

The LORD a Fortress in Adversity (Psalm 31)

About Psalm 31

- This psalm expresses David’s heart in the midst of a troubling situation, and we all know that he’s had quite a few of those!
- Two possibilities for when it was written:
 - His betrayal by the men of Keilah after he had just saved them from the Philistines.
 - When David was on the run from Absalom who rebelled against him.
- This psalm expresses the hopes we all should have when facing difficulties.
- In Psalm 31, David takes us through the ups and downs of his trust, doubt, fear, persecution, and weakness, while always pointing to God’s faithfulness, mercy, redemption and salvation.

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

*¹ In You, O Lord, I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in Your righteousness.*

- The very first thing David acknowledges is his trust in God.
- He humbles himself, recognizing that his righteousness comes from the Lord.

*² Bow down Your ear to me,
Deliver me speedily;
Be my rock of refuge,
A fortress of defense to save me.*

*³ For You are my rock and my fortress;
Therefore, for Your name's sake,
Lead me and guide me.*

- It is humbling and amazing that the God of all creation invites us to speak to Him, and He is willing not only to listen, but to act on our requests.
- David even asks Him to “hurry up! I need you right now!”
- David again speaks about the immovability of God as his rock and fortress twice.
- Not only is He a place we can run to for protection, and shelter – He is also the One we can run to for eternal salvation!
- David appeals to the Lord as the leader of his life.

*⁴ Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me,
For You are my strength.*

*⁵ Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*

*⁶ I have hated those who regard useless idols;
But I trust in the Lord.*

*⁷ I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy,
For You have considered my trouble;
You have known my soul in adversities,*

*⁸ And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy;
You have set my feet in a wide place.*

- David alludes to the fact that, while he can't trust what he sees around him, the Lord knows every trap the enemy has set up to try to ensnare him.
- We see these all too familiar words, quoted by Jesus on the cross. David is saying I trust you with my very life, not just today, but forever.
- David reiterates his trust and faith in the Lord, and the idea that he has no use for those who reject God for other obsessions or deities. He reminds God of His faithfulness through all of David's trials and troubles.

⁹ Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble;

My eye wastes away with grief,

Yes, my soul and my body!

¹⁰ For my life is spent with grief,

And my years with sighing;

My strength fails because of my iniquity,

And my bones waste away.

- Here David is showing his humanity.
- He has been crying, and miserable, having a nice self-pity party. He is tired and weary after so many years of being on the run.

¹¹ I am a reproach among all my enemies,

But especially among my neighbors,

And am repulsive to my acquaintances;

Those who see me outside flee from me.

¹² I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind;

I am like a broken vessel.

¹³ For I hear the slander of many;

Fear is on every side;

While they take counsel together against me,

They scheme to take away my life.

- So David lists out some more of the misery he is feeling.
- The ones closest to us are often the ones who hurt us the most when we are going through trials.

¹⁴ But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord;

I say, "You are my God."

¹⁵ My times are in Your hand;

Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,

And from those who persecute me.

¹⁶ Make Your face shine upon Your servant;

Save me for Your mercies' sake.

¹⁷ Do not let me be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon You;

Let the wicked be ashamed;

Let them be silent in the grave.

¹⁸ Let the lying lips be put to silence,

Which speak insolent things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

- As is true with many of his psalms, David rides the roller coaster of emotional highs and lows.
- David addresses the intimacy and sovereignty of God here.
- David talks about the timing of God.
- David seeks a way out of his trials knowing all the while that they are a necessary part of life.
- Seek God's presence as you wait for an answer.
- David asks that his enemies be silenced.

*19 Oh, how great is Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!
20 You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence
From the plots of man;
You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion
From the strife of tongues.*

- David considers the goodness of God despite his circumstances.
- David again reminds us of the Lord’s protection for us.

*21 Blessed be the Lord,
For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!
22 For I said in my haste,
“I am cut off from before Your eyes”;
Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications
When I cried out to You.*

- Again David speaks of God’s faithfulness in spite of his own doubt.

*23 Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints!
For the Lord preserves the faithful,
And fully repays the proud person.
24 Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart,
All you who hope in the Lord.*

- David ends with praise and encouragement for those in tough times.

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