

## Coping with Betrayal!

Betrayal is one of the worst things that can happen to us: it causes great pain, anguish, disappointment, destroys trust and leaves us feeling vulnerable. It causes us to question our own judgment and can induce feelings of anger and revenge, or cause us to slide into self condemnation and depression, none of which are godly responses.

Many of the great figures in the bible suffered betrayal and to be honest it goes with the Christian walk. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, Abel was killed by Cain, Samson was betrayed by Delila and Jesus was betrayed by Judas. Paul suffered it, many of the apostles did too, as people they trusted and discipled turned and tried to harm them.

*"The saddest thing about betrayal is it never comes from your enemies."- Unknown*

Betrayal in families, between friends or work colleagues, or in business can be as just as devastating as any betrayal within the body of Christ. Friends in church, or a church leader even may have betrayed you? Moses was betrayed many times as he tried to lead the people out of Egypt. The Israelites turned on him time and again, even to the point of wanting to stone him at Mt Sinai. His calling was so great, yet so lonely, because no-one really understood him. It's hard sometimes to find words to express what God has called you to do, especially in our modern secular Greek-thinking world. God's ways are so different to man's, yet man thinks he know it all, when really he knows nothing. God's ways and thoughts are so much higher. When He calls us to do things for His kingdom, the world will rarely if ever truly understand so people will speak ill of us and betray us.

*Even my closest friend whom I trusted, the one who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me – Psalm 41:9*

As we live on in this world, awaiting the kingdom to come, we must expect betrayal, even from those in our church circles. Jesus warned us, *"brother would betray brother even unto death."*

What is important however, is how we respond. Do we seek revenge, to fight back, or do we turn the other cheek and hand people over to God and pray for and forgive them?

*"For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ." Corinthians 1:5*

When we are betrayed and people say bad things about us, especially if its for doing what is good and acceptable in God's eyes, then we must cling to God's promises such as Isaiah 54:17- *'no weapon forged against you will prosper and every tongue that rises against you in judgement you will refute, for this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.'*

What did Jesus do when Judas betrayed him? He still addressed him as friend and forgave him, although 'subsequent torment was so bad he committed suicide. As it is written; *do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm* (Psalm 105). It is not uncommon for people who betray to go on to suffer themselves. For God avenges on our behalf.

Contextually, the words in Psalm 105 were written about kings and prophets of old, but it can still be applied today, for God still appoints and anoints people for kingdom roles and purposes. People often betray us with crushing words and hostile actions. Yet we are called to forgive, to love, to let go and pray for them. It can be so so hard, but if we truly love God, and diligently seek to obey the kingdom principles he asks us to, then we **must** forgive. It is a command not an option.

*Father forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*

When we suffer for the name of the Lord we should also remember we are blessed. In the midst of pain and anguish this might be hard to keep in mind, but the truth is we are blessed when man curses us:

*How blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, because the kingdom from heaven belongs to them! "How blessed are you whenever people insult you, persecute you, and say all sorts of evil things against you falsely because of me! Rejoice and be extremely glad, because your reward in heaven is great! That's how they persecuted the prophets who came before you." – Matt 5:10-12*

If the great men of the bible and Jesus himself were betrayed, we should not be surprised when we are betrayed, for the servant is not greater than his Master. The challenge is our response. Do we respond in the ways of the world or according to kingdom principles?

Sadly, betrayal will often come from those closest to you, or those in whom you've placed trust. However, people are just people and Satan uses them to do his dirty work; stealing killing and destroying. It's not them but the enemy using them. So wage war in the spirit realm against the powers and principalities of darkness, whilst simultaneously praying for and forgiving them. Redirect your anger against Satan who initiates this kind of work – not the person who he used.

Love covers a multitude of sins and forgiveness is a commandment of God. Even as Jesus was hanging in the cross he looked down upon those who had betrayed him, and said '*father forgive them for they know not what they do.*' And there is the clue! They know not what they do, for betrayal is the work of Satan. He was the master of it. He betrayed God's trust as an archangel at the beginning of time and was thrown out of heaven with his followers, who then came to earth to pollute God's perfect creation by way of vengeance.

Forgive, show grace, let go and let God deal with those who hurt you. Do not pay back evil with evil, but pursue peace with all people and holiness, without which none of us will see God!