What other people are doing? David was on his way to that sort of thought that was in his case was resulting, not in manipulation, but despair, Not only blessed the name of God, we trusts the name of God.

If you find yourself having a hard time with people in the church or with any particular individual in the church and it makes you feel like not being there, Then you need to think more about being with God and casting your burden upon him, you'll never permit the righteous to be moved.

It is going to suddenly bring down those who advance themselves. He did it at Babble, right things were going great. At least as in their own opinion, for the people who are building Babel and then suddenly God, divided their tongues confused them, They had their anti-God, unity and God turned it on them and turned them on one another.

And they, they're scattered across the earth. Those who are living and working to advance themselves. We'll find themselves suddenly and devastatingly shattered. We know how everything ends and so. So don't worry about then, they will not ultimately succeed. God. God abides from a vault. Verse where was the first 19, but the bloodthirst seem deceitful men, they will not live out half their days.

They have their idea of how they will accomplish their plans. They're goals but the Lord will not let them ultimately. Accomplish, what they were setting out to So fear. The Lord be obsessed with his praise. With his name, cast your burden. Upon him. He was sustain you. He cares for you.

I say oh there's no one at church. Who cares for me? Well you're forgetting. The only one at church that ultimately matters and that is the Lord Himself and let us not be surprised. Then if churches happened to be full of hypocrites and they don't just mean people who have a standard that they can't detain to, in which sense we're all hypocrites.

But I mean those who are supposed to be believers but are not and those who are supposed to love you, but don't on those who are supposed to help you and together with you advance and bless the name of God, but who are really just interested in advancing. Their own name.

Don't be surprised when you find people like that in the church. They were in the church at the time of David in part, so that by the pen of David, the Holy Spirit could give us these Psalms to sing and pray. Not only were they in the church at the time of Jesus, but there was one among the apostles who was that way or among the disciples Judas?

The betrayer and there were so many of them in the churches in the New Testament that at the end of his ministry. One pole is writing second, Timothy and Alexander. The copper Smith rises up against him. No one stands with Paul but everyone abandons him. So don't be surprised or despair.

As if something strange has happened to you, if it happens to follow exactly the pattern, that the whole Bible leads you to expect, rather trust in the God, who says, despite all those things, he will sustain you. He will not let you be moved from the place and the path of the blessing that Christ has earned for you and that God is determined to give you go.

Praise your God. Servant bless his name. And don't let yourself be the kind of hypocrite. That Psalm 55 is written to genuine. Believers to instruct us how to deal with them out to survive them, how to thrive, despite them looks great for Pray that you bless us instruction to my family.

I thank you for the Psalm.

Pray that you would forgive the unpreparedness and the unorganized presentation. Lord, but always our hope is not and how well the word is delivered, but the fact that the word is yours, anything that I've said that was not according to the text it, right? That you would make to be forgotten and to blow away, like, chaff.

But do I pray O Lord to take the good and important and useful content of this text and plant it in our hearts, make it take root. Make us lovers of your name. Make us lovers of your praise. Make a shore of your care and your faithfulness make us.

Fearless of those who participate in your city and for worker. But our false grant that we would see their end and their destruction by believing what you say in your word, grant us joy in yourself and to be great comforters and helpers and encourage us of those who are yours.

Grant us to love one. Another prevent us, we pray from being false even to those in our family. O Lord. Don't let that happen in our house and our family or in any of these children's houses when they come into their own help us, O God for the praise of your name and according to the good intentions of your love towards us, which we know most of all in Christ and in His name we ask it. Amen.