

## **Our Sustainer**

*Psalm 55:22*

Series: Promise Keeper

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As you noticed from the sermon bump, we are beginning our new summer series today that we are calling: *Promise Keeper*. I love these summer preaching series. I think that:

- last summer we preached our favorite verses...
- the summer before that we did a summer in the psalms...
- the summer before that, our favorite Old Testament stories...

And this summer, we are going to look at some of the greatest promises that God has given us in his word. It is estimated that there are some 8,000 promises that God has given us in scripture, and over the next two months, you are going to get to hear from seven different pastors on our staff preaching some of these great promises.

It's my joy to begin this series...I'll be kicking us off this week with a promise from the Old Testament and then coming back next week to preach a promise from the New Testament.

So, let's get started. I'm calling the message today: **Our Sustainer**

**Illus. Pinky Promise** - I was trying to think this week, of the first time I was taught the importance of a promise. And I think it goes back to my childhood. I don't remember what the promise was, but I do remember reciting:

*I cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye.*

I don't know where this came from...I don't even know what it means outside of the fact, that when you said it, you were promising that you were telling the truth about a situation or someone – it was “cross my heart and hope to die”.

Then came the pinky promise. Remember that? That was about as serious as you could get in grade school – you NEVER broke a pinky promise.

As we got older, promises continued albeit a bit more serious in nature like at your marriage (if that applies to you) where you made a promise in front of family, friends and God...and then I was trying to think of it from a spiritual perspective. When was the first time I became aware of the promises God makes, and I think it was my first year of college in my *Introduction to Biblical Studies* course.

I remember being taught when studying the Bible, that we should look for certain ideas or points: They included (**one screen**):

- **Commands to obey**

- **Sins to forsake**
- **Blessings to enjoy**
- **Teachings to learn**
- **Examples to follow**
- **Promises to claim**

I would encourage you to begin your own personal Bible Study by looking for some of these in scripture...and when you find them, hide them in your heart and make them your own – ESPECIALLY God’s promises!

That’s what this series is all about! God has given us promises and we want to claim these promises! The promise we are looking at today comes from:

**Psalm 55:22 – “Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”**

Now, there are two parts to this promise. First, we see: **Our Opportunity.**

We have the opportunity...the privilege to cast our burdens – whatever they may be – we’ll work this out more in just a moment – on the Lord!

**Illus. Opportunities** - And what an opportunity this is! You know, I’ve had some AMAZING opportunities through the years. The Lord has been so kind and good to me allowing me to be a part of or participate in events that I have NO BUSINESS being a part of and meeting people that I have NO BUSINESS being in the same room as.

Some of these opportunities...privileges...call them whatever you’d like include:

- Going to a Super Bowl – pretty fantastic!
- Meeting a former President and getting to visit with him! Awesome.
- Amazing opportunity to travel to places and preach the gospel like Brazil, Romania, India, Hungary, and Thailand.

It’s mind-blowing that I’ve had the chance to get to do these things. I have had some incredible opportunities. But as great as those opportunities have been, they PALE in comparison to this opportunity the Psalmist presents to me here to cast my burdens on the LORD.

The word picture itself is awe-inspiring. If you know anything about the Hebrew language, you know that it is very picturesque.

We just had graduations...did you know the average high school graduate has a functional vocabulary of about 25,000 words. There are only about 6,000 Hebrew words total - 8,000 if you count names. So, there is a wide semantic range with words that are used.

Let's just look at a few of these words from the first part of (v. 22). The first word is the word "cast". It can mean to "throw down" or "throw out". It can mean to "put someone or something away".

**Micah 7:19 – "You will cast (NIV translates it as "hurl"/throw out) all our sins into the depths of the sea."**

That's what we are told to do with our burdens. We are to "throw them"...we are to "hurl them" on the LORD.

Now, the word "burden" here is an interesting word as well. **Derek Kidner** (theologian from Cambridge, England, Old Testament scholar) – **"The word *burden* is too restrictive: It means whatever is given you, your appointed lot (hence in New English Bible, 'your fortunes')."**

It's also translated in as "cares". So, whatever it is that's weighing you down...whatever it is that falls into the category of "my lot in life" and it qualifies as a "care or concern" - we are to throw it (WHATEVER "it" is) on the LORD.

Now, if you look in your Bibles, you notice this psalm is written by David. Before the first verse, we read the words, "A Maskil of David".

Most believe that a "maskil" is a musical or literary term that was to show how the psalm should be sung or recited. It's translated as the word "prudent" as well as the word "insight" and so it's highly likely that this Psalm was set to some kind of worship tune that prompt contemplation or meditation.

MORE important than determining what kind of music it was set to or how we should recite it, is understanding the content and context of it.

As we read it, we see exactly what David was dealing with...we see the "burden" that he was carrying. Listen to what he writes.

David is hurting...talk about being burdened!

**Psalm 55:1-8 – "Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! <sup>2</sup> Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan, <sup>3</sup> because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked.**

**For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me. <sup>4</sup> My heart is in anguish within me (whatever has happened to him has "tied in knots...it's doing a number on him!); the terrors of death have fallen upon me. <sup>5</sup> Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms ("to cover or to clothe") me. <sup>6</sup> And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest;<sup>7</sup> yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; <sup>8</sup> I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest."**

David is so burdened...the distress so high...the worry and pain so intense that if he could be a bird and fly out of town, he'd do it!

Have you ever been there? I bet you have. I bet a lot of us know all too well exactly what David is feeling. We know what it is to be “restless” (v. 2). Maybe you have an enemy (literally or figuratively) that’s loud (v. 3).

- Trouble is yours...
- Fear is yours (v. 4-5)...

Just like the storms that have rolled through Houston these last couple of weeks, that’s what you feel or have felt like emotionally at times...all you want to do is find shelter from the (v. 8) “raging wind and tempest”.

The opportunity before us as presented in this psalm is that we can cast all that’s causing this emotional turmoil, and pain, and distress on the Lord! We can throw it on him!

So, what is it for you?

- Is it a break in a relationship?
- Is it the culture of your workplace...your boss?
- Is it the threat of sickness, illness or disease?

What is it that you need a break from? What is it that is causing you to complain to the Lord and moan before him? For David, it was the betrayal of a friend.

Evidently, there were people (at a minimum a person) in his life that he THOUGHT was friend. But that “friend” ended up backstabbing him. That “friend” ended up turning on him, and David is beside himself about this deception. He can’t believe that his “friend” has done this!

**Psalm 55:12-15, 20-21– “For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me— then I could hide from him. <sup>13</sup> But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. <sup>14</sup> We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng. <sup>15</sup> Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart... My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant.**

**<sup>21</sup> His speech was smooth as butter (he spoke a good game...he talked like he was a friend, YET...), yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.”**

Talk about betrayal! No wonder he’s hurting. That stinks for sure! There is not a whole lot more painful in life than having the carpet pulled out from underneath you by someone you thought was a friend!

And while we are not certain of the specifics regarding this situation in David’s life, many believe this could perhaps refer to his friend and chief counselor, Ahithophel. Do you remember his story?

Absalom was David's son that led a coup against him to steal his dad's throne. The bible tells us in (2 Sam. 15) that he stayed at the gates of the city winning favor with people day in and day out essentially saying things like, "this is what would happen if I was king."

He did this for years! It got to the point the scripture says in:

**2 Sam. 15:6b – "...So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."**

Then after four years, he initiated his plan and do you know who joined in on the rebellion? Ahithophel, David's chief counselor! Some ascribe to him the title, prime minister...he was for sure one of his best friends!

David is brokenhearted. His son, whom he loves has stolen the throne, and look at what happens when David hears Ahithophel is a part of the conspiracy.

**2 Sam. 15:30-31 – "But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. <sup>31</sup> And it was told David, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O Lord, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."**

Look at what David did in his sadness...in his grief...he turned to the Lord in prayer!

Listen to me: Whatever is causing you the emotional pain and distress...whatever is causing you heartache and trouble, what we are to do is to turn it over to the Lord in prayer.

This is what "casting our burdens" on the Lord is...it happens when we pray! We see David modeling this in 2 Samuel, and we see him journaling it in Psalm 55. The main section on prayer came in (v. 1-8)) but continues into (v. 9-11). It reads:

**Psalm 55:9a - "Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues..."**

Interesting - This could be David requesting to do to Ahithophel and Absalom what happened at Babel. David could be making a reference to when the people (Gen. 11) were trying to accomplish something great for their name, NOT the name of God.

And what did he do to thwart their plans? He gave them different languages...he divided their tongues!

Two quick points I want to make about prayer right here! First is, knowing scripture will help you know what to pray!

**Illus. First Sat Prayer** – this is something we practice! Praying the scripture. It's good when you know scripture, you can recall scripture to the Lord! "This is how you moved in the past, God will you do it again!"

This is why scripture memory is so important...it's why knowing your Bible is so important. You can pray the scripture.

When the Bible tells us if we ask “anything in his name” we can consider it done, what it is revealing to us is if we ask anything according to his will, it will be done, and how do we know his will except through his word?!

Pray God’s word! In our “Revive Prayer Room” we have prayer helps...and all of them are simply praying God’s word back to him! I’m so grateful that I was taught this way to pray – and btw, prayer is taught and caught. If you don’t know how to pray, get around someone who does!

**illus. Prayer Cards** - Let me give you some examples (unity, for someone to know Christ, Jesus’s name to be exalted, etc).

One of the VERY best practices you can begin to implement today is to pray the promises of God. This is most of my prayer journal on a daily basis...reading God’s word and praying it back to him!

In this series, write down every promise that is preached on and begin to pray that promise back to God (ex. Pray Ps. 55:22)

Secondly, NOT only do we pray his word (his promises), but notice, this is a prayer of petition. It’s asking the Lord to for something or to do something. Part of prayer is making requests to the Lord (ACTS).

David here is praying honest, forthright prayer. It’s important to understand this is NOT selfish prayer. David understands that the situation he’s in is bleak, and his concern is NOT so much for himself as it is the purposes and glory of God – and this is of MAJOR importance!

When we know God’s word, we know his purposes...when we love the Lord and grow in our love for him, we want what he wants MORE than what we want.

David’s prayer here is for his enemies to go to Sheol...to the depths of the earth...to the grave (v. 15). His prayer is for God to intervene. He wants them (v. 23) “cast down to the pit of destruction and to not live out half their days.”

By the way, if you read (2 Sam. 17) this is exactly what happens to Ahithophel! David sends a spy into Absalom’s camp by the name of Hushai who acts as an advisor to Absalom. The counsel Absalom receives is divided and ultimately proves to be his and Ahithophel’s ruin. It’s an answer to the prayer from (v. 9-11).

Ahithophel ends up hanging himself. The conspirators and everyone with them are eventually “casted down” (v. 23a) ALL because David “cast his burdens on the Lord” (v. 22).

It’s a play on words...the enemies of David and his God are thrown down all because David threw his cares and burdens on God in prayer – beautiful!

A key to petitionary prayer though is trust. We ask and make our requests of the Lord in prayer – BUT...look at the conclusion of David’s prayer.

This is: **Psalm 55:23b** – “...But I will trust you.”

We pray his promises. We petition him and make our requests known, but at the end of the day, we trust – and God can answer however he deems fit. We want what he wants MORE than anything else.

“Cast your burdens on the LORD...” BTW – “LORD” there is in all caps! That’s important...it signifies this is Yahweh we’re talking about...this is Israel’s covenant God!

And let me tell you something about Yahweh...he’s got broad shoulders! He can handle anything we throw on him. He can carry it!

One of the reasons that David could pray with such confidence is because he knew God and he knew he was anointed by God! In other words, an attack on King David was equal to an attack against the future King (Jesus) and his coming Kingdom!

David knew Yahweh could and would defend his own name...his own righteous...his own purposes. So, David prays. Look at it:

**Psalm 55:16-19** – “But I call to God, and the Lord will save me. <sup>17</sup> Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. <sup>18</sup> He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me. <sup>19</sup> God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, because they do not change and do not fear God.”

David knew the opportunity given to him was to cast his burdens on the Lord, and he did that through prayer. He knew God would listen and give ear to his prayer because he was in a relationship with him!

AND this is the joy of knowing Jesus. When we are in a relationship with him, we can be confident God hears our prayers, so let’s make sure we take him up on the opportunity he gives us to cast our burden (no matter how big or small) on him!

This is the first part of the promise. It’s our opportunity.

But the second part of the promise is what I’m calling: **God’s Obligation**

Commentator, **Donald Williams** - “We can never know the release and relief of this promise until we act on it, through prayer bringing our burden to the Lord. He, in turn, sustains us and keeps us firm. This is his work. All we can do is be open and let him do it.”

See, this is what I call a conditional promise. It has “terms and conditions”. You know what I’m talking about?

**Illus. Playstation 5** – College football – I had to set up an account...username is: “SuperJarrettLynn” – if any of you youngsters want to play me, bring it on! In order to set up

that account I had to read and agree to the “terms and conditions”. I could have just signed my life away and don’t even know it!

Well, here are the terms and conditions of this promise. We have been given an opportunity to throw our cares on the Lord!

**Psalm 55:22a – “Cast your burden on the LORD...”**

IF we do this, God has an obligation toward us...it’s part of his terms and conditions. See, he is NOT going to break his word. God will NEVER go back on his promise. And here is the promise:

IF we will cast our burden on him. The New Testament version of this verse is found in: **1 Peter 5:7 – “casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”** (AMAZING! Yahweh cares!)

IF we will cast our burden on him, look at what God has agreed to do!

- To take our burden from us and remove it from our lives? He doesn’t say that!

Remember, the word “burden” describes our lot in life. It could just be that God put the burden in your life to test and see what you would do with it!

Think on that for a moment...the VERY thing that is weighing you down and causing you distress could just be sent by God to see if you will take him up on his promise to “cast it on him”.

Don’t carry that burden any longer! Through prayer give it to the God who cares for you...whose shoulders are broader...his strength is greater!

You do this, and God has an obligation to you. His obligation?!

**Psalm 55:22 – “Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will (NOT might...NOT maybe...he WILL) sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”**

This is a promise you can take and never let go of! The word “sustain” comes from a word meaning to “nourish you...it means to support you”. To be “moved” means to “totter, or to shake or to slip”.

Look at how beautiful this promise is! When we throw our burden on the Lord, he might not eliminate it or make it go away, but what he does is strengthen us...and nourish us...and support us to the point that the problem doesn’t move us! It doesn’t cause us to shake or our foot to slip!

This is his promise to us! Think on how wonderful this is! Something could happen in our life that SHOULD shake us to the core...but God PROMISES he will sustain us and keep it from moving us IF we will cast it on to him through prayer.



We cast it on to him...and here is the key – leave it there! Don't take it back. Leave it with him.

**Illus. *Leave It There*** – Charles Albert Tindley (**show pic**) was born in 1851 to a father who was a slave and a mother who was free. She died when he was very young. He was mostly self-taught, learning to read by age 17 and after leaving home then became the janitor (at no pay) at a church in Philadelphia called Bainbridge Methodist to be named later Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church. There he took courses to become a Methodist pastor. He enrolled at Boston Theological School where he learned Greek and Hebrew.

Years later he became the Pastor of the Church he was trained in and by all accounts he was a dynamic preacher – his church grew so large they had to relocate and at his peak, they were reaching by some estimates 10,000 people a weekend – that's a massive church for the 1920's AND it was diverse! It was eventually renamed after his death as Tindley Temple.

A number of songs came out of his sermons – he's called the “Grandfather of Gospel Music”, and perhaps his most famous song *When the Morning Comes – We'll understand it better by and by. We Shall Overcome*, the anthem that was made famous during the Civil Rights Movement – a Freedom Song – he wrote that!

He also wrote a hymn called *Leave it There*. Here are the lyrics:

**“If the world from you withhold of its silver and its gold,  
And you have to get along with meager fare,  
Just remember, in His Word, how He feeds the little bird,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.**

**If your body suffers pain and your health you can't regain,  
And your soul is almost sinking in despair,  
Jesus knows the pain you feel, He can save and He can heal,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.**

**When your enemies assail and your heart begins to fail,  
Don't forget that God in heaven answers prayer;  
He will make a way for you and will lead you safely through,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.**

**When your youthful days are gone and old age is stealing on,  
And your body bends beneath the weight of care,  
He will never leave you then, He'll go with you to the end,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.**

**Leave it there, leave it there,  
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.”**

What a promise! Let's take God up on this promise and through prayer cast whatever it may be weighing us down on to him. Let's let him carry it. And we'll see in the process, he will fulfill his promise to us, by sustaining us – NEVER permitting the righteous to be moved.

Let's pray.

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*Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.*