

Grief that Goes Somewhere

Week 8: Lament in Holy Week, Psalm 55

Introduction

→ What griefs did Jesus endure on his path towards the cross?

Part 1: Reading the Psalm

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David.

¹ Listen to my prayer, O God,
do not ignore my plea;

² hear me and answer me.

My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught

³ because of what my enemy is saying,
because of the threats of the wicked;
for they bring down suffering on me
and assail me in their anger.

⁴ My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen on me.

⁵ Fear and trembling have beset me;
horror has overwhelmed me.

⁶ I said, "Oh, that I had the wings [like] a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.

⁷ I would flee far away
and stay in the desert;

⁸ I would hurry to my place of shelter,
far from the tempest and storm."

⁹ Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words,
for I see violence and strife in the city.

¹⁰ Day and night they prowl about on its walls;
malice and abuse are within it.

¹¹ Destructive forces are at work in the city;
threats and lies never leave its streets.

¹² If an enemy were insulting me,
I could endure it;

if a foe were rising against me,
I could hide.

¹³ But it is you, a man like myself,

my companion, my close friend,
¹⁴ with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship
at the house of God,
as we walked about
among the worshipers.

¹⁵ Let death take my enemies by surprise;
let them go down alive to the realm of the dead,
for evil finds lodging among them.

¹⁶ As for me, I call to God,
and the Lord saves me.

¹⁷ Evening, morning and noon
I cry out in distress,
and he hears my voice.

¹⁸ He rescues me unharmed
from the battle waged against me,
even though many oppose me.

¹⁹ God, who is enthroned from of old,
who does not change—
he will hear them and humble them,
because they have no fear of God.

²⁰ My companion attacks his friends;
he violates his covenant.

²¹ His talk is smooth as butter,
yet war is in his heart;
his words are more soothing than oil,
yet they are drawn swords.

²² Cast your cares on the Lord
and he will sustain you;
he will never let
the righteous be shaken.

²³ But you, God, will bring down the wicked
into the pit of decay;
the bloodthirsty and deceitful
will not live out half their days.

But as for me, I trust in you.

Part 2: Interpreting the Psalm

- What elements of lament do you see?
- What is the Psalmist experiencing (feeling)? and why?
- How does the Psalmist want to react to what he is experiencing? How does the Psalmist want God to react?
- Where is the “turning point” of this Psalm?
- What does the Psalmist assert about his enemies?
- What does the Psalmist assert about God?
- What is the final posture of the Psalmist toward God? What enables him to make that shift?
- What resonates with you? What bothers you? What puzzles you?

Part 3: Applying the Psalm

In betrayal or when facing opposition, this Psalm encourages us towards...

- Ceaseless prayer
- A change in focus / leaving others to God

How did Jesus do these things on the way to the cross?

Are there situations in your life where the Spirit might be asking you to do these things too?