How To Respond To Your Problems
Message 15 in Psalms For Everyday Living Sermon Series
Psalm 55:1-23

Tonight as we resume our series from The Book of Psalms I want to talk to you for a few minutes about your problems......more specifically, “How To Respond To Your Problems“.

Please open your Bible’s to tonight’s scripture text in PSALM 55, we’ll be reading this passage in just a few minutes.

By now I’m sure you have noticed in this series that a great number of the Psalms were written at a time the author was battling problems of one sort or another in his life.

I believe one reason why the Book of Psalms is one of the most loved books in all the Bible is because it is a book we can all relate to. For who among us doesn’t have problems?

At the time David wrote this 55th Psalm he was dealing with a “gut-wrenching” problem.

Ahithophel, one of David’s most trusted political advisers and closest friends, had betrayed him. This happened at a time when David’s son, Absalom was trying to take the throne away from him. And Ahithophel forsook David and sided with Absalom.
If you have ever had a loved one or close friend betray you or turn their back on you or disappoint you, then you can relate to what David was going through.

As you might expect, David’s tone throughout most of this 55th Psalm is very somber. In this Psalm David gives us a “crash course” on the RIGHT WAY and WRONG WAY to respond to PROBLEMS.

First, let’s consider .............

I. **The Wrong Way To Respond to Problems**

READ: Psalm 55:1-15

1. In these verses David reveals **four temptations** we must guard against when dealing with problems in life.

   (A) First of all: **DON’T COMPLAIN ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS**.

   What is David doing in the **first three verses** of this Psalm? **He’s complaining!**

   **Verse 2** in the King James Version reads: “Attend to me, and hear me: I mourn in my COMPLAINT, and MAKE A NOISE.”

   Isn’t that what a lot of us do when we have problems? **We complain! We make noise!** It doesn’t do any good, does it?

   - Complaining doesn’t solve our problem.
   - Complaining doesn’t make our problem go away.
   - Complaining doesn’t make our problem any easier to deal with.

   As I was writing this message I tried to think of one problem I ever solved by complaining and I couldn’t think of a one, not one!
Remember what the Israelites did in the wilderness? They complained! They complained about Moses’ leadership! They complained about their food! And what did all that complaining accomplish? It got them 40 more years in the wilderness and the loss of the lives of every young man who had left Egypt during the Exodus.

COMPLAINING about our problems may give us a sense of satisfaction in knowing that others know about our problems, after all “misery does love company,” but complaining doesn’t solve our problems.

(B) Secondly: **DON’T GIVE UP WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS.**

In verses 4, 5 it’s as though David sees himself hopelessly trapped inside four walls with no possible way out of his problem.

Wall #1: “My heart is in anguish within me.” (v.4a)

Wall #2: “The terrors of death assail me.” (v. 4b)

Wall #3: “Fear and trembling have beset me.” (5a)

Wall #4: “Horror has overwhelmed me.” (5b)

Feeling “boxed in” in all sides, you get the sense David is ready to give up and throw in the towel.

I believe this is one of the greatest temptations we face when we encounter problems in life. While “giving up” is the easiest thing to do, sometimes its also the worst thing we can do.

*How many blessings have we missed out on in life because we gave up rather than persevering through our problems?

* How many doors of opportunity was God prepared to open for us, but didn’t, because we gave up too soon?
The late Babe Ruth once said, “It's hard to beat a man who won't give up!” Another way of putting it would be: “Quitters never win and winners never quit!”

As children of a God who specializes in the impossible, you and I should never GIVE UP when we encounter problems in life.

DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS!
DON'T GIVE UP WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS!

(C) Thirdly: DON'T TRY TO RUN AWAY FROM YOUR PROBLEMS!

VERSES 6-8 again

Illustration: In the classic movie, The Wizard of Oz, a very girlish looking Judy Garland sang one of the most memorable songs in film history, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”

In that song, Garland’s character, Dorothy, was expressing her heartfelt desire to escape to some far away place where all of her problems would just “melt away like lemon drops.”

Dorothy envied the BLUE BIRDS in the sky who had wings to fly “somewhere over the rainbow” and Dorothy asked, “Why, oh why, can’t I?”

In real life, Judy Garland was not so different than the character she had played in The Wizard of Oz.

Tormented by the fears and insecurities of having been through a number of broken relationships, Judy Garland turned to alcohol and drugs to escape.

Tragically it was those very things she thought would give her peace that led to her premature death.

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Just like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, David wanted wings like a bird so he could fly far, far away from his all his problems.

But the truth is, NONE OF US CAN RUN AWAY FROM OUR PROBLEMS. PROBLEMS HAVE A WAY OF FOLLOWING US EVERYWHERE WE GO!

-How many people have RUN AWAY from a bad relationship only to wind up in another one?

-How many people have RUN AWAY from a bad job only to wind up in another one?

-How many people have RUN AWAY from a problem-filled Church only to wind up in another problem-filled Church?

When you and I encounter problems in life one of we must resist is the temptation to RUN AWAY!

Don’t COMPLAIN about your problems!
Don’t GIVE UP when you have problems!
Don’t try to RUN AWAY when you have problems!

(D) And fourth: DON’T BLAME OTHERS FOR YOUR PROBLEMS.

VERSES 9, 10

One of the greatest temptations we face any time we have problems in life is to POINT THE FINGER OF BLAME AT SOMEONE ELSE for our problems.

While it was true AHITHOPHEL had betrayed him, it didn’t do David any good to play “the blame game.”

In life, the choices and the actions of others can certainly have a negative impact on our lives.
- The choices and actions of a “cheating mate” can certainly have a devastating impact on the innocent mate.

- The choices and actions of a dishonest business competitor can certainly have a negative impact upon your business.

- The choices and actions of an unfair school teacher or coach, can certainly have a negative impact on you as a student.

But honestly, IS THERE ANYTHING TO BE GAINED BY POINTING THE FINGER OF BLAME AT SOMEONE ELSE FOR YOUR PROBLEMS?

No matter how right you are, BLAMING someone else for your problems doesn’t resolve anything does it?

These are some TEMPTATIONS WE MUST GUARD AGAINST when dealing with PROBLEMS in life:

Don’t COMPLAIN about your problem!

Don’t GIVE UP when you have problems!

Don’t try to RUN AWAY from your problems!

And Don’t BLAME someone else for your problems!

Now David shows us..........
II. The Right Way To Respond To Problems

READ----------PSALM 55:16-23

1. We have all heard that old saying, “God helps those who help themselves.” Sounds good doesn’t it? In fact, a lot of people, including a lot of Christians, actually believe that saying is found in the Bible. I assure you, its not!

2. The problem with many of us is NOT that we don’t try to “help ourselves” at all when we have problems, the biggest problem is that we try to “help ourselves” too much.

PRIDE causes us to leave God out of the picture!
PRIDE causes us to be independent and self-reliant.

PRIDE causes us to believe, “I can handle my problems by myself,” “I don’t need anybody’s help,” “I’ve got myself through tough situations before and I’ll get through this.”

3. More than anything, GOD wants us to depend on HIM when we have problems. GOD wants us to understand that the BEST WAY TO HELP OURSELVES when we have problems is to RELY ON HIS HELP!

4. How do we do that? David tells us TWO WAYS:

(A) Our first response should be: TO CALL UPON THE LORD.

v.16 But I call to God, and the LORD saves me.

DAVID now realizes his problem isn’t going to get any better by complaining about it......or by giving up......or by running away from it......or blaming somebody else for his problems. David now understands his first response should have been to PRAY ABOUT IT!
WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR US TO DO THAT? WHY DO SO MANY OF US TURN TO PRAYER AS A LAST RESORT WHEN WE HAVE PROBLEMS?

*We call A PLUMBER when we have plumbing problems.

*We call A DOCTOR when we have health problems.

*We call TECH SUPPORT when we have computer problems.

*We call A MECHANIC when we have engine problems.

WHY ARE WE SO RELUCTANT TO CALL ON THE LORD WHEN WE HAVE “LIFE PROBLEMS?”

WHO KNOWS MORE ABOUT LIFE THAN THE ONE WHO CREATED IT?

WHO KNOWS OUR NEEDS BETTER THAN THE ONE WHO SEES ALL AND KNOWS ALL?

WHEN YOU AND I HAVE PROBLEMS OUR VERY FIRST RESPONSE SHOULD BE TO CALL ON THE LORD IN PRAYER.

(B) And once we have CALLED ON THE LORD IN PRAYER, our second response should be: TO CAST OUR PROBLEMS ON THE LORD.

v. 22 Cast your cares on the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall.

DAVID was carrying one of the heaviest burdens a man can carry. It would have been one thing if he had been betrayed by an enemy. But he was betrayed by a close friend……...someone he loved……...someone he trusted.

How do we survive when we have been hurt by someone we love? How do we move go on when someone we thought was our friend turns into an enemy?
We do it by LEAVING OUR BURDEN, OUR PROBLEM WITH THE LORD.

-To “leave our burden” with the Lord, means we will no longer worry or fret over our problem.

-It means we will surrender our problem to God’s will, and we will trust in Him for the best possible outcome to whatever problem we are dealing with.

Remember that old hymn.........

*Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.*
*If you trust and never doubt,*
*He will surely bring you out,*
*Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.*

When you and I learn to CAST OUR BURDENS ON THE LORD, we will discover God isn’t just strong enough to carry our burdens and problems, He is strong enough to carry us as well.

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C O N C L U S I O N

In his book, “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back” Chuck Swindoll writes:

Every problem is an opportunity to prove God's power. Every day we encounter countless golden opportunities, brilliantly disguised as insurmountable problems.

C. Swindoll, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, p. 35.

In our study of this 55TH Psalm tonight, David has taught us there is A RIGHT WAY and A WRONG WAY to respond to our problems.
May our prayer be........

Dear Lord,

Help me to respond to my problems in the right way. Give me the self-control not to complain, the resolve not to quit or give up, the courage not to run away, and the wisdom not to blame someone else for my problems.

Lord I turn my problem over to You. I will trust in You for the best possible outcome. May Your will be done!