

Cast Your Burden Upon the LORD

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References: **Psalm 55**, Psalm 55:1-5; Psalm 55:6-7; Psalm 55:9-11; Psalm 55:12-15; Psalm 55:16-19; Psalm 55:20-23; Joshua 24:15; Genesis 1:5; 1 Peter 5:7

This morning, we're going to take a look at the subject of prayer, and we'll look from Psalm chapter 55, the 55th Psalm, please. Psalm 55. Psalm 55, and the theme, again, is prayer.

The line begins, the Psalm begins with the line, "Give ear to my prayer, O God." We're thankful that the Lord answers, hears and answers the prayer of others. Sometimes when we pray for others, we say, "Now, Lord, we know that You pray—that You help others, and I know that You'll help me, but I'm just going to pray now that You will help me, help me answer my prayers." Some people say, "Would you pray? Because the Lord answers your prayers; He doesn't answer mine." Well, that isn't what the psalmist says. The psalmist says, "Lord, would You please answer my prayer? And hide not Yourself from my supplication." He continues. He says, "Attend unto me and hear me; I mourn out my complaint and make a noise because of the voice of the enemy." He says, "Lord, I'm not just going to pray silently. I'm not just going to mumble. I'm going to pray with my voice." Periodically, that's a very good thing to do. Why? Well, in part because the enemy with a loud voice is against me. And so, Lord, I'm going to have a loud voice to You on my behalf. Verse 3 again: "Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked, for they cast iniquity upon me and in wrath they hate me."

So this delightful psalm—and we're just going to break it down a little as we go through it; we'll read a lot of verses quickly—but the theme is, Lord, would You please hear my prayer? I've got a problem and You are the only one who can solve my problem.

The Problem from Human Perspective

So the question is, what is his problem? And from verses 2 through 5, what we have is the problem from his perspective. There are different perspectives on prayer, isn't there? There's a problem from your perspective. There's a problem... problem from God's perspective, the problem from the enemy's perspective who is the problem. And so here we've got the problem from his perspective. We'll read again verses 2 to 5, the problem from his perspective. He says:

[Psalm 55:1-5 NKJV]

- ¹ Give ear to my prayer, O God,
And do not hide Yourself from my supplication.
- ² Attend to me, and hear me;
I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily,
- ³ 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.
- ⁴ My heart is severely pained within me,
And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
- ⁵ Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me,
And horror has overwhelmed me.

You ever had a problem? You ever had a big problem? You ever had a problem that big? I say, I know what I've—I got problems, but I don't know that they're that big. What would you do if you had a really big problem? And from David's perspective, this was a big problem. What are you going to do in a really big problem?

The Natural Desire to Flee

And the answer from a human perspective comes next. What do humans do when they have a really big problem? Verse 6:

[Psalm 55:6-7 NKJV]

- ⁶ So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
- ⁷ Indeed, I would wander far off,
And remain in the wilderness. Selah

This is a terrible problem. What I want to do is get out of it. If I had wings, I'd fly away; I'd get away from here. Verse 7, "Lo, then would I wander off and remain in the wilderness." Where are you going? I don't care; I'm just getting out of here. It's too big for me; I can't handle it anymore. I think suicide is the ultimate escape for some. What a tragedy. The natural consequence of a big problem is to say, "I'm going to run away."

We would like often to run away physically, but we can't. So very, very often the natural response is to run away in our thoughts, in our emotions, in our thoughts. I think Bill Gothard was the one who drew to my attention the line, "Wherever you are, make sure you're all there." Are you always at home when someone knocks on your door? Not necessarily the physical door, but the door of your mind. Do you ever run away from the situations of life in your mind? Do you ever run away from the stresses of life in the night in your mind? Do you pretend it isn't there? Do you think about 25 other things? The natural result, consequences of humanity is to run away from the problem.

The Facts of the Problem

So what do we know about the problem? Well, verse 9 picks up the problem again. And this is the perspective of the facts of the problem. What is the problem all about? Verse 9, he says:

[Psalm 55:9-11 NKJV]

⁹ Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues,

For I have seen violence and strife in the city.

¹⁰ Day and night they go around it on its walls;

Iniquity and trouble are also in the midst of it.

¹¹ Destruction is in its midst;

Oppression and deceit do not depart from its streets.

What is the problem? "Violence and strife in the city" is the way he summarizes it. Consequences of life, all the issues that are going on all around me, they're all against me. Everything's a problem. All these problems in the night—sorry, all these problems in the city.

Verse 10, day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof. The problems start bouncing around all around me, and the people behind the problems bouncing all around me. Mischievous and sorrow are in the midst of it. What's going on? And in your life there's one set of calamities, and in someone else's life another set of calamities. Are there many? Yep, many. People look behind the calamity? Yep. Many problems that don't appear to have people behind them? Yep. What do we know about the city and all around it and the problems that we face? Wickedness is in the midst thereof; deceit and guile depart not from her streets. Doesn't seem to be any to help. How are you going to solve this? I don't know. How are you going to solve this? I don't know. How are you going to solve this? I don't know. I don't know how to solve this. It is a terrible problem.

Betrayal by a Companion

But then he goes on and he says, but it's not just that. It's a problem of people. Verse 13: "It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it. Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him." If there was just one particular person, was that bad guy? Well, I could hide away from him. But the problem is that those that I had confidence in have failed me, and I can't have confidence in them anymore. Is that a big problem? Some of you have been there. By the grace of God, I think most of us haven't, but some have. What a tragedy to be in such a calamity. Verse 13:

[Psalm 55:12-15 NKJV]

- ¹² For it is not an enemy who reproaches me;
Then I could bear it.
Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me;
Then I could hide from him.
- ¹³ But it was you, a man my equal,
My companion and my acquaintance.
- ¹⁴ We took sweet counsel together,
And walked to the house of God in the throng.
- ¹⁵ Let death seize them;
Let them go down alive into hell,
For wickedness is in their dwellings and among them.

All that I trusted in, all the confidence that I had, it broke down. The psalmist David says elsewhere, "I looked on my right hand, I looked on my left, there was none to help me." Verse 15: "Let death seize upon them and let them go down quick into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them." You ever had a problem? Yeah. What are you going to do about the problem? Well, you can turn around and run. You can stand and face it. What's the psalmist do when he has a problem?

Calling Upon God

Verse 16: "As for me, I will call upon God."

[Psalm 55:16-19 NKJV]

¹⁶ As for me, I will call upon God,
And the LORD shall save me.

¹⁷ Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud,
And He shall hear my voice.

¹⁸ He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me,
For there were many against me.

¹⁹ God will hear, and afflict them,
Even He who abides from of old. Selah
Because they do not change,
Therefore they do not fear God.

As for me, I will call upon God. What about the other guy? I don't know what he's going to do. What are you going to do? What am I going to do? As for me, I will call upon God. We have a similar phrase to that, don't we, in the book of Joshua where Joshua says:

[Joshua 24:15 NKJV] - And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

You decide what you're going to do. But Joshua says, let there be no misunderstanding: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." You've got a huge problem, what are you going to do? As for me, I will call upon the Lord. Why? Well, verse 16 goes on and says, "And the Lord shall save me." Okay? Somehow, you say to yourself, "Harold, quit worrying. The Lord is going to help you." Why? Because He's the Lord and He's promised. And David says, "I know I'm in a mess." And his mess may have been all of his own making; it may have been of somebody else's making, and in all probability it was the combination of both, as it is in all of our lives. But he says, "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me."

Evening, Morning, and Noon

And then verse 17: "Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice." It's interesting, the emphasis on aloud. They make a noise against him, he cries aloud. Evening, morning, and at noon, I will cry aloud. Is that how you would have

phrased it? I think probably I would have phrased it: morning, noon, and night, I'm going to pray. I'll pray morning, noon, and night. Psalmist doesn't say that. Psalmist says, "Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray." And so the answer, of course, is why. Or the question, of course, is why. It's interesting, isn't it? What did the Lord say in Genesis chapter 1?

[Genesis 1:5 NKJV] - God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

In the evening and the morning for the first day. In the evening and the morning for the second day. What do we know about the Hebrew reckoning of days? Begins in the evening. The night precedes the day. That's all the day. We say the night follows the day. That's all the day. That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says the night precedes the day.

So when are you going to pray? Well, you pray in the evening and you pray all night. And then in the morning you commit that to the Lord, and then you go along and halfway through the day you stop and you say, "Lord, we're halfway there." And you keep on praying. If you were going to run away from your problems like the world does, when do you say "I'm going to flee away"? "I'll fly away like a dove." When do you do that? You usually do that in the night, don't you? What is the night? What is the evening? Many people use the evening and the night as the relaxation from the day. The psalmist uses the night as the preparation for the day. Is there any significance on that? Yeah? You use the night as a preparation for the day, not a relaxation from the day.

Well, for some people, you know, that's a big change. The Lord says, "You want to have a successful tomorrow? Give me tonight." Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice. Yeah. Do you think he actually spoke out loud in the middle of the night? And frankly, I think he probably did.

Verse 18: "He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many against me. God shall hear and afflict them, even He that abideth of old, because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." He's basically saying, "One of the reasons that I'm praying is because I prayed before." You know what happened the last time I prayed? It worked. God heard and answered my prayer. Why do I pray again today? Because He answered my prayer yesterday. He's a faithful God.

Why do I pray? Because He answered your prayers when you prayed; He answered David's prayers when he prayed. We don't pray meaninglessly. We don't pray on the basis of blind faith. We pray on the basis of delightful experience in our lives and in the lives of

innumerable others. If we had a testimony meeting right now, and all we said was, "We want each one of you to itemize at least one prayer that God answered in your life," do you think you could come up with one? And you say, "Yeah, I think I could maybe come up with a whole lot more than one." Frankly, it would be a most interesting meeting if all we did was pray—if we could just tell one another how God has answered our prayers. And frankly, I'm not sure that I would know which one to tell you about. I've told you about many of them; you've been listening for a long time. But there were many delightful answers to prayer in my life. All right, why did he pray? He prayed because of all the good things God had done for him.

So the circumstances, as I put it all together, not dissimilar to the circumstances that Job went through. What was wrong in Job's life? Well, everything was against him. The Sabaeans came in, the winds blew, and this problem and that problem. And then his friends came to counsel him, and frankly, they were no help. What did God do for Job? Well, He listened to his prayer, and He answered his prayer and doubled everything that he had. What's God going to do for you? He'll listen. He'll answer. Job was not given, as I mentioned maybe to some a short while ago, he wasn't given a to-do list of 15 items. What he was given was simply a responsibility: "Job, you keep faithful. You keep serving me faithfully." And that's what Job did. And the Lord responded in a wonderful way.

Sustained by the Lord

Verse 20 says:

[Psalm 55:20-23 NKJV]

²⁰ He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him;
He has broken his covenant.

²¹ 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.

²² Cast your burden on the LORD,
And He shall sustain you;
He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

²³ But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction;
Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;
But I will trust in You.

These are those who were against him. His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. What are you going to do, David? Verse 22: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." If He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved, why would they want to flee away as a dove and be at rest? Where is the best place to be in the problem? Answer: exactly where the Lord puts you in the problem. That's the best place to be. Fly away and be at rest? No, that doesn't solve the problem. Where should I be? No, you should be where you are in the problem. Where the Lord puts you in the problem, that's where you should be in the problem.

What do you do then? Well, you cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you. Is that a good verse? Yes. Yeah, I think it was Peter who thought it was a good verse; he quoted it. Many of us have quoted it many times: "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He shall sustain thee." I looked at the margin of my Bible. As some of you know, I use the Newbery Bible. He's got some pretty good notes. And he says the word burden here—the word burden here is an interesting word. He says the word burden is that which the Lord has given you to bear. "I got this terrible burden." You do? Where did it come from? Well, I guess it came from the Lord, who gave it to me to bear for His purpose. "I want to flee away and be at rest. I want to get wings like a dove and I'll get out of here. I think I'd be safer on top of Grouse Mountain." No. Why do you have the burden? The Lord gave it to you to bear. Why didn't He take it away? He will. You pray. He'll deal with it. But right now, it's there. And it's there why? Because He has seen fit to allow it to stay there, not to take it away.

Cast thy burden. What is the burden? What He gave us to bear. So what do I do? I take what He gave me to bear and I pass it on to Him. And I say, "Lord, You've given it to me. You, therefore, are going to have to give me the strength to do what is right, to continue to bear the burden that You have given me." Why am I in these incredible circumstances anyway? What's going on in the city? The Lord has said, "I put you there." That's why. That's why you're where you are. "I put you there." Cast your burden. Cast what He has given you upon the Lord. What will happen? He will take it all away and then I'll be gone in no time flat? Is that what it says? He will sustain me. I think that's marvelous. How did you make it through the burden thus far? Well, He sustained me. So what's going to happen tomorrow? Well, if you pray, if you cry to Him evening, morning, and at noon, He'll sustain you.

Job, you got a problem? Yep. Job, when do you expect to get over the problem? Tomorrow afternoon at two? Job, it's not really... you know, all my children have died. You don't get over that in a few days. What's the Lord do? He says, "Job, I'll sustain you." How long did He sustain him? Long enough for him to have ten more children. Long enough for him to be the mighty man of God, twice as much as he ever was before. Matter of fact, he lived twice as long as the average man. How did the Lord sustain him in such a way that he became the

hero that we look to when we got a problem? What are you going to say when you meet Job in heaven? You're going to say, "Thank you, Job. Your experience was a great help to me." What are you going to do when you meet David? You're going to say, "Thank you, David. I took confidence in God because He took confidence in you."

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But Thou, O God, shall bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in Thee." That's how it ends.

Maskil: A Psalm of Instruction

How does the Psalm begin? It begins in the caption above the first verse, doesn't it? What does that say? It says, "To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David." So what's Maschil mean? Teaching. Why is this Psalm here? So you and I can be taught by it. What's Neginoth mean? Music. What? You want a good song? Da dee da dee da dee da. You want a song like that? Well, yeah, I do. Okay, well, then read Psalm 55. It's a beautiful song. Beautiful song. It's all about the goodness of God. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, He'll sustain you." Hallelujah.

Lord, we thank You for the truth of God. It's true, Lord. Many of us would simply pray, "Lord, give me wings of a dove. Let me fly away." Job didn't. Job didn't do that; he stayed there. David didn't do that; he stayed there. The Lord gave them rich blessings. Lord, would You help us? Sustain us, we pray, in our problems. And as You see fit and in time as You did for Job and for David, deliver. But in the meantime, sustain. We ask and we commit ourselves to You giving thanks. And we sing in Jesus' name. Amen.