

A Song of Betrayal

Psalm 54: 1-7

Our text is a psalm of David set to music. There is a footnote to this psalm: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth." The word *neginoth* means "smitings." There are eight psalms which have this note attached, and they all contain a record of deliverance from personal smitings. ⁱ

Scholars agree this psalm was written while David was fleeing for his life from King Saul. He is hiding in the wilderness of Ziph, seeking to escape the wrath of the king. Like David, the Ziphites were of the tribe of Judah, and yet they chose to betray David's location to Saul. In fact, they betrayed David on two separate occasions – [1 Samuel 23:19-23; 26:1-3](#). Thus, one can rightly discern that this is a song dealing with betrayal.

Unfortunately, many have dealt with betrayal at some point in life. While this psalm records the Ziphites' betrayal of David, we also know that Jesus was betrayed by one of His own, for thirty pieces of silver. Betrayal brings great hurt and confusion because it often comes through those we loved and trusted, those we least expect.

As we examine the [disclosures](#) of David, I want to consider this: [Song of Betrayal](#). Hopefully we can gain some insight and wisdom when faced with a similar situation.

I. The Urgency of his Situation (1-2) – David opens this psalm by revealing the urgency of this desperate situation. He had been betrayed by those he thought he could trust, and his place of hiding had been revealed to the one who sought his life. We discover:

A. An Urgent Request (1) – [Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength](#). David was simply following the plan and will of God for his life. He had been anointed by Samuel to replace Saul as king of Israel. Following the anointing, David had remained loyal to Saul, seeking to defend Israel and serve the king. However, he found himself hunted like an animal and betrayed by his own countrymen. He cried out for God to save him and judge him according to His strength.

- I have never been forced to flee for my life from an enemy, but I have dealt with situations that God alone could handle. We all face situations that require the help of the Lord. In those moments we know we can depend on Him to meet our needs and provide security!

B. A Dependent Request (2) – [Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth](#). David faced a situation that required the Lord's help; he was dependent on God to deliver him.

- I am certain we all have faced situations when we cried out in desperation, totally dependent upon the Lord to meet our need. We were unable to resolve the situation and prayer was our only hope. I am thankful the Lord hears the cries of His children. Even when we can't find the words to express our grief, the Spirit knows and carries them into the Lord's presence!
[Rom.8:26 – Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.](#)

II. The Reality of his Situation (3-5) – Here David offered a few details about the situation he faced. He mentioned:

A. The Iniquity of the Wicked (3) – [For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.](#) The Ziphites did not know David personally and yet they chose to betray him unto Saul. Likely seeking to gain favor from Saul, they sought David's defeat. David declared these men acted in wickedness, not setting God or His will before them. They acted out of personal desire rather than in righteousness.

- We too live in a world consumed with wickedness. The majority do not know the Lord and have no desire to serve Him. In fact, they seek to hinder the church and despise the Gospel. They stand against all that is right and good in favor of that which satisfies the flesh.

B. The Sovereignty of the Lord (4-5) – While David admitted he faced a wicked adversary, he also knew that he served a sovereign Lord, one on whom he could depend to provide in his times of need. David was aware of:

1. God's Power (4a) – [Behold, God is mine helper.](#) David had been betrayed by his own men of Judah, and the King of Israel sought his life. However, David was not in total despair. These were mere men, limited in power and ability. David served the Lord and knew that God was his helper, the defender of his life. What was there to fear as long as God was on his side? [Psalm 27:1 – The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?](#) [Isaiah 51:7 – Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.](#)

2. God's Presence (4b) – [the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.](#) David was greatly outnumbered when one considered the forces of Saul and the desire of the Ziphites, and yet he knew God was on his side. He realized the Lord was with him and He was with those who desired to help him.

Those who supported David were not in the majority in Judah, but they had the Lord there to lead and protect them!

- We all have struggles in life. At times these can be overwhelming, but regardless of how difficult our lives may be, we have comfort knowing that the Lord is always near to us. He will always provide the strength we need, upholding us in the darkest of hours. [Isaiah 41:10 – Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.](#) [Rom.8:31 – What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?](#)

3. God's Perfection (5) – [He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.](#) David faced evil at the hands of his enemies, and yet he knew the Lord would always deal righteously and justly with all men. He trusted the Lord to deal with his enemies according to His divine character. The Lord would reward those who walked uprightly and bring judgment upon the wicked. God would handle the situation according to His will.

- We live in a world that has blurred the lines of right and wrong. In fact, many today call evil good and good, evil. Those apart from God are consumed in wickedness, living to gratify the flesh and advance their humanistic agenda. We can rest knowing the Lord is just and right in all His dealings. He will provide for the righteous and deal accordingly with the wicked.

III. The Beauty of his Appreciation (6-7) – As David closed this song of betrayal, he chose to offer praise unto the Lord rather than focusing solely on the deceit of his enemies. Consider:

A. The Sacrifice of Praise (6) – [I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for *it is* good.](#) The Ziphites, and even King Saul, sought to advance their personal agendas, seeking prominence and prosperity through their efforts and abilities. They did not seek to honor the Lord or worship Him. David was committed to offering sacrifices and praise unto the Lord. God had been gracious to him, and David knew the Lord was worthy of his praise. In the midst of his adversity, David found peace and rest through worship.

- No doubt, this was a busy and very hectic time for David, and yet he made time to worship the Lord. We live busy lives, often finding it difficult to accomplish everything we desire. Unfortunately, time spent with the Lord in worship, prayer, and Bible study are often neglected in favor of something we have been convinced is more pressing. Like David, regardless of the situation, or the busyness in our lives, we need to make time for worship and praise. God has been good to each of us, and He is certainly worthy of our praise!

B. The Satisfaction in Providence (7) – *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.* Although David had been betrayed by his countrymen and hunted by the King, he knew God had never forsaken him. The Lord was there in his times of need, faithfully delivering him from all his trouble. David was well satisfied with the providential care of God. He knew the Lord would continue to meet his needs and guide his life according to His sovereign will. The world may have been against him, but David rested in the providence of a loving God who possessed unlimited power and wisdom.

- We all have situations that bring hurt and disappointment. Likely you have felt betrayed by a close friend, or abandoned when you needed them most. There is no need to worry about such disappointment with the Lord. He is always faithful to those within the body of Christ. His ways are always right, and His care for us never wavers. Like David, we can rest in the divine providence of the Lord. He died on the cross for our sin, rose again for our justification and life, has gone away to prepare an eternal home for us, and will return in power to receive us unto Himself. We are secure within His providential care!

Conclusion: This psalm was written during a difficult time for David, and yet it is more positive than negative in tone. David had been betrayed, forced to deal with hurt and disappointment, but he rested in the provision of the Lord. We too can rest in our Lord's grace and provision regardless of the situations we face. He is faithful to provide and the saved by grace are secure in Him. If there are needs, especially regarding salvation, come to Christ for the hope and help you need.

ⁱ John Phillips Commentary Series, The - The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Psalms, Volume One: An Expository Commentary.