

Psalms 55:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

Analysis

We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. This poignant verse appears within a psalm of deep anguish, where David laments betrayal by a close friend. The verse describes past intimacy and spiritual fellowship, making the subsequent treachery (v.12-13) even more devastating. This isn't betrayal by an enemy but by a trusted companion who shared both friendship and worship.

"We took sweet counsel together" (nashim sod, נִשִׁים סָוד) describes intimate, confidential conversation. Sod means secret counsel, intimate circle, confidential discussion—the kind of vulnerable sharing that occurs only among close friends. "Sweet" (metukim, מְתוּקִים) conveys pleasantness, agreeableness, delightful fellowship. These weren't superficial acquaintances but deep friends who shared hearts, discussed spiritual matters, and enjoyed each other's company. The verb form indicates ongoing practice: "we used to take sweet counsel," speaking of habitual fellowship now tragically ended.

"Walked unto the house of God in company" (berega nehalek bet Elohim, בָּרֶגֶשׁ נָהָלֶךָ בֵּית אֱלֹהִים) intensifies the spiritual dimension of the friendship. Berega can mean "in a throng" or "in intimate fellowship," suggesting either they walked together amid the festive crowds going to worship, or they walked in close companionship. Either way, their friendship centered on shared worship. They didn't merely socialize but together pursued God, attending temple worship, discussing spiritual truths, encouraging each other's faith.

This makes the betrayal (described in surrounding verses) catastrophically painful. Verse 12-13 specifies: "For it was not an enemy that reproached me...But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance." The one who shared worship now works destruction. Many scholars see this as David's lament over Ahithophel's betrayal during Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15-17), when his trusted counselor joined his son's conspiracy. The pain resonates through centuries: Judas walked with Jesus to the temple, shared meals, heard teaching, witnessed miracles—then betrayed Him with a kiss.

Historical Context

Psalm 55 belongs to the genre of lament psalms, where the psalmist pours out anguish to God while maintaining faith despite suffering. The superscription attributes it to David, written during intense personal crisis involving betrayal, opposition, and danger. While the specific historical occasion isn't stated, 2 Samuel 15-17 records Ahithophel's betrayal during Absalom's rebellion—a close advisor abandoning David to support his treacherous son.

Ancient Near Eastern friendship carried covenantal weight. Friends were covenant partners who pledged loyalty, shared resources, and defended each other. David and Jonathan exemplified this in their covenant friendship (1 Samuel 18:1-4, 20:16-17). Betrayal of friendship violated sacred bonds, making it particularly heinous. Proverbs 17:17 defines genuine friendship: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

"The house of God" refers to the tabernacle (later the temple), Israel's worship center where God's presence dwelt. Pilgrimages to Jerusalem for festivals were communal, joyful occasions. Psalm 122:1 celebrates: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." Friends often traveled together to feasts, making the journey part of spiritual fellowship. That this betrayer shared such sacred experiences made the treachery more devastating.

Jesus directly applied this psalm to Judas's betrayal. John 13:18 quotes Psalm 41:9 (thematically related): "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel

against me." Judas shared meals, heard teaching, witnessed miracles, even participated in ministry—yet betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver. The parallel between David's betrayal and Christ's shows how Old Testament sufferings foreshadow messianic suffering.

Church history records countless examples of spiritual friendship betrayed. Paul lamented: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). Every generation experiences the pain of those who once walked together in worship but later abandoned faith or turned against former friends.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does shared worship and spiritual conversation deepen friendship beyond mere social compatibility?
2. What makes betrayal by a close friend who shared spiritual fellowship more painful than opposition from acknowledged enemies?
3. How did Jesus experience the fulfillment of this psalm's anguish through Judas's betrayal, and what does this reveal about His identification with human suffering?
4. In what ways should we respond when someone who once walked with us to God's house later betrays trust or abandons faith?
5. How can we cultivate friendships that center on shared worship and spiritual growth rather than merely common interests or mutual benefit?

Interlinear Text

אֶלְהָיְם בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים

H834

together

We took sweet

נוֹמָת יְלֵן

H3162

סְדִּין

H4985

בְּבֵית

unto the house

H5475

בְּבֵית

H1004

אֱלֹהִים

H430

בָּבְגָשָׁה נָפַל רָ

and walked in company

H1980

H7285

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 42:4 (References God): When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

Isaiah 2:3 (References God): And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 33:31 (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

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