

Psalm 55

Author: David

Wounds inflicted by a friend's betrayal run deep and are difficult to heal. Cutting even deeper, and leaving wounds that never completely heal, is the betrayal of a child. One can easily identify with David's brokenness and sympathize with his plight. But who are these friends—and this child—and what did they have against David?

Read 2 Samuel 23:34.

Who was Ahithophel's father? _____

Read 2 Samuel 11:3.

Who was Eliam? _____

What reason would Ahithophel have for betraying David? _____

David has suffered double betrayal. The first wound—of treason—was exacted on him by his son, Absalom. Absalom felt his father's response to the rape of his sister fell short of justice (2 Samuel 13:1-22). The second wound—again of treason—occurred when his top advisor, Ahithophel, the grandfather of David's wife, Bathsheba, joined forces with Absalom to overthrow his dynasty.

Absalom and Ahithophel each felt justified in righting a wrong. Each was waiting for just the right time to seek revenge. And each lost his life righting the wrong.

Let's be honest, we can easily identify with the feelings of Absalom and Ahithophel. Each of us has our own wrongs that we would like to be avenged. But the price for revenge can be very, very high. So how can we avoid the seduction of revenge and live in peace with the hurt of betrayal?

Revenge Has No Fury An Angry Granddaddy

Absalom watched in agony as his sister Tamar suffered the trauma of being raped. He carried the offense of his sister's betrayal, and let it eat him up. Years passed, and real reconciliation never came to pass. And then Ahithophel watched his granddaughter's marriage be destroyed by adultery and murder. Obviously, in the case of Absalom and Ahithophel, *time does not heal all wounds*.

The root of revenge is anger—unchecked anger. The first point, on the subject of revenge, is to know that anger must be resolved. The resolution should be with God's help, and if possible, with the one who opposes us.

Read Ephesians 4:26-27.

What is the result of unchecked anger?

Read Proverbs 14:29.

What is the result of checked anger?

A godly response to pain goes beyond human power. It is spiritual and gives us the power to sit back and do nothing instead of taking revenge. Our natural impulse to the pain of betrayal says, "Hurt them as much or more than they hurt you." And the world whispers, "You should get yours! You deserve restitution."

Read Romans 12:19.

What instructions are we given concerning revenge? Who repays those who harm us?

We need to step back and give God room to take His righteous revenge. When we stay too close to the situation and try to exact our own revenge, we crowd God out and thwart His work. In reality, when we respond to our impulses and make no room for God, we align ourselves with the likes of Absalom and Ahithophel.

A Shift Of Allegiance

Ahithophel had been one of David's top advisors, but he was coerced into conspiring with Absalom. He shifted his allegiance and quickly became an enemy to every one who was once his friend. Loyalty is a powerful thing. When the eyes of our allegiance are blurred by something other than God, trouble will follow. It is impossible to serve two masters (Luke 16:13). In haste, we take matters in our own hands rather than leave them in the right ones, God's hands.

Wrong Thinking

Wrong thinking leads to wrong doing and naturally follows a shift in allegiance. In thinking, we are "all that and a bag of chips," our focus shifts to us rather than to God, and what we can do, rather than what He will do. We simply compromise the discipline of waiting on His revenge when we succumb to our impulses to seek revenge on our own.

Read Psalm 147:6.

What does God do for the humble? What does He do to those who oppose them?

In remembering who He is and who we are, we create a place for both victory and revenge—but in His perfect timing. In doing so, we bear witness to His work and learn to trust Him more and more, battle after battle.