

When Trouble Comes Knocking On Your Door

Psalm 54

Introduction: 1) Betrayal is a cruel enemy, but a friend in a time of need is a friend indeed. David knew betrayal from King Saul. He knew friendship from Saul's son, Jonathan. And he knew a Savior in the Lord God who raised him up and appointed him as His servant and chosen vessel.

2) Psalm 54 is a part of a group of 4 Psalms (Pss. 52-55) in which David prayed for the Lord's deliverance when he was being hunted by Saul.

3) The background of Psalm 54, a prayer for deliverance from one's enemies as well as a prayer of confidence, is found in 1 Samuel 23 which we will read to get the historical context of this song. [Read 1 Sam. 23]

4) 1 Samuel 23 then gives us the historical record and the events. Psalm 54 provides for us psychological and spiritual insight into the thinking of David. What on the surface did not seem to trouble David terribly, was actually an occasion for deep concern and emotional trauma.

Transition: David is pursued like an animal. A friend has become an enemy. There are those who will give him up in a moment to further their own agenda. Many of us can identify with David to the last detail. What was his response? What can we learn from him when we find ourselves in a similar situation, when trouble comes knocking on your door?

I. Call on the Lord. 54:1-3

David begins where we all should begin when trouble is knocking at our door. He flees to His God. Ultimately he knows if God does not deliver him then he has no hope. Our lives are in God's hand as the sovereign Lord of the universe. He is in control of the details, the moments of our lives. What can this Lord do?

1) The Lord can save you. 54:1

- Salvation in this context is temporal not eternal.
- The plea is deeply personal: "Save me!"
- David appeals to the character and nature of his God, denoted by the phrase "Your name." This God is righteous and just. He will do the right thing. He will do what is good, what is best. His name stands for all He is, who He is and what He has done. Exodus 34:6-7 informs us, "And the Lord passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation" (NKJV). David's God, our God, He is great and glorious, mighty and majestic, righteous and just, the sovereign of the universe. This is a God who can save.

2) The Lord can vindicate you. 54:1

- That David has primarily in mind the righteousness and justice of God is borne out by the term “vindicate.” He places his reputation, hope and confidence in God. God will prove us to be men and women of integrity and authenticity, and He will do it by His strength, His might, His power. [Note the use and repetition of the word “Your”].
- Paul reminds all of us who are in Christ, “If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31). “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies (Rom. 8:33). Yes, God can vindicate us.

3) The Lord can hear you. 54:2-3

- Verse 2 is a beautiful example of Hebrew parallelism as the 2nd line complements and reinforces the 1st. The same is true for verse 3 (a verse nearly identical to Ps. 86:14), though it contains a 3rd line providing something of a summary judgment or indictment of the evil persons who seek to do harm to David.
- David pleads with the Lord 1) hear my prayer and 2) give ear to the words of my mouth. He prays out loud and with his voice. This is not for show, but comes from a desperate and sincere heart.
- David identifies his enemies as strangers and oppressors (HCSB, “*violent men*”). They are not friends, and their character and behavior is that of violence and destruction. They have risen up and became emboldened. They feel empowered to go after David. And their goal? To take his life. They want him out of the picture, out of the way, they want to be done with him.
 - They will use intimidation.
 - They will use betrayal.
 - They will use flattery.
 - They will use bribery.
 - By any means necessary, evil men will do what they have to, to get rid of a man of God.
- Their motive? God is not before them. (NLT: “They care nothing for God; HCSB: “They have no regard for God.”) They do not respect the man of God because they do not respect God. If they care nothing for God, why would they care for you?
- Jesus reminds all of His disciples, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18). People who hate us have a much deeper problem: hatred of God.

II. Trust in the Lord. 54:4-5

David prays in confidence (vs. 1-2) because he knows who God is and what He will do (vs. 4-5). You see we call on someone we trust, and David trusted His God, His Lord (v. 4).

1) **The Lord is your helper.** 54:4

- This is the center verse of this psalm and its apex or climax. It is a great affirmation of confidence in God. **Behold**, look, see, “God a helper to me, *Adonai* [is] with the upholders of my soul.” (lit. reading). Is it implied that one means by which God sustains us is thru others, like a Jonathan?! At times the Lord’s help comes through humanity instrumentality. Prov. 17:17, “A friend loves at all times” and Prov. 18:24, “There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”
- As David’s helper, “the Lord is the sustainer of my life” (*HCSB*). The *NLT* says it this way: “But God is my helper. The Lord is the one who keeps me alive!”
- We are made by Him and we are sustained (maintained) by Him. From beginning to end our life is in the hands of the one we can call our helper. He’s got the whole world in His hands! “He’s got you and me sister/brother in His hands.” What a joy! What a blessing! What a comfort. “I am immoral til my task on earth is finished!” (Lottie Moon)

2) **The Lord is your avenger.** 54:5

- Paul taught the Roman church “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Rom. 13:19). This principle is rooted in Old Testament text like Deut. 32:35; Psalm 94:1, and Psalm 54:5.
- With continued confidence in the justice and righteousness of God, David says, as we should say, “He [the Lord] will repay my enemies for their evil.” In other words, God will take care of business. I will leave the matter in His hands.
- Now, David is not hesitant to express his mind on the matter:
NKJV: “Cut them off in your truth.”
“Destroy them in Your faithfulness.” (marginal reading)
HCSB: “Because of your faithfulness, annihilate them.”
NIV: “Let evil recoil on those who slander me; in your faithfulness destroy them.”
- David “wants their blood”, but he will leave it to God to make the call.

Transition: We must trust the Lord.

III. **Worship the Lord.** 54:6-7

David’s heart is at peace and his soul at rest. He has cried to the Lord and committed the whole matter to the Lord. Now there is only one thing left to do: worship. David’s worship takes a 2-fold nature.

1) **Sacrifice to the Lord.** 54:6

- David pledges to make a “freewill offering to the Lord”, an offering explained in Leviticus 3&7. It was offered willingly, voluntarily. Also called a “fellowship offering,” it was an offering or sacrifice made from a grateful heart for deliverance from sickness, trouble or death, or even for a blessing

received. David had experienced God's rescue from trouble and death, and in response He worships the Lord with sacrifice.

- Romans 12:1 addresses the proper sacrifices for the one who has experienced "the mercies of God" and deliverance from the penalty and power of sin, death and the grave by the blood atonement of Jesus. We are to "present our bodies as a living sacrifice."

2) **Praise the Lord.** **54:6-7**

David now moves to worship the Lord verbally, with His mouth. He cannot and will not remain silent.

- He will praise the Lord's name, His character, and in particular, His goodness.
- The evidence of His goodness is clear and powerful. First, He has delivered me out of all ("every") trouble. Second, we have seen what He has done to our enemies. The *NIV* translates v. 7b, "my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes." They meant me harm but God turned it back on them. He did it. He did it all. "I will praise your name."

Conclusion: Trouble came to our family in 1984. Those that we believed were our friends worked behind our backs betraying us and lying about us. Our place in ministry came to an end. It all seemed so unfair. However, God was our Savior and vindicator, our helper and sustainer. We did our best to walk in integrity and by faith, and God showed Himself strong, and lavishly gracious. He started us on a path that would eventually bring us to where we are today, a part of this wonderful church and serving the finest seminary anywhere. We have learned that trouble will come knocking. It is inevitable. That's the way life is. So, when you hear its rapping at your door: Call on the Lord; Trust in the Lord, and Worship the Lord. He has a purpose. He is working out His plan for His glory and for our good.