



## **Israel's Greatest Hits Vol. II-Part 11**

### **Betrayed**

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Well it goes without saying, obviously, the Bible is a great book and it provides us with so many answers to so many things. But there's no denying it that it certainly raises a lot of questions as well. Questions that it doesn't always explicitly answer. I was hit with one of those questions reading through the Gospel of John recently and I started to wonder why was there a Judas? That's a good question. Right? I mean, certainly we realize that Jesus did everything perfectly. We realized that and I think to myself couldn't he have picked a better inner circle of guys? I mean, you'd think that. I'm not trying to be funny, I'm thinking to myself, yes, I realize that the point of Jesus was to go to a cross, to give his life as a ransom for many. But, I mean, couldn't the Jewish leaders or the Roman authorities, couldn't we have gotten there without it being an inside job? And you Sunday school grads will start, you know, quoting Zechariah or Psalm 41, Zechariah 11, looking at the discussion in Acts, want to say well it's prophecy, it's all about prophecy. Right? This was to fulfill prophecy, even John says that. That's what it was about and I'm thinking great, OK, that's good, but it just pushes the question back a little further. Why did God in his sovereignty plan that there would be a betrayer? Why is that?

Now I can't definitively tell you why God does what he does if he doesn't explicitly tell us why he does what he does. But there's no denying that you and I will have the experience that Christ had. I think about his humanity. He certainly suffered hunger and thirst and trials and pain and suffering and betrayal. And you will too, all of those things. And as our sympathetic high priest he goes through things that sometimes it's helpful for us to look at and say, well those are the kinds of things I go through. How does the perfect God-man, Jesus Christ, deal with those things? Jesus had his Judas. And you're going to have yours. I mean, even just saying that, a betrayer. Someone that you trust in who proved to not be trustworthy. Someone who was your friend who became your enemy. Someone who was your confidant who became your critic. Someone who's your ally became your opponent. Someone who you had promise you their trust, they pledged to you their loyalty and they ended up walking out.

I mean, everyone's going to experience that at some level. And it is helpful for us to think about how is that rightly handled? How do we respond to that? Jesus had his Judas and David certainly had his Ahithophel, among others, who, if you remember through our Daily Bible Reading, was one of his trusted advisers in his cabinet. He relied on him, he relied on his counsel, trusted him as a friend and a counselor. And yet in the midst of that coup-d'etat that was foisted by his son, Absalom, you had an Ahithophel defect. Now it doesn't say explicitly in the passage that I want you to look at this morning if we're talking about Ahithophel but it.

Certainly fits the pattern and that is we know that David is suffering in Psalm 55 the pain of betrayal. There's a lot of pain you'll experience, a lot of pain of exterior opposition, a lot of pain of physical suffering, a lot of pain of illness, a lot of pain of even bereavement of those who you've lost. But there's something about the pain of betrayal that is so tough. And so in this passage I'd like to give you some perspective and some hope and even a template of how you might rightly respond to it. Even as we saw Jesus rightly respond to his Judas, how does David respond to his



betrayed and how would God have you respond to those who have and maybe are currently betraying you?

Take a look at this text if you haven't turned they're already. I'm going to read it for you, at least parts of it to get started to give you the context. I want you to look and make sure you understand that that's what we're dealing with. So let's get to the heart of this, then we'll get back and go through it all, but start in verse 12 with me. Psalm 55 verse 12. Pull that up on your device or take a look at that in your Bible and see that that's exactly what we're dealing with here. Betrayal. You can see the superscription of the Psalm there. This is a Psalm of David. A Maskil, we're not sure what that means. Lots of guesses about that. I told you at the beginning of our series here in the Psalms some of these words are very difficult musical notations or terms that relate to something related to the songs or the lyrics.

Nevertheless, David is writing and he's saying this in poetical terms, but it's clear what he's talking about in verse 12 that he's not talking about the pain of an enemy. "For it's not an enemy who taunts me - then I could bear it." I mean he's a warrior, he's a soldier, he knows how to deal with enemies. "It's not an adversary who deals insolently with me." Surely, I would expect that from an adversary. "Well then I could hide from him." And he had to do a lot of that. "But it is you," look how personal even as stated here poetically, "It is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend." It's you that what? Who did all those things you taught me. You're dealing insolently with me. "We use to take sweet counsel together," verse 14, "within God's house we walked in the throng." I mean, we had doughnuts and coffee on the patio, you know. I mean that's at least how you might say it. "You were in my small group and we were prayer partners, maybe we were accountability partners."

Drop down to verse 20. "My companion stretched out his hand against his friends," which, of course, he's including himself in that, he's made that very clear in verses 12 through 14. "He violated his covenant." His covenant we're assuming to God, to the nation if we're talking about Ahithophel, certainly as a friend to David. Verse 21, "His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." Now this is painful. I hate to bring up such painful topic for us today but if we can learn to respond rightly to it the way that Jesus and David do and certainly the instruction in this passage, I think we will leave in much better shape than we came.

So with that in view, I want you to look at verse 1. As the outline shows you if you got your outline out of your worship packet this morning, you'll see I've grouped together verse 1 and 17, which is really simply a way to look at two texts that remind us what this whole thing is. The whole thing is a prayer. I mean, I know it's a song and it's a set of lyrics, but it's a prayer and he's saying this, verse 1, "Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!" Help me in this, I'm hurting. Verse 17. How often is he praying this prayer? Verse 17, "Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice."

David is praying to God about this problem. And I didn't mean to make an argument from silence here but I would like to say that that is certainly the right place to go. And the other places to go that we're so tempted to go in bringing our complaint is really not the way we should do this.



Complaint. We use that in a lot of different ways, I suppose. There's a formal way. You might have a complaint in a courtroom, you might have a complaint as your friend is complaining to you about some other person. But it's the same idea. "Here are the reasons I'm not happy. Here's the cause for my discontent. Here's how I'm being raked over the coals by someone who's doing me wrong." And in this passage David is bringing that complaint to God. That's the right place to go.

If you're taking notes, I wish that you would, number one on your worksheet there, when you're betrayed you need to "Direct Your Complaint to God." That's where God would have you go. Do it respectfully but bring your complaint to him, morning, noon, night. Bring it to him all the time. Talk to him. Because there's a lot of trouble when we don't bring it to him and we're tempted as we are just as human beings to take it to everyone else. Fourteen times this word complaint, the Hebrew word is used as translated variously but often "complaint" in the Old Testament. Ten times between two books. Did you catch that? Fourteen uses of this word, ten times between two books. And the two books are Psalms and Job.

Now in the book of Job, Job has a complaint. And the complaint is against God. He's mad at all the things that have happened. I mean the Serbians have come in and stolen his property. There are lots going on that had happened. You got storms crushing a place where his kids are and killing them, it's a terrible situation for Job. But if you know the book of Job, you know the whole thing is a big discourse between Job and his friends. And he's complaining to his friends about all the things that have gone wrong. How does that go, by the way, in the book of Job?

We quote Job as a godly man and I'm certainly going to tip my hat and say he's a godly man. But all that godliness in Chapters 1 and 2, it seems to deteriorate quickly. And the more he complains to his friends about all the bad things happening the worse this gets. In the Psalms the same word is used and the direction of the complaint you'll find is vertical, it's not horizontal. And that's the pattern.

It's the pattern that I would say is the godly pattern and I wish the godly Job would have spent more time complaining to God morning, noon and night than he did to his friends. Now again, props and great respect to Job. But I got to say in the Psalms we certainly see the direction of our complaint to God is super important to keep that as the focus. Is there ever a time to complain about the betrayer in our life to someone else? Yes. In the proper settings, at the proper time, perhaps in the proper context for the right kind of counsel that will actually do something. But that's not how we complain about the people in our lives who have done us wrong. We complain for all the wrong reasons.

Let me give you five reasons this is the wrong thing to do. Number one, because you're complaining to everyone else about your betrayer, I would say uncover the motive. It is vengeful. Let's just say that, when you get down to it, it is vindictive. When you're pulling people into your discussion about how your betrayer has done you wrong, you are trying to get them on your side so that you can somehow get them to share your rotten opinion of this person who has betrayed you. And the more you talk about it the more you're trying to build this alliance of people who will be against those folks who have hurt you. You're mad at them, you're angry and you're trying



to get others on your side. That really is vindictive. And what does God think of that? Well, he's not big on that, you're taking your own revenge.

Secondly, it's only going to ramp up your anger. I know we think if we spread the news and talk this out and share this with other people, I mean, we'd like to think that if we defuse all of this pain and all this anger, it'll start to go away. If I were writing a book I suppose this would be a good little play on words "to diffuse it," D-I, "does not defuse it," D-E. Right? It does not take the power of anger out of my life. As a matter of fact, it's almost counterintuitive. What it does to spread the word about how badly I've been hurt, is it just ramps up and stokes up your anger. And since the anger of man doesn't accomplish the righteousness of God, it's not a good thing to stoke the fires of your anger toward those people because it isn't going to do anything and it will not be helpful. I mean, it's a road to nowhere.

So you sharing about all the things that have happened to you with the person that's wronging you and all your texts and all your phone calls and all that, "You know, I've got to tell you what they've done and what have they done this week and how that... And I didn't tell you about how they did it to me here." You just need to stop it. Bring your complaint to God. But bringing your complaint to everyone else is not helpful. It's really an act of vengeance. It's vindictive and it's also going to stoke the fuel of your anger which isn't going to accomplish what God wants done.

This one may be hard, very hard to process. But you're speaking against people who are made in the image of God. You're tearing down God's creation. That may be hard. That's the hardest one I suppose. It's really hard for me to say I shouldn't be spreading that about others when they're bad. How can it be bad for me to expose the bad of others? It seems like they deserve all of that and I get all that. But jot this reference down, James Chapter 3 verses 8 and 9. James 3:8-9, speaking about the sin of our tongue, our mouth, the words that we say. And it talks about it being a deadly evil and a poison. And then it says this: we use our mouth in church to sing these songs and "we bless our God and Father," the Lord Christ and the King and all the great things that God has done for us, the triune God. And then we turn around and "curse people," now here's the line, "who are made in his image." Now, I like to think I don't curse people except the people that deserve to be cursed. But the Bible says be careful. As a matter of fact, the Bible says stop, because those people who you're accusing, even though they may deserve the accusation of what they've done that is wrong, you're badmouthing and slandering those people is speaking against a God who finds in them his own image.

If you want to test this theory in the lobby or out on the patio when some kid does something wrong, maybe takes a donut hole and throws it, start slandering that kid with his parents standing by. Now the parent might be running over to say, "Oh Johnny, don't throw that donut hole at the pastor. Let's just make this really interesting now. And the parent might be horrified. Right? I would hope there would be a little bit of that. Johnny just picked up that doughnut hole and throwing it at the pastor. You're watching, you step up, slander the kid. See how that's going to go over.

In other words, does God think that what Judas in your life or Ahithophel in your life has done to you that was wrong, do you think God is happy with what happened? Of course he's not. But God,



the father of all mankind, not by virtue of redemption but by virtue of creation, looks at his creatures and he says, "Don't badmouth them." Think about that. That's a wild thought.

I think for Peter to start hauling off on Judas, if perhaps at the Upper Room Discourse, he recognizes that, which of course they didn't. But if he did and he says, "Judas!" and he starts ripping on Judas, what does God think of that? God says, don't rip on him. Oh, he may deserve judgment. But he is not going to have you badmouthing and slandering his children, small "c." Not his adopted children, I realize. You may have a non-Christian Judas in your life right now. But I'm just saying this: it still gives you no right to bad mouth him. It is bad for you to complain about others in the sense that I'm talking about, even though you may be calling for God's justice in all of this, be careful how you do this. And I'm saying bring your complaint to God not to each other. It's vindictive, it ramps up your anger, it tears down people made in the image of God.

Now, let me just get it as broad as I can. I give you five reasons, here's number four: it's just prohibited. God says, don't do it. God says you ought to be able to do all things without grumbling or complaining and if you know the context of that verse, Philippians Chapter 2 verse 14, you know the next verse talks about us shining as lights in a crooked and perverse generation, in a crooked and perverse generation. There's going to be a lot of people who do you wrong. And you're supposed to shine as bright lights. Here's what non-Christians do when they're wrong by people in a crooked and perverse generation. They fight back with their words. They complain, they sully people's reputation, they taint their reputation. They slander them. For you to complain to other people about someone, all I'm telling you is this: God says all of the struggles in your life should be done without complaining.

Here's one, First Corinthians 10 verse 10. First Corinthians 10:10 recalls to the Corinthians the wandering wilderness children of Israel coming out of Egypt. And it says, "Don't grumble as some of them did and the Destroyer destroyed them." Now, here's the thing, God got really mad at them complaining. But you know what was happening there? They were complaining to each other about Moses. Complaining to each other about Moses and in their complaints, guess what happened? God said I've had it and he destroys many of them. But notice how they started this wilderness wandering. They started by complaining to God about the Egyptian taskmasters. That's interesting. The vertical complaint was answered by Moses coming and delivering them. The horizontal complaint about Moses was responded to by God with judgment. God does not want us complaining to one another about each other, about anything. "Do all things without grumbling or complaining." On the vertical level. On the vertical level, fine, bring my complaint to God on the horizontal level, we got to curtail our words.

Fifthly, just throwing out some pastoral wisdom to you from the Scriptures and certainly from what I think all of us experience in life, is when someone complains to me about what another person is doing, I'm not talking about in my pastoral role or as a counselor, I'm just talking about when someone comes and rips someone else up in my hearing, and they're saying this is a bad person. And then that person, their betrayer, somehow they reconcile with that person, guess what I'm left with. A really, really bad opinion of that person. I have a hard time. Now you're in the thick of it and you and your betrayer are going at it. You come and dump all of this negativity on me. You slander them and complain about them to me. And guess what? Even if you kiss and

makeup, I going to have a hard time doing that. I just put it this way. It damages the process of reconciliation. Because you now have spread this to everyone else.

You've got to be super careful when you're betrayed to do exactly what we find in this passage. What we find in this passage is bring your complaint to God. You want to bring it a lot? Evening, morning and noon, utter your complaint and moan, let God hear your voice. I'm just going to say, let's not have you be sharing the complaint with each other. Now is that an absolute statement? There are times, of course, to talk about your pain, ask for prayer, to say I'm going through this trial, I'm being sued at work, I had someone, you know, who betrayed me. Fine. But I'm talking about you uttering that complaint, the pain of your complaint and the slander that often results when I'm talking about Ahithophel or the Judas in my life. Bring your complaint to God.

Verses 2 through 8. Back to our psalm, Psalm 55. He starts dumping now and just revealing the pain. "Attend to me God, answer me; I'm restless in my complaint and I moan." There is a word to highlight. This is painful. "Because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked," and if this is Ahithophel, certainly Ahithophel and his turning, along with everyone else who defected in that scene, they caused a great uproar. The city turned on them. The people who should've been loyal to David now were loyal to Absalom.

"These people dropped trouble on me, in anger they bear a grudge against me." What does that feel like? Verse 4, "In my heart is," here's another word, I made you highlight moan, here's another one, "in anguish," there's a word to highlight. "My heart is in anguish within me," that's a big word. How about this word? "The terrors of death have fallen upon me." Moan, verse 2. Verse 4, anguish and terrors. Here are some more words, verse 5. "Fear and trembling have come upon me, and horror overwhelms me." Moaning, anguish, terror, fear, trembling, horror. What's the response to that? Well anyone in their right mind feels this way, verse 6, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness." And there's that word "Selah" we've talked about before. "I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and the tempest." I mean, who hasn't thought that? Get me out of here. But look at those words again: moan - verse 2, anguish - verse 4, terror, fear - verse 5, trembling - verse 5, horror. "I just want to get out." Painful.

When you're betrayed you're going to feel bad. "Well, OK." And here's all I have to say. I fear in this being redundant. It's a hard thing for me to preach to you every week because I'm up here thinking, "Man, I've said this to them so many times." But at risk of being redundant, let me say something to you I've said many times before. And it reminds me, by the way, the old story, speaking of redundancy, I've shared this story before, but the pastor who comes to candidate for the job at that church. He wants to be the preacher there, he comes and he preaches a really, really good message, everyone likes it, so they extend a call, they say you can be our pastor. He comes, he starts his first Sunday and he preaches a message. The problem is it's the same exact message he preached when he was candidating. They were a little embarrassed for him and they said, "Oh well, hopefully he'll get over it." The next Sunday comes around he preaches the same exact message he preached when he candidated and the same one he preached the first week. Now they're embarrassed and they come to him and say, "Hey, I don't know if you know it or not. I know you're new and everything, you're probably nervous but you preached the same sermon

to us three times." He said, "Yeah I know." He said, "And when you start living that one, I'll move on to the next one."

That's probably a bad lead-in for me repeating this to you. But I find it in my conversation with so many people. When you're hurting and you're so shocked and so alarmed and so surprised, I'm thinking have I not told you, has Scripture not been clear? What did you expect in a fallen world with fallen people?

Number two on your outline, put it this way. We've just highlighted a lot of words, do not be surprised by the pain. "Don't Be Surprised by the Pain." You are going to experience pain in the Christian life. Here's what Jesus said when he called us. "If anyone would come after me," he said this. You'll have fun. It'll be great. You'll never hurt. You remember that passage? Look it up real quick. It's an awesome text. No, I've quoted that wrong. I always get that wrong. "If anyone would come after me let him deny himself, take up his," Roman execution rack, the thing that people are strung up on and get tortured on, "the cross and let him follow me." He said it so often, "Hey, they hated me, they're going to hate you. They kept my word," John 15, "they'll keep your word." And you know what a lot of people did keep his word. And then there were some people who had all of his word that could be offered, guys like Judas, and they did not keep his word. Betrayers. I mean, I can just add to that. If I had my betrayers, you're going to have your betrayers. What are you surprised about?

I'm not taking away the words I made you highlight: moan, anguish, terror, fear, trembling, horror. I get all that and I empathize with your pain. My arms around you, I'm going to say it feels bad, it sucks doesn't it? It's terrible. But if you say, "I don't even understand this, I don't believe it, I didn't know." You didn't know? I don't understand, you didn't know? "In this world you will have..." There's another great verse, fun. Remember that verse? "In this world you will have tribulation." If you're getting hurt right now because you've had someone you've trusted in who has proved to be untrustworthy, someone who was your friend who has become your enemy, someone who was your confidant has become your critic, someone who was your ally has become your opponent, if you're going, "I can't believe it," Believe it! You say, "It hurts so bad though, Pastor Mike." It's going to hurt. On the forecast is a lot of hurt, "through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God." A lot of pain. There's probably no more deep profound pain than having someone we trust betray us. So all of this is normal. It's normal. It was on the forecast.

First Peter 4:12, "Do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you, as though some strange thing were happening to you." But, here it is, verse 13, "But rejoice in so far as you share in Christ's suffering." And guess what Christ suffered? He suffered the pain of betrayal. And guess what? You're going to suffer the pain of betrayal and you should rejoice. "Hey, I got my Judas, finally. You got your Judas? I got mine too last year." Well, "Rejoice in so far as," this is exactly what happened to Christ. Why was there a Judas? I don't know. I think because it's one of the most profound pains we can experience. And Jesus says I'll go through that too. Rejoice that you share in the same kind of suffering that he experienced.

Now non-Christians can't handle this. Non-Christians when you share the gospel with them, and I know sometimes it's just nothing but a smokescreen, but for some people there's some truth to this and sincerity to it. They say this, "I am not going to become a Christian because, you know, there are so many hypocrites in your church." And they can't handle it. I mean, let me invert this. Hey Christian, you need to handle it. You need to handle it. You need to handle the hypocrite. What does that mean? You need to be able to live with the pain of the hypocrites in your life. Suck it up, take up your cross, there's the Mike Fabarez paraphrased version of the Bible, and follow Christ. He suffered through his Judas, you've got to suffer through your Judas. Handle it.

They say, "Oh, I can't join your band because it's full of hypocrites. What a terrible group to hang out with." You know they could have said that about Christ. "Judas has been seen stealing from your money pouch. He was in it for himself. He acted like he was your friend, an apostle, but he wasn't. He's going to sell you out just to add some more money in his pocket. He was your confidant but now he's your critic." Yep. I want to be able to handle that. Here's a great text to jot down if you're taking notes. Second Corinthians Chapter 4. Listen to these words, verses 8 through 11. "We are afflicted in every way," Paul speaks at his trials, "but not crushed. We're perplexed," and certainly I'm perplexed when the Judas in my life pops up or Ahithophel that I trust in turns on me, I get it, I'm perplexed "but not driven to despair." That's the challenge. I'm not going to let my pain turn into despair. "I'm persecuted," but here's the thing, "I'm not forsaken; I'm struck down, but I'm not destroyed," carrying around, "always caring around in the body the death of Jesus." That's a weird statement. But you know Jesus had all this pain and suffering and death. We're going to experience all that, "so that," in the midst of all that, non-Christians can't handle that, I'm not going to follow Christ, it's too hard, I'm going to count the cost and I'm going to check out, "so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies." And then the next line reiterates it. Look at how it's put here, "For we who live are always being given over to death." I even like the way that phrase is used, particularly when I'm studying Judas I'm thinking about this: always given over to death. How was Jesus given over to death? He was given over to death specifically in the narrative, historically, by a betrayer, by a confidant, by someone who violated his trust. "For we who live are always being given over to death," just like Christ was and we do it "for Christ sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh." The life of Jesus? What kind of life did he have? He had a life of incredible love and grace. He could handle it. He could handle the hypocrite. Can you handle the hypocrite? Can you handle the betrayer?

Matter of fact, the night before the betrayer would succeed in having him crucified, the night he was betrayed, it was the night this was all going down and the betrayer was going to betray, Jesus was at dinner, having dinner with the betrayer. Not only that, it started with Jesus doing this thing we talked about recently in one of these psalms, washing his betrayer's feet. Now, not only am I going to skip washing the feet of my betrayer if I've got the knowledge that Jesus has, man, I'm going to say, "Hey, you know what? You meet at Tony Pepperoni, I'm going to meet it Mod Pizza. I mean, I'm going to just have you eat somewhere else that night. I'm not interested in sharing a meal with you. I'm certainly not interested in washing your feet." Jesus with all knowledge sat there and graciously, graciously and kindly washed the feet of his betrayer.



Think of the kindness. Think of the grace. Think of the flexibility. The magnanimous character of Christ to show, not bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander. I mean, I'm slandering Judas for sure in my flesh. Or I can be like Christ who said in Ephesians 4:31, "Let all the bitterness, all the wrath, all the anger, all the clamor, all the slander be put away from you, along with all that malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Here's the thing, you look in the mirror and see a betrayer of God and you're counting on the grace of God to have that grace and mercy toward you, a betrayer, and there are people in your life that you need to demonstrate the same thing toward. Does it mean I'm not angry? No, I'm angry. Does it mean that I don't want it changed? I want it changed. But it means that in my heart I realize I'm reflecting this incredible sense of love, which is my commitment to your well-being even when you are committed to my downfall. That's crazy talk. I get it. But that's where it goes next if you know that passage I was just quoting. The last two verses of Ephesians 4 and then that starts in Chapter 5, which is just a break in our Bibles, but there's no break in the argument, he says, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children." Think about how much he loves you. "And walk in love, as Christ loved us." I mean you can look at Judas as the bad guy and Peter and Thomas and Nathaniel and all these others as good guys, but let's just think about the guys he had left over. Yeah, we may say we're Peter and we're not Judas but Peter caused Jesus a lot of pain too. Think of the kindness of Christ toward you so that you might be able to be kind toward your betrayer.

He says there in those verses, "I want to fly away. If I had wings and I could be like a dove," I just get out of here, "I'd be at rest. I'd fly, I'd wander far away," and find someplace in the middle of nowhere. I'd get out of it all. Non-Christians can't handle, at least theoretically, being a part of our band because they can look at, you know, the Christian plumber or the Christian guy at the church and they're hypocrites and they're betrayers. Great. I get that. David has got to handle his Ahithophel. I don't know if you've ever been to the place that surely David was tempted to be at, as he is here, "Oh, that I had wings to fly away." Here's what God needed. He needed David to go through the difficulty of being betrayed and then he needed him back on the throne in Jerusalem to continue his leadership. He wanted to fly away and I'm thinking if I'm David, I'm done. Matter of fact, I've been there. Don't ask me too many questions. I've been there. I want to be done when I'm betrayed. I don't want anything else to do with this. But God says I need you back in the game. So I don't need you to fly away. I don't want you to find this little town, this border town between Israel and Philistia, maybe you just get there grow a beard and, you know, just blend in and I don't know you can be, I don't know, be some kind of farmer or something. David wanted to get out. But he was supposed to handle this.

"Perplexed but not driven to despair." Flying away is not a bad desire. Now, if I sound like I'm contradicting myself, I'm not. Because here's how the Bible puts it. As Paul is in prison in Rome, he says to the Philippians, I'll just quote right in the middle the verse, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ." Take that out of context and you think, "Oh man, this guy has a death wish." He does. He wants to be done. And when you're betrayed if there's ever a time you want to be done with this life is it not then? When you're betrayed, I want to be done. And if you're a Christian you really know where you're headed, you want to be done because your hope has been set on things above, Colossians 3, not on things of the earth. And now you're thinking the world stinks, every man is a liar, everyone, you know, affirms, as Proverbs says, their loving faithfulness, their loving

kindness, "but a faithful man who can find?" I mean I just want to be done with all this. I want to fly away.

It's a good thing, but then he turns around and says this, "I may be hard pressed here between faithful ministry and flying away but I'm going to pray I'm going to get out of this jail because that'll mean fruitful labor for me," even though he had been betrayed, as it says in Second Timothy, by many people. Second Corinthians 5, he says the same thing, "We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord." And yet he says, "I'm going to please the Lord. I'm going to live in this body. I'm going to do my job." For those of you who are done with people and done with relationships and done with trusting people and done because you have been betrayed, that's not the perspective of King David. He wants to fly away, it's not a bad desire, but he's willing to sit down and finish the work. And God's got you here in this world to finish the work. When you're betrayed don't be surprised by the pain. Don't be derailed by the pain. Don't despair because of the pain. Don't let the pain turn into you quitting.

"Well, what do I do?" Well, we've seen it. This is a prayer. A prayer for what? Well, you want to put it in good words? Drop down a verse 22. Here are the words that will make it on a Dayspring card. You'll find this on a plaque somewhere in the bookstore. "Cast your burden on the Lord." Does that look good? That is good. Right? "Oh, what a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer. Oh, what peace we often forfeit." Now that's great. That sounds great. And then that's going to make a framed plaque in the bookstore. But what does that mean in context? Well, I'm glad you asked. Let's pick it up where we left off, verse 9. "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues." Why? Because look at the mess they've caused. "They see violence in the city and strife in the city. Day and night they go around on its walls, in iniquity and trouble are within it; ruin it's in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace." Why? Because I had someone I trusted in. "It wasn't an enemy who's taunting me - then I could bear it; not an adversary who deals insolently with me - then I could hide. But it's a friend, it's a man, it's a companion of mine, a familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together; within the house of God we walked in the throng." What do I want to happen? Verse 15, you want to cast your burden on the Lord? Here it comes, "Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol," the grave, "alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart. But I call to God, and the Lord will save me." Praying all the time, "evening and morning and noon I utter my complaint and I moan, and he hears my voice. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me. God will hear," and it's nicely put here too, "and humble them." What does that mean?

"Destroy them, divide their tongues." What does that mean? Confused their conspiracies. Kill them, verse 15. I mean that's harsh stuff. "Humble them, he who was enthroned of old, because they do not change and do not fear God." Because they do not change and they do not fear God. Because they do not change, do not fear God. Why is he resorting to imprecatory Psalms? Right? These lyrics of "get them" "judge them?" Well, because of this: they do not change and they do not fear God. "My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant. His speech was smooth, as smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." So now he says to them what he's doing in his own heart, "cast your burden on the Lord." When this happens to you people, trust in Yahweh, "he will sustain

you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved." Well, he's been moved out of town and yet God is going to be with him, "You, O God," well here it is again, "cast them down into pits of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half of their days. But I will trust in you."

Now all of this is very interesting because it seems like he's a vengeful, angry, balled-up, wanting-to-get-revenge kind of guy. Remember the context. What's the context? It's a prayer. It's a prayer. He's praying to God. He's not conspiring with Abishai or Joab saying let's go get him. He's not complaining. He's trusting and praying that God will take care of the problem.

Number three, when you're betrayed, put it this way: "Leave the Vengeance to God." Not a bad thing to first pray what I think you should graciously pray, and that is what we said, but I repeated multiple times in verse 19, pray that they change and pray that they would learn to fear God. But there is nothing wrong with us recognizing that there are times in our praying, that because we want the treachery, the insolence, the betrayal to stop, we want it to stop one way or the other. Either by repentance, by them changing and fearing God, or by God, would you just judge them? I got to be careful with that, but he's being very honest in this passage, "morning, noon and night, I utter my complaint and moan." I'm giving you license to tell God your complaint, all the time tell him your complaint. Just shut your mouth when you're speaking to other people.

And when you share with God, I know you're going to share, "God, change their heart, change their heart, change their heart. Let them fear you, let them see the wrong that they're doing." But you're going to let slip out, I'm sure, because ultimately it is a motivation for you continuing to do right. And I say that because Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and he says it's only right that God would afflict those with judgment those who are afflicting you. One thing that keeps me on the right path is knowing this: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

"Therefore," and I'm quoting the Old Testament, but it's quoted there in Romans Chapter 12 where he says, "Never take your own revenge." Matter of fact, when they curse you, you bless them in return. Matter of fact, "If your enemy is hungry, you feed them." You feed them and you care for them. Matter of fact, if their feet are dirty and you can wash them, then wash them. If you got a meal, then feed them. You be kind and you keep doing good. And you know what? Evil is going to be overcome. Either by their repentance or by their judgment. Which, by the way, is how that whole section ends in Romans 12. "Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Don't let your perplexity about your trustworthy friend becoming an enemy, don't let that lead you to despair, don't let it overcome you. Don't say with the non-Christian I can't handle the hypocrites. But overcome that evil with good. Your task is to do the right thing. Your task is to do, even in your prayer life, to say, "God, I need you to take care of this. I'm not taking justice into my own hands."

When David was wandering around between that period of time, 12+ years between being anointed by Samuel as the king and having Saul reigning and he's a fugitive running all through the countryside, eventually the men of Benjamin and Judah came to David to his stronghold, the locals there in the south and they came to him and they said, "Hey, we want to join your band. It

says in First Chronicles Chapter 12, it says that David has this perspective and he says it, when these people went out to meet him he's not sure who to trust. He says, "If you've come in friendship to help me, then my heart's going to be joined to you." I'm with you. "But if you betray me to my adversaries, although there's no wrong in my hands," if you betray me without cause, "then may the God of our fathers see and rebuke you," and deal with you. Now I don't know if that's a good way for you to start your friendships with people to say that. But it's not a bad way to think about it. Particularly, if you've been burned in the past. To say to God, "God, here's the thing. When I get overtures of loyalty and friendship from someone, my heart's going to be with them. But here's the thing, if they turn on me I'm going to trust God to take care of them." The Lord will see, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good." And I'm going to trust. I'm not going to let my life be overcome by evil even if it happens again. I'm going to overcome evil with good, which means I'm going to pray, I'm not going to be demoralized by the pain, and I'm going to say to God, "God, you've got to deal with these people."

The Bible says some great things about how God feels about his children. I don't mean to sentimentalize God but there are some passages that certainly show us his care is so compassionate. In Deuteronomy Chapter 32 it talks about the people of God being the lens of someone's eye. Remember the old phrase "the apple of the eye." I never knew what that meant as a kid, I heard it all the time, but it means your eye, the very sensitive part of your eye. It talks about being in a howling, you know, desert windstorm, a dust storm. And it talks about God will shield you, protect you, like the apple of his eye. You can see that in an ancient Near Eastern picture with the headscarves and all that covering the eyes in the midst of a wind storm.

"He found you in a desert land, in a howling waste in a wilderness; he encircled you, he cared for you, he kept you as the apple of his eye." All I'm saying is God takes the betrayal in your life personally. It doesn't mean he's not going to let any sand get in your eyes, because he certainly will, he let some sand get in Jesus' eyes. His name was Judas. He let Ahithophel get into David's circle and betray him. He's going to let betrayers get into your life. But don't think God is sitting there dispassionate about your pain. He'd like you to bring your complaint to him. Just don't bring it to everyone else. He'd like you not, in your perplexity, to despair. And he wants you to know in time he's going to take care of these issues. Trust him. Isn't that how this ends? What great words to end with. Verse 23, "But," even all these things and whenever God does it, it's not resolved but I'm trusting God, "I will trust in you."

Flying back from a speaking engagement somewhere and it was a long trip, I had multiple stops. I was at the airport, dropped off the rental car. It was one of those big rental car complexes where you, you know, have all the buses and, you know, all these cars. It's like half a mile or a mile from the airport where everyone has to go to get a rental car. I returned the rental car and there's like underground where you finally had to get your shuttle to the airport terminal. And I came out, had luggage because it was a long trip, I had my carry on. I come out of the door and I think, fantastic, it was right out of the door, here was a shuttle bus and the doors were open and it was great. I walked right into it, right off the curb, threw my stuff, my heavy luggage into the luggage rack, plopped down into the chair. I thought good, I got a good seat, it's right by the door, fantastic.



And I sat there. And I sat there. And I finally stood up and looked to see, realized no one else is in this bus, and there's no bus driver in the seat. I was embarrassed. I looked around, look through the windows of the bus, realized that you had to cross the street to get into the shuttle buses that were actually going somewhere. So I sheepishly took my luggage out, went across the street, got to that curb. I don't know why they do that but there it was, got in that one, looked to make sure there was a bus driver. There was a bus driver, threw my luggage in there, the doors eventually closed and off to the terminal I went.

The intuitive response to us being betrayed is to get really angry, to share our anger with people, to vindictively build an alliance, to think that somehow I got to tell the story and I got to finish and settle the score myself. I mean, that's the open door. You walk out of your painful season of betrayal, you want to get in that bus. It's right there. Everyone else is getting in it, the problem is there's no bus driver there. It's going nowhere. You're vindictive, vengeful, angry, complaining feelings about your Judas and your Ahithophel, it doesn't work, it doesn't do anything. Stop talking about it. Get in the right bus, sit down, shut up and let the bus driver take you where he wants to take you. It may not happen on your schedule but you've got to trust him. And stop talking about it to everyone. Trust the Lord. Take those last six words, "But I will trust in you." And say, that's my mantra. I may pray some things I wouldn't want to publish in a hymnal about my betrayers. But I'm directing that complaint and I'm moaning in my pain to God. I'm not derailed by it, I'm not surprised by it. Jesus had his, David had his, I have mine. I'm not going to be dissuaded. Trust in the Lord. He'll figure this out.

Let's pray. God, help us in a day of betrayal that some must be going through right now, I'm sure. And if it's not today it'll be tomorrow, next week, next year. But surely I'm not naive to think that all of us don't have our stories of betrayal. We do. We need to learn to handle it properly. God forgive us for all of our blathering about our enemies. The enemies who hurt the worst are the ones who were close to us, who walked with us in the throng in church. God let us stop talking, thinking that that sharing and building alliance is going to make all the pain go away, all the anger subsides. It doesn't. Help us to trust you. You said vengeance is yours. You'll repay we hope. Instead, we can graciously pray for repentance and people to change and fear God. But even in our frustration to know that you will fix the problem. Let us be trust-filled people, people who really have faith and confidence in you, a God who sees all. Give us a better perspective and a better attitude and better words as we learn to be gracious and love as you do. God, thank you for this reminder from your Word. Let it be a great template for us as we experience the betrayal in our lives.

In Jesus name, Amen.