



TOPICS: Folk Tunes; Jesus' Suffering & Death; Lent-Easter; Psalm settings

LEAD-IN: *Listen to my prayer, God;  
And do not hide Yourself from my pleading.  
Give Your attention to me and answer me;  
I am restless in my complaint and severely distracted,  
Because of the voice of the enemy,  
Because of the pressure of the wicked;  
For they bring down trouble upon me  
And in anger they hold a grudge against me.  
My heart is in anguish within me,  
And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.* (Psalm 55:1-4, NASB)

LEAD-IN DEVOTIONAL READING:

## Reflection on Psalm 55

As I read Psalm 55,  
images from the suffering and death of Christ  
float into my mind.

The Psalm vividly expresses the feeling of being  
overwhelmed with sorrow:

*My heart is in anguish within me;  
the terrors of death have fallen on me* (v.4, NIV).

Is there any better description of  
Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane?

The Psalmist longs  
to fly away like a bird,  
to escape and be at rest (Psalm 55:6-8).

Can you feel that same yearning in Jesus' prayer,  
"My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me" (Matthew 26:39, NASB)?

And in Psalm 55:9-11, we can almost hear Jesus describing  
Jerusalem during His last Passover:

*I have seen violence and strife in the city.  
Day and night they go around her upon her walls,  
And evil and harm are in her midst.  
Destruction is in her midst;  
Oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets.* (NASB)

But of all the  
physical,  
mental,  
emotional, and  
spiritual pain heaped on Jesus,  
what could be more piercing than  
being betrayed into an agonizing death  
by a dear friend?

*If an enemy were insulting me,  
I could endure it;  
if a foe were rising against me,  
I could hide.  
But it is you, a man like myself,  
my companion, my close friend,  
with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship* (Psalm 55:12-14, NIV).

Against the attack of a close friend,  
the tender heart of Christ had no protection.

As you contemplate the fierce reality of His love for you,  
let it sink in that you truly can  
*Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you;*  
*He will never allow the righteous to be shaken* (Psalm 55:22, NASB).

Jesus, by  
Your Word and  
Your faithful Spirit,  
continue to burn into our hearts  
the depths,  
the intimacy, and  
the selflessness of  
Your love for us.

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