

It Is Written

*A weekly publication of the
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*
Vol. 8 August 2, 2026 No. 31

When Our Friends Become Our Enemies

By Mike Noble

King David of Israel had many enemies throughout his reign, and these were a bother. But in several of the Psalms he wrote about the ones who really tormented him. "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng" (Psalm 44:12-14). One doesn't have to strain to hear the distress in David's voice. They are the words of a man who is hurting. In the 31st Psalm he lamented, "I am a reproach among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and am repulsive to my acquaintances" (v. 11). "All who hate me whisper against me," he wrote in the 41st Psalm, but as well "even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (vss. 7,9).

Each of us would hope that our friends and family remain friendly and loyal to us. But alas, sometimes those dearest to us can be our biggest disappointment, perhaps even enemies.

Can we survive such distressing times? If so, how? Consider these Biblical points...

Others Have Suffered Likewise

Let no one imagine that they are the first to experience such agony. David, obviously, illustrates this point. Did he pen these psalms about his former friend, Saul, who had on more than one occasion sought his life? Or perhaps he spoke of his former counselor, Ahithophel, who had joined the forces of his son Absalom in a coup attempt? Very likely he wrote some of these words about Absalom himself. We don't know for sure, but these psalms came from a man who had experienced a lot of woe and misery in this area.

Let us remember others as well. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. Job's "close friends abhorred" and "turned against" him (19:19). Paul the apostle was forsaken by his friend Demas. In fact Paul wrote of a time when "all those in Asia have turned away from me" (2 Timothy 1:15; 4:10). Our Lord Jesus had many disciples who left Him -- one of His apostles even betrayed Him (John 6:66; Luke 22:48).

We don't intend to presume that the experiences of these forerunners will take all the sting out of one's own experience, but we are saying that none should become disillusioned by the treachery of friends and family. Jesus indicated this was a mark of discipleship, warning that "a man's enemies will be those of his own household" (Matthew 10:36).

A Time For Reflection

When David was being "knifed in the back" by Absalom and had to, consequently, flee Jerusalem, a man named Shimei stood on the hillside and cursed David. When some would have executed the man, David said, "let him curse, because the Lord has said to him, 'Curse David'" (2 Samuel 16:10).

Was David being punished for his sin with Bathsheba and especially for his sin against Uriah, his friend he had murdered years before? David apparently thought so, and his suffering at the hands of his traitorous son provided a moment for reflection.

When others fail us, we would do well to think about times we ourselves have failed others. It should be a humbling experience. "Getting a taste of our own medicine" ought to impact us. "But I've never treated anyone like this before!" you say. Better think again, brother. Have you not treated the Lord as an enemy many times over? No, such moments are good times for introspection, leading to humility. The same psalm that had David crying out about the mutiny of his "familiar friend" had him also begging God for mercy, saying, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You" (41:4).

Lean On The LORD

Listen to David in each of the aforementioned psalms: "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me... Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you" (55:16,22). "But you, O Lord, be merciful to me, and raise me up..." (41:10). "But as for me, I trust in you, O Lord; I say, „You are my God.“ My times are in Your hand" (31:14,15). A person would have to be blind to miss where David put his trust. He saw the Lord as THE unfailing One to lean on, even when it seemed that all others were failing him.

And truly, the Lord is always there for you, the "everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27). "He Himself has said, „I will never leave you nor forsake you"" (Hebrews 13:5). "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me" (Psalm 27:10).

Man Does Not Live By Bread Alone

By Hugh DeLong

During the wilderness wanderings of Israel, God provided food for them. Sustaining such a large group of people would be impossible for men (even men like Moses), but not for God. How many there were we do not know for certain, but it states there were 605,550 men of fighting age. Add to that their wives, their children, their parents, some grandparents, and the mixed multitude, and you come up with a very large number of people! As the disciples responded to Jesus: "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?" (Mark 8:4).

Everything about this food indicates the miraculous activity of God. It hadn't appeared before; hence, they called it 'what is it' (the meaning of the word manna). It could not be kept overnight except for the Sabbath day. It ended when they entered the promised land and no longer needed it.

Interestingly enough, it kept those that ate it alive – for a while – until they died of other things than hunger! But they died! Moses makes the correct observation about such food:

"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Hence, to this second generation that was about to enter into the promised land, where there would be food, they must learn to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. They put their eternal interests above all other interests, even life itself.

Then, this 'second Moses' appears, Jesus. Being the Son of God, He was able to turn rocks into bread to satisfy His own hunger, but did not do so. He understood the very point that Moses had made! He chose to live according to God's instructions and not Satan's! (Read the temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 again).

He was also able to provide miracle food for the people. Although in context it was a very temporary provision and nothing indicates it would continue for 40 years like before, yet the people wanted it to be more permanent. Hence, they sought after Him not because of His teaching, but because their bellies were filled (John 6: 26).

The real bread is not that which fills the stomach, but that which fills the soul with desire for God. It is the food that provides for the ability to fulfill the greatest commandment: Love the LORD your God with all your heart. It is the food that provides for eternal life.

This brings us to Jesus. Jesus is the Bread of Life. It is only as we 'partake' of Him that we live! We are made alive in Christ by eating his body and drinking his blood. Such 'eating His body and drinking his blood' is to absorb His ways, His thoughts, His way of thinking. It is to have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1f). It is accomplished by having His words and teachings abiding in us, to have His words dwelling in us (John 15:7; Colossians 3:16). The life we live is to be lived by faith in Him (Galatians 2:20).