

Psalm 54 The Sin of Betrayal

by Pastor Roy Hogan

Psalm 54 is another of the Psalm spoken by God to David. Once again, a problem in David's life is being addressed. David was a man of many troubles. He was hunted as a fugitive by Saul. Many times, he seemed only a step away from death. He must have felt like a game bird being sought for food.

The sin of betrayed seems to have a special, harsh sting. Many of God's children has experienced the sting of betrayal. One can be as nice as possible to someone only to have that person betray them. Brothers and sisters in Christ betray one another. As a minister, you can bury their dead, marry their young, and hold their hand through the valley of sickness only to see them turn on you and go another direction. The sin of betrayal is rampant in the family of God.

Earthly families experience the sin of betrayal. Brothers and sisters betray one another. Children turn on their parents who birthed them into this world, clothed them, educated them, and put a roof over their head. Co-workers in the workplace sting one another with sin of betrayal.

Betrayal is a sin- let that sink into your mind and heart. To turn your back on someone who has been your friend and has helped you is a SIN. There is little loyalty in this wicked society. The root of betrayal is usually greed. Betrayal usually happens when someone is seeking gain for themselves.

This Psalm reflects back to an experience David had in I Samuel 23. The Philistines had invaded the city of Keilah. The Philistines were stealing the food of the people from off the threshing floor (I Samuel 23:1). Word came to David of the Philistines invasion of Keilah. He inquired of the Lord as to whether he and his men should go and defend Keilah. The Lord advised David to go to their defense. He and his men went and drove the wicked Philistines out of the city.

This is good news. However, there is bad news. Someone, likely from Keilah, leaked information to Saul as to David's whereabouts for we read in I Samuel 23:7 *And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.* Someone had betrayed David by telling Saul that David and his men were in the city of Keilah. If Saul could catch David and his men inside a walled city, he could destroy them. The question becomes "How does someone who has been rescued from a wicked enemy betray the person who saved them?" This is an example of the sin of betrayal.

There is another instance in the same chapter, I Samuel 23, of betrayal. David and his men left the city of Keilah and went into the wilderness of Ziph. The Ziphites, who were of the same tribe as was David, went running to Saul and reported David's whereabouts. This we read in 1Sa 23:19 *Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?*

The sin of betrayal stung David at other occasions. It is well that we recall the betrayal of his son, Absalom. How could one's son rise up in a spirit of betrayal and seek to dethrone his own father?

54:1

Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

I am glad we serve a God of awesome ability. When the sting of betrayal comes, we have God on our side. David is in need of help. Saul is on his trail hunting him as one would hunt a partridge. He asked for salvation in the plea *Save me*. David's army is outnumbered. David has 600 men and Saul has 3000 men. In such an hour of being greatly outnumbered, he goes to the highest source of strength. He appeals to God.

We know God is more than a three-letter word comprised of three characters from the English alphabet. When we call on God, we

invoke his name, and his name speaks of his character, that is, *all that he is*. He is God of creation. He is God of covenant. He is God of control. God, who possessed the ability to place galaxies in the universe, is not afraid of Saul and his puny three-thousand-man army. God, who hung the heavens as a curtain, is not afraid of Saul. God is not afraid of the worst of disease, such as cancer. Darkness does not scare him.

David calls on God to exert himself on his behalf and on behalf of himself and his men. God plus one is a majority. Elijah plus God, and that makes two, withstood the man of God being outnumbered 850-to-1 on Mt Carmel. We serve the same God today. We sometimes lose sight of his strength.

David asked that God *judge* him. Is David worthy of God's deliverance? Has David betrayed God in some fashion? I appreciate David's honesty. God will only help the person who comes clean with him. Do not call on God for help in time of trouble if you have a hidden agenda displeasing to God.

54:2

Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

Once, while riding a jet several miles above the earth, the jet hit a very turbulent condition. The flight had been so smooth I had dozed off. Suddenly, and without notice, the aircraft began to shake. Fear and uncertainly gripped my heart. It was a most helpless feeling. I could not call anyone. I could not consult a book of instruction. I certainly could not jump out. Unlike a passenger bus, there was no chain by the window to pull to notify the driver to stop and let you off. I realized at that moment how helpless I was. My life was suddenly in the hands of another.

David had no one he could call. He could not signal for help from his bosom friend, Jonathan, son of the king. I do not know where his family was at this moment of despair. He had a strong father and several brothers, but there was no way to reach them. However, he could call on God, the one and only Jehovah God. God can be

reached any time from any place and under any conditions. Once, a man was trapped in the belly of a great fish. He called on God, and God responded.

At this time in David's life, Saul is nearing his last days in seeking to capture David. I believe Saul knew his days of hunting David were near an end. He has the heat set on high, much like the king did when the three Hebrew boys were thrown in the fiery furnace.

54:3

For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.

Betrayal seems always to come with more questions than answers. The nature of betrayers is difficult to understand. How can a generous person understand the doings of a thief who steals from them? How can a forgiving person understand one who is spiteful and revengeful? How can an honest man understand a deceiver?

Yes, betrayal brings more questions than answers. David says "for strangers are risen up against me." Who are these people? Are they from Mars? What are they thinking? Why did they do this to me? I do not even know them. I have been in the place of David, to a degree. Once I was attacked by flesh and blood. Suddenly, folk I grew up with I did not even know. A feeling came over me which caused me to say "I do not know these people."

David's oppressors sought after his soul. They did not want any wealth he may have had. They did not want his weapons. They want his life. The Ziphites not only secretly told Saul of David's hiding place in the forest, they promised Saul they would see to it that David was delivered into his hand. David classifies his oppressors as having *not set God before them*. You are in for an experience you will never forget when godless people rise up against you.

54:4

Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.

We gather from this verse that God can and will help us in time of need. *God is mine helper*. How God solves problems and provides help in time of need is beyond the understanding of man. We simply put our faith in him to provide the help needed. The Ziphites had secretly told Saul of David's whereabouts. However, God was ahead of the enemy as he always is. *The Lord is with them that uphold my soul*. As God does in this situation in David's life, he uses others to help his children in need. Just as the Ziphites were revealing to Saul David's secret hiding place, God sent a friend to David. The friend was Saul's son, Jonathan. Jonathan came to David in his hiding place and explained to David all David needed to know about the scheme of the Ziphites.

Truly, God is ahead of the enemy. God moved on Jonathan to, as the verse states, *uphold my soul*. In time of trouble in your like, has God sent a friend to rescue your soul?

54:5

He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

The act of betrayal is a sin and is an evil act according to his verse. Be very careful before you choose to betray someone. God will get even. He will render evil for evil. Happy will be the day when all betrayers are ridded from the earth by the coming of our Lord from glory to the earth. *He shall cut them off in thy truth*. God's ultimate weapon is truth. Truth will stand when the world is on fire. What is truth, one may say? Truth is everything God is, does, and says. *Let God be true and every man a liar*, Romans 3:4.

In the meanwhile, pray for patience. Have you been betrayed before? If you have not, you are blessed. I predict you will be betrayed at least one time before you leave this earth. A friend, a family member, a politician, or someone you depended on will ring your bell. Psalm 118:8 reads *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man*.

54:6

I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good.

Most children of God know someone who has turned their back on God in an hour of betrayal. In a time of being mistreated, they departed from walking with God. David did not. I greatly admire David. Amidst the betrayal of the Ziphites, he found a reason to worship God. No one could worship God quite like David could. One reason he can be classified a champion worshipper is that he worshipped even in difficult times. What would my attitude be if I was placed in the situation David was in? Would I have the spirit, the will-power, or the faith to find a place to bow before Jehovah God and worship him? Your best friend just betrayed you, and you are going to bow and worship the Lamb of God? This is contrary to the human spirit.

54:7

For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

This story of betrayal in David's life has a good ending. He says: *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble.* Saul rushed down to the wilderness of Ziph once the Ziphites leaked the betraying news of David's whereabouts to him. The following verses record the unusual victory God provided to David and his army:

I Samuel 23:23-29 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah. 24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. 25 Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. 26 And Saul went

on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. 27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. 28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth. 29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.

Saul's victory party got interrupted. God can grant victory in ways man cannot imagine. Poised to take David and his men, a messenger told Saul "Saul, you had better get back home. The Philistines are taking your people, land and possessions. Oh well, God wins again and Saul loses.

The sin of betrayal- don't be found guilty.