



Strength Of The Shepherd

By Lucy Wall

Life is certainly a mixture of positive and negative experiences and we all have to learn how to take the bad as well as the good! No matter who we are we're not immune to heartache and everyone is going to experience feelings of sadness, disappointment, loss and many other negative emotions as we journey through the years.

One particularly difficult experience which many of us will deal with at some point is the feeling of betrayal from a loved one. It's not the way God would have things but sadly it's highly likely that during our lives we'll all feel let down and deeply hurt by someone who was once close to us and who we considered to be a friend. This is a particularly painful blow and reminds me of David's words in Psalm 55:12-13 where he laments,

*"If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide.
But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend."*

Also in Psalm 41:9 David sorrowfully says,

"Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me."

A reproach from those who dislike us or don't know us is upsetting but has no where near the hurtful impact that an insult or the act of betrayal has from a friend or relative. The reproach of one who has been emotionally intimate with us and trusted by us, cuts us to the very core.

Having experienced this heartache first-hand and witnessed the same devastation caused in some of the lives of those close to me, I felt inspired to write a poem that sensitively addresses this subject. It's not intended to tear anyone down but rather my prayer is that it might lift people up.

Although the topic is a sad one, my hope is that the poem can ultimately bring a positive and uplifting message to anyone who may be going through a similar experience. If anyone can understand our heartache it's Jesus Christ who endured the worst betrayal in history. I really felt my Saviour ministering to me through these situations and I wanted to share the process I went through in the hope that it might help and encourage another.

It's far too easy for the devil to get a foot-hold when we're feeling the pain of betrayal and so it's imperative that we get the armour of God on and process our hurt in a Biblical way. A verse I found very encouraging during this time was Psalm 61:2 which says,

*"From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed;
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."*

I really pray this poem can minister to someone's heart today and help them find peace in the presence of Jesus. He is the God who understands the hurt more than anyone else and who knows every detail of the situation before we even utter a word. As Psalm 139:4 tells us,

"For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether."

When we have a clear conscience before our Saviour and know we've done all we can to be at peace with others as Romans 12:18 exhorts us, then we can leave the situation in God's hands, knowing that He sees our plight and will fight for us. He'll work on our behalf and grant us peace in the meantime as we grow spiritually and surrender all to Him.

It's certainly a hard lesson in life but when those who once embraced us now offer nothing more than a cold shoulder, may we turn to our loving Saviour and look to His example. May we be granted healing through His unconditional, unfailing love and find rest in His warm embrace.



Oh Lord I come before You with a heaviness of heart,
I come with wounds inflicted by another.
Though life has shown me many times the callous ways of man,
I never thought I'd gain them from a sister or a brother.

Had it been my enemy who sought to hurt my soul,
Had it been my foe who cursed my name
I would have had endurance to face the bitter trial,
Instead to my despair it was a *friend* who caused this pain.

One I called "companion" and lifted up in prayer,
One I gave to freely with my time.
One with whom I fellowshiped and showed them love and care.
One with whom my soul rejoiced in purposes divine.

Much sharper is the knife when it belongs to one you love,
Far deeper is the cut into your heart.
Greater are the blows when dealt from one who'd earned your trust.
Much harsher are their wounds because they tear your soul apart.

They leave you in confusion, in sadness and in doubt,
Wondering what planted such a seed.
Filled with disappointment while processing the pain;
Betrayal from a loved one is a bitter pill indeed.

And yet you know this fully Lord, You understand the heartache.
My prayers of deep despair You won't dismiss
For You endured the treachery of one whom You had chosen,
The night a friend approached You and betrayed You with a kiss.

Disloyalty beyond compare, deception most appalling!
His faithlessness would send You to Your *death*!
His treason and desertion had been bought with merely silver,
You knew You'd be betrayed and to the point of dying breath.

And yet You *still* extended Your compassion and Your mercy,
Using not Your power as God's Son.
Forsaking Heaven's angels, commanding not their army,
Instead Your words were filled with grace, "Friend, why have you come?"



A glorious example of Your kindness and forbearance!
Strength of heart that puts the rest to shame!
Rebuking Peter's actions that sought retaliation
For vengeance and reprisal bring no glory to Your name!

Instead You did Your Father's will, submitting to injustice,
You sought to gain redemption for the lost.
Knowing what You'd come to do, inspired by Your passion,
Suffering the wrong, You bravely chose to face the Cross.

Thinking of the torture and the trials You endured,
Knowing that You died to set me free
Fills my heart with worship for the God who came as Man.
Scorned by those You loved and You endured it all for me.

If anyone can understand the heartache of betrayal,
If anyone has felt the pain it brings,
If anyone can comprehend and know it all completely,
Surely it is You O Lord, my God, the King of kings!

And so I bow before Your Throne seeking strength and comfort,
I place this situation in Your hands.
Relinquishing desire to control or change the outcome,
Surrendering to You, my Great High Priest who understands.

Help me to respond like You and mirror Your example,
Let anger and resentment have no place.
May I always have a heart for peace and restoration,
Should we meet again then may my words be filled with grace.

Much greater is the strength of heart required in this moment!
Far deeper must I delve into Your love.
Much higher are Your ways O Lord, please give my soul endurance.
Far better is the peace You grant my spirit from above.

So set my focus once again on living for Your glory,
May my life bring honour to You Lord!
Longing for the day You call Your Bride into Your Kingdom,
When every hurt will be erased and all will be restored!



Matthew 26:47-56

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

“And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.” Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?”

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.”

John 6:38

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Hebrews 4:15-16

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Romans 12:18

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Matthew 5:23-24

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.”

Psalms 34:18

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Proverbs 18:24

*“A man who has friends must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”*

Ephesians 4:1-3

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”