

2 Samuel 15, Absalom betrays David

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[0 : 00] 2 Samuel chapter 15. We've been working our way through 2 Samuel and we're up to chapter 15 this morning and I'm going to read it for us. In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with 50 men to run ahead of him. He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gates. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, what town are you from?

He would answer, your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom would say to him, look your claims are valid and proper but there is no representative of the king to hear you. And Absalom would add, if only I were appointed judge in the land then everyone who has a complaint or a case could come to me and I would see that they would receive justice. Also whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.

Absalom behaved in this way towards all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel. At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord. While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow, if the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron. The king said to him, go in peace. So he went to Hebron. Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, Absalom is king in Hebron. Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They'd been invited as guests and went quite innocently knowing nothing about the matter. While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel, the Gilanite, David's counselor, to come from Gilho, his hometown. So the conspiracy gained strength and Absalom's following kept on increasing. A messenger came and told David, the hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom.

[2 : 07] Then David said to all his officials who are with him in Jerusalem, come, we must flee or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword. The king's official answered him, your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses. The king set out with his entire household following him, but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace. So the king set out with all the people following him and they halted at the edge of the city. All his men marched past him along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites and all the 600 Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath, marched before the king. The king said to Ittai the Gittite, why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland. You came only yesterday and today shall I make you wander about with us when I do not know where I'm going? Go back and take your people with you. May the Lord show you kindness and faithfulness. Ittai replied to the king, as surely as the lord lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be. So David said to Ittai, go ahead, march on. So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him. The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king crossed the Kidron Valley. All the people moved on towards the wilderness. Zadok was there too and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of the covenant of God and Abathur offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city. Then the king said to Zadok, take the ark of

God back into the city. If I find favour in the Lord's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says I am not pleased with you, then I am ready. Let him do to me whatever seems good to him. The king also said to Zadok the priest, do you understand? Go back to the city with my blessing. Take your son Ahimaz with you and also Abathur's son Jonathan

and you and Abathur return with your two sons. I will wait at the fords in the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me. So Zadok and Abathur took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there. But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and they were weeping as they went up. Now David had been told Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. So David prayed, Lord turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness.

When David arrived at the summit where people used to worship God, Hushai the archite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head. David said to him, if you go with me you'll be a burden to me. But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, your majesty, I will be your servant. I was your father's servant in the past but now I'll be your servant. Then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. Won't the priests Zadok and Abathur be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace. Their two sons, Ahimaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abathur are there with them. Send them send them to me with anything you hear. So Hushai, David's confidant, arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city. Well this is God's word for us this morning.

I think it's perhaps true to say that there is no pain in life as great as the pain of betrayal, betrayal of being betrayed. That pain that a wife feels when her husband goes off with another woman or a husband feels when his wife is unfaithful. That the way that you feel when a friend who was a dear friend turns on you and cuts you down. How a parent feels when a child runs from home and doesn't want anything further to do with them. How a child feels when their parent walks out on them.

How you feel as an employee when an employer ignores years of faithful service and dismisses you from your job. You know these sorts of pains of betrayal are the sort of pains that that wake us up in the night. They're difficult to focus on anything else. It's hard to concentrate as your brain tries to work out. Why did that happen? Why did they do that to me? What were they hoping to achieve? Did they not know how much that would hurt me? Do they not care what pain I'm going through now as a result of their betrayal? It's betrayal like that that's at the heart of 2 Samuel 15 isn't it? In fact it's kind of the worst end of that scale of betrayal. Absalom turns on his father and leads a rebellion against him. But what I want us to see together in 2 Samuel 15 is that actually in the midst of this story and particularly in the way that the story is told we are given hope both as people who are betrayed by others but also hope for people who betray others too. So let me show you that from this story and first let's try and get the story straight in our minds. So I want you first to see that the four steps to

[7 : 41] Absalom's betrayal. The first step is this, look the part, look the part. It's where the passage starts, verse 1. Absalom gets a chariot, horses and 50 probably slaves to run before him. Of course it's all a show, right? This is a drama made to make him look impressive. This is the ancient equivalent of hiring a fancy car and driving around in it so that people will think, oh wow, that guy is loaded, right? So this is what he's done. He has got horses and chariots and 50 people to run in front of him so that everyone thinks, oh that guy is someone to take notice of. It's an interesting aside though that just like I suppose blacked out four-wheel drives had a slightly bad rep in our world, so too in the Bible by this point horses and chariots also have a bad reputation. They are consistently used up to this point by bad kings. Think of Pharaoh leading his army into the Red Sea pursuing the Israelites. So I think by this point, you know, although Absalom is trying to look impressive and look the part with his chariots and his 50 runners in front of him, anybody who's a sort of serious Bible thinker by this point or a serious resident of Jerusalem is thinking, Absalom looks rather dodgy, doesn't he, as he's riding out there with his horses and chariots. Step two, then be a man of the people. If you were with us last week, you'll know that one of the king's jobs in Jerusalem is to hear the more complex legal cases from around the kingdom. That means that there's a steady trickle of people entering Jerusalem who are harassed and troubled and have lots of difficult things on their minds. Verse two tells you that Absalom gets up early in the morning, presumably before the morning sacrifice and definitely before the court opens to hear their cases, and he listens to them. And what's amazing about the whole of Absalom's time in listening to all of this steady trickle of people coming into Jerusalem, for all the people that he speaks to, he never meets a single case that he disagrees with. Amazing, isn't it? He agrees with all of them.

Verse three tells you that his stock line is, you know, your claims are valid and proper. You're right. You're right. He says the big problem in Jerusalem is not your case, which is excellent, if I may say

so. Your case is excellent. The big problem in Jerusalem is there's just not enough judges. There are not enough people to hear your cases. A problem, verse four, which if I would judge, I'd sort out, says Absalom. Notice he's not yet asking, is he, to be king? Very clever, isn't he? He's not trying to overdo it just now. He's just saying, just let me be a judge, and then the problem will be solved. To cement this sort of man of the people appearance, you know, people would go to bow down to him. You know, what an impressive guy. They go to bow down to him, but instead he'd kind of, he'd grab them in and pull them in for a kiss and a hug. Oh, come on. We're friends. We're buddies. Verse six summarizes it, doesn't it? Absalom behaved in this way towards all the Israelites who came to the king to ask for justice, and here you go, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel. Look the part. Step three, be patient. Verse seven is remarkable, isn't it? Absalom was clearly patient with his wicked plans. I think we've had hints already to Absalom's patience. In chapter 13, he took two years to take revenge on his brother Amnon, but now we learn in verse seven that he keeps this show up for four years. He must have met with hundreds and hundreds of Israelites and become famous among the tribes. You know, this fine-looking man with all these chariots and runners, always agrees with everything. What a knight. You go to bow down to him. This guy, he doesn't even take that. He pulls you in for a kiss. What great patience for four years. Step four, then, be cunning. If you look at Absalom's request to go and worship in Hebron, it sounds a little strange. By this time, he's been in Jerusalem quite a long time, and even though he was born in Hebron, and I suppose it was plausible that he might return to the place of his birth to fulfill a vow, still it is a little strange, isn't it, that he asks for this right now. Nevertheless, Absalom is cunning enough, I think, to dress up a request in spiritual-sounding language to his father so that his father will agree.

You know this, don't you? If you have a God-fearing parent, the way to get your own way with them is to ask what you want for in a way which makes it sound like it's the sort of thing that God might want you to do, and then your parent will agree with you. Well, that's exactly what Absalom is doing here. Oh, David, please, I know you're a man of God, aren't you, Dad? Let me go and worship God in Hebron. Of course, he had no intention, did he, of worshipping God? The real cunning, though, I think, is in verse 11. Absalom had done a really good job of winning the hearts of the people of Israel with this four-year show at the gates of Jerusalem, and verse 10 shows you that he's confident that when he blows the trumpet, they'll support him. But the problem, really, if you think about it, is the people in David's court, the people in Jerusalem. You see, everybody else who comes to Jerusalem might believe Absalom's case when he says, listen, the big problem in Jerusalem is that there's not enough people to hear the cases. You know, if I was a judge, I'd sort that out. But the people who know that's not true are the people who are working with David inside the court. They know that David does a fine job of all of that. And so Absalom's got to do something about David's government, David's civil service, all the people that will come in to fight for David when it comes down to it. So what he does, very cunningly, verse 11 tells you, he invites 200 of them to come with him to fulfill his vow in Hebron. And they have no idea where they're going, no idea what they're going to. And what Absalom has done here is effectively sort of ripped the heart out of David's government and his ability to govern by taking them against their will to Hebron, all of which is then helped by this guy Ahithophel, who is David's most skillful advisor, voluntarily, it seems, joining

Absalom as well. He was Bathsheba's grandfather. I wonder whether he wasn't a big fan of David. David. So there you go. Look the part, be a man of the people, be patient and be cunning. All of which lead to that conclusion at the end of verse 12, which tells you, and so the conspiracy gained strength and Absalom's following kept on increasing. Now, if that's Absalom's four-step plan to take over the kingdom, look at David's response. What does he do? Well, it's there in verse 14, he runs. He runs.

[14:14] Flee, move quickly, he says, taking everyone with him except for 10 concubines who are left not so much to defend the kingdom as preserve the palace for Absalom. The narrative then just slows down just a little bit, doesn't it, for this guy called Ittai the Gittite, who has, I think, a claim to being the best name in all the Bible, Ittai the Gittite. It sounds great to say it, doesn't it? He was a part of David's foreign conscript army employed in David's protection.

But he's a new arrival, and David, perhaps to test his loyalty, suggests that he should stay with the new king. Listen, your job, your job, your bodyguards to the king, and I'm not going to be the king anymore. You should stay with Absalom, the new king. Ittai's answer is remarkable, isn't it? In verse

21, he says that he's following not the king, but David's lord and David, serving him in life and death. It's an incredible statement of faith in David and his God. Next come the priests who've brought the Ark of the Covenant with them from the tabernacle, but David sends those guys back. David has learned by now, if you've not remembered this already from 2 Samuel, that carrying the Ark as a lucky charm is not the way to go.

It can be very costly. Instead, he's content to trust the Lord and leave it in Jerusalem. And that's then when you see David making some plans. He sets up the sons of the priests as messengers to communicate what's happening in Jerusalem. It's sort of the ancient equivalent of an encrypted message, sending even Hushai back to the palace to work with them. In fact, I think the way that Hushai is introduced, it seems as though Hushai's arrival is the answer to the prayer of verse 31, when David asks that Hithophel's advice would be frustrated. So David sends his old friend Hushai back just in time to deceive Absalom to say, oh yes, I'm going to serve you, but actually I'm going to supply information back to David. And verse 37 tells you that Hushai arrives just as Absalom is arriving in the city. Now that's the story. Okay, so that is 2 Samuel 15, but I want us just to slow down a bit and focus on David, because I think there's something remarkable in how the story is told about David, which brings to us hope and really sort of healing in the midst of betrayal. Take a look at verse 30 again, and let me try and explain what I mean. Let me just read it to you again. But David continued up the Mount of

Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered and he was barefoot, and all the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went. These verses, I think, are meant to pull out a contrast in the passage. What you've got in the passages is Absalom arriving in the city in great triumph and great victory, and David walking out of the city in great defeat, barefoot, weeping, head covered, walking with a company of other weeping, head covered followers. Absalom's cunning has won the kingdom and put him in the seat of the power, and David is now handing over everything to the Lord, insisting that even the ark remain in the city. He is walking and weeping, defeated.

This contrast, I think, is meant to bring out the scale of the betrayal here. You know, the innocent David is left in pain and weakness. The betrayer keeps everything that's been left behind. I think this is perhaps, isn't it, betrayal's greatest pain for us. I think it's not just the loss, is it, for David. It's not just the loss of the affections of a son. It is this contrast, isn't it, that the son is the innocent one, walking out weeping, while Absalom the wicked is riding in victory. It's the injustice of betrayal that is so painful, isn't it? I think that's what David is probably reflecting on in the Psalms.

[18:09] Lots of the Psalms, as you read them, I think, have this story at their heart. Psalm 35, David says this, they repay me evil for good and leave me like one bereaved. They do not speak peaceably, but devise false accusations against those who live quietly in the land. Lord, you have seen this, says David.

Don't be silent. Don't be far from me, Lord. Arise, awake, arise to my defence. Contend for me, my God and Lord. Vindicate me in your righteousness, my Lord and my God. Don't let them gloat over me.

It's the injustice, isn't it? So you've got this great contrast between Absalom riding in in victory, David coming in in defeat. But there is another contrast, too, also in this passage, because it's, as New Testament readers of the book, we get to see a contrast, not just between Absalom and David, but amazingly between Jesus and David here. It's a remarkable contrast, isn't it? It's one that the writer of 2 Samuel could not have seen, but that God, who is really the author of all the scriptures, he knows this as he inspires these words, that here is a contrast between not so much David and Absalom, but David and King Jesus. Let me just point that out to you if you've not seen it already. Here in this passage, as we read it, we see, don't we, that 1,500 years later than David, there is another betrayed king in Jerusalem. This other betrayed king in Jerusalem is also in the Kidron Valley. You remember that from John 18 that we read with the kids. He is also on the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane. He's marked by grief. He's weeping.

He's shedding sweat drops of blood, even, as a conspiracy against him forces him out of Jerusalem onto a wooden cross to die. And this, I think, is the whole point of 2 Samuel chapter 15. This is why it's in your Bible, because here's the thing. David, at the point of his betrayal, at the point of his greatest weakness is the most like Jesus as he ever is. David is the closest to Jesus in 2 Samuel 15, as at any other point in the story. In the point of his betrayal, he is literally walking in the steps of King Jesus. In other words, this great Old Testament shadow of Jesus to come shows us most

clearly what Jesus is like, not so much when he wins the battle, but when he loses Jerusalem. [20 : 50] And this, I think, is then the mind-bending truth about David's weakness, not his strength, pointing us to Christ. It's when he's betrayed, not honoured, that you see Jesus most clearly. But we've not yet seen the contrast, have we? Because that's the way that Jesus and David are the same.

Here's the contrast, okay? Here's the contrast between David and Jesus. David, in the weakness of his betrayal, is losing his kingdom. Jesus, in the weakness of his betrayal, is gaining a kingdom. Do you see it? Jesus, betrayed on the Mount of Olives at the moment of greatest human weakness, is not losing God's people, but winning God's people the kingdom. As betrayed and bleeding out on the cross, he dies for the sins of his people, to gather them together as a kingdom of forgiven saints who will love and trust and worship God, Father, Son, and Spirit for all eternity.

Now, I want to suggest to you that that contrast, which is at the heart of 2 Samuel 15, has massive implications for you and I this morning. Let me just draw out two for you. There are others, but we're going to focus on two. The first one is this, hope for the betrayed. Hope for the betrayed.

I think most of us probably know something, at least, of what David is going through here. We know something of the wounds of betrayal, don't we? You know what it is to experience this, of someone turning their back on you. Someone, at some stage, will do this to you if they have not yet done it. Someone will turn their back on you, let you down, deliberately betray you. Maybe they'll overlook you because of the color of your skin. Maybe they'll gossip about you and cause you grief.

And here's the truth of it. The closer they are to you relationally, the greater the depth of that pain will be. So as David says in Psalm 41, explaining this betrayal, he says, even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me, he says. But here then is the healing power of 2 Samuel 15, that it is at that point of betrayal, at the end of himself, as David weeps and walks up the Mount of Olives, that he gets to share in the footsteps of Jesus. In other words, the betrayal doesn't take you away from Christ, but can actually bring you closer to your Lord and Savior.

[23 : 14] Why? Well, for one hand, because Jesus, he knows exactly what betrayal feels like. He knows exactly what David is going through in 2 Samuel 15. He knows exactly what you're going through if you're being betrayed this morning. As betrayal empties you and faces you up to injustice, he knows exactly how you feel.

But more than that, more than that, as betrayal empties you of your own strength, it is at that point that you begin to realize how strong Jesus is. Let me give you a silly illustration, okay, just to slightly lighten the moment, but also just so that you can grasp what's really going on here. I want you to imagine for a moment that you're watching a guy try to undo a wheel nut on a car with a spanner made of jelly, okay? You're looking at this person, they're trying really hard to get the wheel nut off their car, but they have a spanner made of jelly. What are you doing as you think of that? You look at them and you think they have absolutely, I mean, you probably think I've entered a parallel universe, okay, where this sort of thing happens. But anyway, you think they have no hope, do they? Every time they put the nut on the spanner on the nut, it just kind of spills and goes to nothing. But then as you're watching, along comes somebody else and he takes the jelly spanner out of the hand of the other person and he puts it in his own hand and he puts it on the wheel nut and in a remarkable event, which you can't even believe you're seeing, he turns the spanner, the spanner made of jelly, and he undoes the wheel nut on the car and off it comes. And you look there thinking, who is that? Who is able to undo the wheel nut of a car with a spanner made of jelly? Who can do that? Who can do that? Now in a roundabout way, that's what's going on in 2 Samuel 15 and this parallel with Jesus. In Absalom's betrayal, what you see is the human weakness of David. He's undone by a cunning plan, isn't he? He's weak, he's dethroned. David, in our illustration, David is the man with a jelly spanner trying to undo a wheel nut. He has no hope, does he? He is defeated, he is weak, he is hopeless, he is dethroned. And in contrast then in John chapter 18, when you see Jesus walking the same steps with the same weakness, the same betrayal, the same human flesh, he undoes the wheel nut, doesn't he? It's his moment of victory. The same jelly spanner of humanity. He is not dethroned, but enthroned. He is not defeated, but he is victorious. And we look at that and go, who is this man? Who is this man who takes the weakness and the pain and the injustice of betrayal and takes it to himself, not in defeat, but in great victory to win the kingdom? Who is that?

Who is that? And the answer is, this is your saviour. Your saviour. The one whom your experiences of betrayal do not drag you away from, but draw you near to. He is the one who you will meet when you are at the end of yourself. He is the one that you can trust when all of the hopes have gone. He is the one who can take the betrayal of his friends and win a kingdom with it. So you can take your experience of betrayal and let you know victory, bringing you to glory. Now hear me rightly, I'm not trying to glorify suffering or betrayal as if it doesn't hurt or as if it doesn't matter. It really does, doesn't it?

What I'm trying to help you see is not that it doesn't matter, but what I'm trying to get you to see is that neither suffering nor betrayal, if you're experiencing those things this morning, neither of those things are a contradiction of the gospel. Instead, they're right at the heart of the gospel. So much so that when all other hopes have gone, when we've run out of resources ourselves, that's when we see who Christ is and what he's done. It's that in betrayed human weakness, you see the power of God at work. You know, this morning, maybe you're not a Christian this morning, or maybe you're not quite sure where you stand and you're thinking, why is all this about? I don't really understand all this. Well, let me try and say to you, this is what a Christian is, right?

A Christian is someone who has discovered true strength and they've not discovered it inside themselves. It is not their own true strength. They have discovered God's true strength and God's true strength is not shown in a display of a sort of awesome power and glory, but actually God's great strength is found in the weakness of the cross. In what God can do with human weakness is where you see the strength of God. What God can do with human weakness is greater than whatever we could do with great strength. So much so that becoming a Christian is not about bolting Jesus onto your life like a hobby or a therapist. It's not accepting a few facts that you didn't believe before. No, becoming a Christian is about seeing your own absolute weakness and abandoning all hope in yourself and trusting Christ alone. I'm never going to crack this life. I'm never going to make it through the betrayal and the heartbreak and the brokenness. I need a savior who is strong. I need someone who can take this weakness, this brokenness, this suffering and conquer it. I need a savior who can get me through death, a death conquering risen savior, Jesus. And if you're a Christian this morning, I want to suggest to you it's the degree to which you, like David, are willing to walk in the steps of Christ-like weakness, seeing your own hopelessness. It's to the degree to which you're willing to do that, that you will find the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't want to minimize anything that anyone in this room is facing. I know some of you are facing particular hardships and betrayals even.

[29 : 33] But let me say as gently as I can that if God has to let us face betrayal so that we might know his strength, it seems good to him to do it. Finally though, there's one other thing to see here, and not only hope for the betrayed, but hope for the betrayer. Hope for the betrayer.

Think just carefully about this with me as we close. If you've thought about 2 Samuel 15, and we've understood this rightly, if this really is a sort of inspired acting out of the future betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ, if 1500 years after the drama of 2 Samuel 15, you see the real drama in Jesus on the Mount of Olives weeping and betrayed. If that's true, then who are you and I in the story? Who are we in the story? Well in one sense we're not really David, are we? We're not really Jesus. We're not really the object of the betrayal of others. The truth is we are the betrayer.

We're the people who have ejected King Jesus. Our voices are the voices in the crowd shouting, crucify, crucify, crucify. We're the disciples who fall asleep in the garden and then run away when the soldiers come. We're the close friend who shared the bread and then put the knife in.

Or maybe you thought, goodness me Steve, that sounds a bit dramatic, doesn't it? We're not really, I don't think about God like that. I don't want to put the knife in. I don't think about Jesus like that. I quite like Jesus, you think. Is that sin really that serious? Well let me tell you, that's exactly how the Bible describes sin. The horror of sin in the Bible is not so much the wrong actions that you and I do. The horror of sin in the Bible is the fact that our wickedness, the wrong actions that we do are a betrayal of the God who made us. But I say this reverently, sin effectively is like flipping God off and saying, you know, stuff you. I'm going to get on with my own life. You know, I want to get to say what's right and wrong. You know, this is my life.

I'm going to live it my way. I want to live for my glory. Saying to God, give me my share of the inheritance. Let me live for myself. You know, let me live in a world where the sun comes up, where the rain falls, where the crops grow. You know, give me an iPhone and give me money in my bank and let me get on with my life. As if you don't exist. And the Bible says that is betrayal.

[32 : 01] Betrayal on a grand scale. That you and I were created for God's glory and yet we live for our own. What might you expect God to do with that kind of betrayal in his universe? If you'd made the world, inhabited it with creatures you'd made for your own glory and they live for their own, what would you do?

Well, I think we might expect God to lash out, but that's not what's going on, is it? Instead, in the moment of betrayal, in a display of humble strength that the world has never seen before or since, God himself in the person of the son in human flesh, submits himself to the cross and pays for your forgiveness, for your restoration to the father. You know, this is the hope for the betrayer, isn't it? For people like us. It's found even as a result of the fruit of the betrayal of the son.

You know, like I said, we effectively flip God off and yet he graciously moves towards us and he says, listen, hey you, you, you, the one who's betrayed me. You, the one who lives as if I don't exist. You, the one who is pursuing your own plans and dreams without regard or reference to me. You, you, the one over there who breathes my air, the air that I have made, who lives in the flesh that I have made, that I have given. Come to me. I love you. I've overcome your betrayal.

I've used even your betrayal to defeat your sin. Come, come and find hope. Find comfort in me. Come find strength in life and death. Come abandon all hope in yourself. Come trust in me. Come, come turn your back on your betrayal and come to me. Worship me. Live life for me and my glory.

[33 : 48] The words of our next hymn put it like this, turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

Let me pray and then we'll sing together. Let's just leave a moment of quiet for us to respond in our own hearts to what the Lord has said to us from his word.

Let's just leave a moment of quiet for us to respond in our own hearts to what the Lord has said to us from our own hearts to our own hearts.

Let's just leave a moment of quiet. Let's just leave a moment of quiet. Please, Heavenly Father, we know that we are the betrayers of 2 Samuel 15. That we've turned our back on you.

The very air that we breathe and breathe out desires to live for our own glory is given to us by you. But thank you that even through human betrayal, the Lord Jesus is able to provide for our forgiveness and our reconciliation.

[35 : 20] Please, we pray. May there be nobody in this room who leaves without being reconciled with you, coming back to you, finding forgiveness and grace and mercy for our betrayal.

And please, Lord, too, we pray, might you heal us from the wounds of others. Might you help us to appreciate that it is even in the pain of the injustice of betrayal that we might find your closeness with the Lord Jesus.

That he trod where we tread. And he wins even when we lose. So please, Lord, bring healing and hope to us this morning.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.