

# River Community Church

## Daily Devotionals Oct 10 - Oct 14 2016

Knowing and Loving God and Making God's  
Love Known to Others

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## Day 1 Psalm 55 Devotional

### Pray

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

### Read

Psalm 55:1-5

“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.”

### Understand

In Psalm 55, David is in complete dismay at the betrayal he is experiencing. He is struggling with the fact that some of his closest and intimate friends have just turned against him. Though we don't know who David is speaking about, the events outlined in this Psalm are very similar to the rebellion of David's own son Absalom and David's most trusted advisor Ahithophel. Imagine the emotions running through David's mind!

Well...we don't have to imagine, because David is describing for us the condition of his heart. He finds himself in an unbelievably bad place; he is filled with fear, anguish, and horror! The word “anguish” means writhe. Picture someone lying on the floor writhing in pain-this is where David finds himself. He's becoming weak in his waiting; he is paralyzed emotionally and physically. We can't miss how deep-seeded his fear is.

But notice this...in the opening line, we see David's desperate cry to God! He's saying to God “Don't ignore me; hear me, answer me. I'm troubled and distraught!” The fear David's experiencing has beaten him up both physically and emotionally, yet he is asking God to listen to him, to hear him, and to answer him. David's prayer flows out of deep despair, but ultimately his prayer flows out of his confidence in the Lord! Even though he may not understand what is going on, he knows that God is sovereign. David is confident that God is aware of his situation.

### Apply

Fear is a part of life, but there is a right way and a wrong way to respond to it. Some people try to weather the storm by pulling themselves up by the bootstraps and acting as though nothing is wrong. They live believing that if they act as if there is no fear, then somehow they will be free from the effects of the fear. This approach is wrong; it's foolish!

A better approach would be to look to David's response to the fear he faced. David's heart was full of fear... and rightly so! But notice what he does...he admits it. He has no problem expressing all of his feelings to God and takes his fears directly to the Lord.

Fear can grip our heart in many different ways. It doesn't have to be as dire a situation as David found himself in. It could be an everyday fear that is a nagging sense of uncertainty. Maybe it causes you to start running all the "what if" questions through your mind? "What if" I lose my Job? "What if" my spouse dies? "What if" I never get married? And on and on it goes. We begin to see just how much we really don't control in our life. We can find that soon these "little fears" become all consuming! They may even cause us to turn in toward ourselves as a form of protection. This leaves us feeling more alone and isolated, which leads to more fear. It is an endless cycle we can't afford to live in. So what do we do?

In the midst of the storm and fear, we should do like David and admit our fear to the Lord. We come back to a proper perspective when we turn to the Lord and give Him all our troubles. We remember that despite our situation, there is One who is all-powerful and all-knowing. He alone is omnipresent and omnipotent. Our current fears will shrink when focused on the One who has the power of life and death.

Jesus understood how fear can grip our hearts at times. Listen to His thoughts on fear and who He said we should fear. "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him." (Luke 12:5)

Even though David wasn't around to hear Jesus's words, Psalms illustrates that he lived them out.

So, what are you afraid of?

Have you shared those fears with God? If not, would you stop right now and let Him know what makes you fearful?

Remember that you are never alone. No matter where you are, there is nowhere you could go and escape His presence. So, turn to Him right now. Ask Him to help you learn from David how to handle your fear.

## **Live**

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.)

Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

## Day 2 Psalm 55 Devotional

### Pray

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

### Read

Psalm 55:6-11

“6 I said, “Oh, that I had the wings of 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.”

### Understand

Fear can evoke a desire for us to run from danger. We often call this fear the “fight or flight” response.

In this passage, David says “Oh that I had the wings of a dove!” David wants out of this scary situation...if only he could just fly away!

I can imagine David walking around and trying to come to grips with the fear he was experiencing. As he walks, he finds himself coming upon some pigeons in his path. As he gets closer and closer, they just stand there on the ground. Maybe he begins to think, “Are you going to move?” Maybe he even thinks, “Dumb birds, don't you know I can squash you.” It's not until he is just right upon them that they lift off the ground and settle just out of reach on a rock that perches out from the side of a hill. I can hear him saying to himself, “Man, it must be nice to be able to fly away from danger, to so easily escape. If only I could do the same.”

### Apply

When fear grips us, we often feel the same as David. We want to get out of the situation...the quicker the better.

But notice where David is? He's in the city and he stays in the city. He doesn't flee from the fearful situation; he chooses to stand. In the midst of his storm, he is choosing to stay and draw close to God. David is focused on God as his fixed navigation point and He is determined to live life by the objective reality of God. He's not going to navigate life based on his fears.

So what do you do when fear, in all of its different shapes and sizes, comes into your life?

It's normal to want to flee from situations that produce fear and anxiety, so the bigger question for us is...what are we choosing to navigate these life situations by?

What would it take for you to navigate with Christ as your fixed point?

What can you learn from David when you're faced with these types of situations?

## **Live**

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.)

Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

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## Day 3 Psalm 55 Devotional

### Pray

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

### Read

Psalm 55:12-15

“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.”

### Understand

Once again we see David crying out to the Lord in his pain and fear. The unrest he finds under this circumstance now brings tremendous pain; he's perplexed by the situation. Rather than run, he turns to God and voices his emotions.

David has been betrayed-not just by anyone, but by a trusted friend-and it has caused him great pain! David can't understand how such a faithful companion could turn on him so completely. He could understand the situation if it were a known enemy he was facing, but this is one of his most trusted friends. David tells us that he has even joined with this man in “sweet fellowship” and worship of the Lord.

David wants justice to be given out, but he chooses to take his anger about the injustice to the Lord. He speaks honestly with God, telling Him about his fears, his pain, and his anger. He knows God is sovereign.

### Apply

You and I know that nothing can hurt us more than the wounds of a friend. I can remember a time I was betrayed by another person in a prior work experience. I shared some frustrations I had, letting him know how exasperated I was with a situation. I opened up to this person and I trusted them to keep it to themselves.

Before the day was over, I was called into my boss's office and berated over my frustrations I had just vocalized hours earlier to my friend. I was hurt deeply; I didn't know how to respond. I was stunned that he would go straight to my boss and share what I had said. My emotions went from fear to anger to worry to shame and to sadness. I'd like to tell you that I responded like David and called out to the Lord, but I didn't. I wanted to make things right on my own; I turned inward to myself instead of turning toward

God.

I never plan to find myself in a situation like that again! If I do, though, I hope that I would respond like David and turn to God first. My hope is that I would be honest with my emotions and openly share with God all the feelings I am experiencing.

So what about you? Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? What was your first reaction?

What would God have you do?

Why don't you pray to God right now...acknowledging His goodness and thanking Him for his grace and mercy?

Now ask Him to give you the strength to run towards Him with whatever challenge you're facing. Trust Him with the situation and faithfully walk with Him today.

## **Live**

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.)

Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

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## Day 4 Psalm 55 Devotional

### Pray

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

### Read

Psalm 55:16-19

“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.”

### Understand

Here David says that he cries out to the Lord three times a day. Don't think of these times as three distinct times, but rather as a way of expressing the totality of his day. It's like saying, “I prayed non-stop throughout the day, without ceasing.”

Why would David pray like this? It's because of who he trusted. Despite all the fear and confusion he faced, he never stopped believing in the One “who is enthroned from of old, who does not change.”

The fear that David was experiencing exposed his heart. The psalmist states that “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” and declares “all who follow His precepts have good understanding” (Psalm 111: 10). David understood that ultimately the One he should most fear is the Lord.

David's constant calling out to God was reorienting him back to reality. He understands that when we are less afraid of God than we are of other things or people, we get in trouble. It causes us to forget to fear God.

Remember that David is struggling with fear. Don't miss what David is doing in the midst of that fear; he doesn't run from it, but instead runs to God!

### Apply

What do you fear right now?

Do you fear others? More than you fear God?

Where does fear drive you? Does it drive you to protect yourself, or does it drive us to our Protector God?

Talk to God right now. Tell Him what's on your mind and ask Him to give you right perspective.

## **Live**

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.)

Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

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## **Day 5 Psalm 55 Devotional**

### **Pray**

Ask God to orient or reorient you to Himself. Confess any known sin. Thank Him for His forgiveness. Be still and reflect on Jesus and His sacrifice for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to God's Word. Pray for others in your life that they, too, would know and love God today.

### **Read**

Psalm 55:20-23

“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.”

### **Understand**

What a contrast we see in these closing verses! David's “so-called” friends were slick and charming. In the end, they turned out to be murderous hypocrites. Yet, there is One who remains steadfast and true; it is the Lord God. David knows now more than ever that man will fail you; but you can cast your burdens upon God.

At the closing of the Psalm, we see David making a declarative statement: “I will trust in God.”

### **Apply**

The New Testament calls for us to do the same thing; we are to trust God. 1 Peter 5:7 says “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” Jesus tells us in Matthew 11:28 “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

So the question for today is...will we trust Him? Will you let go of all your anxieties and give them to Jesus? Will you trust Him to bear the weight of those fears?

Instead of running from fear and worry, will you be like David and run toward God? Let's not submit to the circumstance, but to the Lord who controls the circumstance.

Take a moment and express your complete trust to God. Thank Him for His grace and mercy that He's shown to you.

### **Live**

(Personalize this prayer today; make it specific to the circumstances that face you.)

Ask God to lead you through His Spirit as you go through your day. Ask Him to bring to mind the truth of the gospel and its implications for what you will encounter today. Tell Him "Yes" to His will and ask Him for His power and protection to live this "yes." Ask God to create and reveal opportunities to proclaim the good news today. **KEEP PRAYING THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY.**

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