

# Small Group Resource Guide

Jan 19-21, 2021

*Psalm 55*

## Ice Breaker: (5)

How did you see God working over Christmas and the New Year? Is there an area you trusted him with?

## Pray and read this introductory information: (4-5 min)

As for historical context, we are unsure exactly what the circumstances of this Psalm are. While some believe it is in response to David's son, Absalom's, betrayal, others question this. In terms of literary context, Psalm 55 is the final of three Psalms by David sharing times when he was betrayed. In Psalm 52, he is betrayed by Doeg, a foreigner. In 54, he is betrayed by enemies in his own country. But here in 55, he is betrayed by a trusted friend. This is the betrayal that undoes him and, for the first time, drives him to wish to flee from his life and responsibilities. Yet in 56, he shares the depth of his trust in God who keeps his tears in a bottle. So how does he go from being so terrified that he wishes to flee to such confident trust in God that he perseveres? This is the question we can answer by digging into 55. *Read Psalm 55 aloud.*

## Exploration: (25 min)

1. Compare each of these sets of passages then answer any questions below. Is there a change in emotion? Perspective? What he asks God to do? Do you notice any words or phrases that could explain the changes?

1-3: Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan, because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

16-18: But I call to God, and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.

4-8: My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, "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; (*Selah*) I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest."

22-23: Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.

<p>9-11,15: Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues;* for I see violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it; ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace....Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.</p>	<p>19: God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, (<i>Selah</i>) because they do not change** and do not fear God.</p>
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*If you haven't already, consider the different ways David describes the wicked in these two sections. What is their heart condition and how does it manifest?*

*\*This language comes from the Babel account in Gen 11:1-9*

*\*\*Commentators are divided on whether the text says God doesn't change or the wicked don't change.*

<p>12-14: For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me— then I could hide from him. But it is <b>you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend</b>. We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.</p>	<p>20-22: My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant. His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.</p>
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*What do you notice about how David addresses his betrayer (in bold)? Does this make you think of anyone else in Scripture?*

*In 20-22 David steps back from the personal betrayal to consider the heart of the betrayer. What does he find?*

- Looking at the full passage, where do you find the **shift**? What clues did you use to find it? What is David shifting from and to?

### **Putting It All Together (15-20min)**

- Big Idea:** What's the big idea of the passage? What is David emphasizing *most*? Does the shift point to the big idea or help focus it? How does David go from wishing to flee and abandon his kingdom to persevering and trusting God? It's okay to disagree!
- Gospel Connection:** Take your big idea (or one of them) and explore how it connects to Jesus. You might:
  - Ask how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection connects, changes, or adds to it. You may consider how Jesus' experience mirrored David's (Mt 26; Jn 13, 18).
  - Ask what we know about the big idea that David wouldn't have known fully.
  - Look at New Testament passages using cross references (1 Peter 5:6-8; 2:23-25) or the concordance at the back of your Bible which gives you verses related to key words/ideas.

3. **Application:** What applications can you draw from your work in the text?. Start with applications that flow from your big idea and work towards the more peripheral ones. You might ask these questions:
- How does this passage prepare us to walk through betrayal? What comfort can we find in it for past betrayals?
  - What does this teach me about God?
  - How does this change my view of myself?
  - What should I do in response?
  - Why is this required response difficult to do?

**Wrap-up Video: (10 min)**

**Optional Reflection: (5 min)**

Journal about a time in your life that you felt betrayed by a friend or trusted person in your life. If you cannot think of a personal betrayal, consider someone you thought you knew well but who turned out to be a hypocrite. How did you feel? Were you able to trust God? How can trusting God continue your healing or change how you interact with that person going forward?

**Prayer Requests: (15 min)**

**FOR FURTHER STUDY**

**Further Reflection**

In what ways has God shown himself trustworthy in your life?

**Further Study**

Look at Genesis 11:1-9. This passage shares some language regarding how God deals with the wicked. Does this add anything to your understanding of the nature of the wicked and the nature of God's judgment?

Explore Christ's treatment of the righteous and the wicked in Mt 10:28-33; Mk 12:1-11; James 4:12; Heb 2:13-18.

**Further Encouragement**

Read about Jesus's heart for his friends in John 11:1-44.

**Further Worship**

Listen to [What a Friend We Have in Jesus](#)