

David Calls on the Lord for Deliverance

Psalm 31

Psalm 31 – “In You, O LORD, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed. Deliver me in Your righteousness. Bow down Your ear to me; deliver me speedily. Be my rock of refuge, a fortress of defense to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress.

Therefore, for Your name’s sake, lead me and guide me. Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for You are my strength. Into Your hand I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. I have hated those who regard useless idols; but I trust in the LORD.

I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble. You have known my soul in adversities, and have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy. You have set my feet in a wide place.

Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble. My eye wastes away with grief, yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. My strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. 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. I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind. I am like a broken vessel, 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. But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in Your hand.

Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me. Make Your face shine upon Your servant. Save me for Your mercies’ sake. 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. Let the lying lips be put to silence.

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!

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.

Blessed be the LORD, for He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!

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.

Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, and fully repays the proud person. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”

Background Notes

In this personal lament psalm, David called on the Lord to deliver him from physical distress and danger. Then David thanked and praised the Lord for hearing and answering his prayers.

The title of this psalm reveals that it was a psalm of David, for the choir director. So, somewhere along the line, this psalm about David's experience of danger and deliverance was put to music for worship at the Temple.

Psalms 31 could be outlined as follows: verses 1-6 is a prayer, a supplication for deliverance; verses 7 & 8 is a song of praise for the deliverance; verses 9-18 is a prayer, a supplication for deliverance; verses 19-22 is again a song of praise for deliverance; then the conclusion of the psalm is a call for all believers to praise and worship the Lord for His goodness and promises (v23-24).

We don't know of the exact occasion of this psalm, but most likely it was written during the time of Saul's persecution of David, and there is a very good possibility that took place during David's time at Keilah. 1 Samuel 23:7-12 - *"And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, 'God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.' Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring the ephod here.' Then David said, 'O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.' And the LORD said, 'He will come down.' Then David said, 'Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?' And the LORD said, 'They will deliver you to him.'"*

Notice that David escaped. He and his men were delivered from being shut up and besieged in a fortified city (Psalm 31:21-22). 1 Samuel 23:13 - *"So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go... And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand."* Psalm 31 gives us David's praise to the Lord for his deliverance.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. The experiences of David in Psalm 31 have personal applications.

The structure of this psalm is like traveling through valleys and mountains. In the valley David cries out to the Lord for deliverance, and then on the mountaintop he praises the Lord for the deliverance. As a result, this psalm has a lot of personal applications, because life consists of highs and lows. Even Christians have valley experiences, as well as the mountaintop experiences.

In David's prayer for deliverance in (v1-6), we see that even though he is surrounded by the enemy as by a net (v4), David is confident in the Lord that he is safe and secure. Notice the terms that David uses to describe the Lord as his security: my refuge (v2), my stronghold, or fortress (v2), and my rock (v3). When we are in some valley experience, we too can trust in the Lord as our Rock and Fortress.

In David's song of deliverance in (v7-8), David praises the Lord that he has not been handed over to the enemy. Let me ask you: did you ever thank the Lord for keeping you safely out of the hands of Satan? Satan is the enemy who would just love to get a hold of you and destroy your faith. Remember what the Lord said to Peter in Luke 22? *"Simon, Simon, indeed Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat but I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail."* We should remember to thank the Lord for delivering us from temptation to do what is evil.

In verses 9-18, David is again in the valley, and again we have his prayer for deliverance. All of us can identify with David in at least some of our personal experiences: times of grief (v9), or sorrow (v10), or weakness (v10). Notice, by the way, that David is willing to admit that part of his problem is because of his own sin: *"My strength fails because of my iniquity"* (v10). Many believers today are unwilling to admit that sometimes our own sin has been the cause of our problems. What about you? What about me?

We see rejection in verses 11-12, slander in verse 13, and terror in verse 13. In all of these experiences, David could still say, *"I trust in the Lord"* (v14), because he knew that his times were in God's hands (v15). Can we say *"My times are in your hand?"* Can we say that through all the ups and downs (especially in the downs) of life? If you can say that, and **mean** it, you have great faith.

When David prays for the Lord to let the wicked be put to shame and die (v17-18), he is not seeking personal revenge. Rather, he is asking the Lord to silence the proud and wicked scoffers who mocked and derided the Lord.

In verses 19-22, David is again on the mountaintop, and thanking and praising the Lord for His blessings along with His deliverance:

- the blessing of stored up goodness (v19) - I love that concept, don't you?
- the blessing of being hidden in God's secret place, safe from the opposition (v20)
- the blessing of God's loving kindness, even when we are under siege (v21)
- the blessing of knowing God hears our prayers (v22).

In the last two verses of the psalm, we are exhorted to worship and praise the Lord, as David did, to thank Him for the His goodness and His promises. The experiences of David in Psalm 31 have personal applications.

2. The experiences of David in Psalm 31 have prophetic implications.

Not only do we have personal applications in Psalm 31, but we have prophetic implications as well.

Psalm 31 has Messianic implications. Look at the beginning of verse 5: *"Into Your hand I commit my spirit."* The Lord Jesus quoted this verse from the cross. In fact all the way through the psalm, we can see parallels with David's sufferings on the one hand, and our Lord's sufferings on the other. The difference, of course, is that David speaks about the consequences of his own iniquity (v10), but it was **our** iniquities that caused **Christ's** sorrows.

The resurrection of Christ can be glimpsed in the natural pause in the middle of verse 5. *"Into Your hand I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth."*

Not only do we have Messianic prophetic implications in Psalm 31, but we also foresee the sufferings and deliverance of the restored Jewish remnant of Israel during the coming tribulation period of the last days. That restored remnant will certainly identify with the content of this psalm in that day of trouble. The experiences of David in Psalm 31 have prophetic implications.

Practical Application

Let's stop bowing to idols!

Look again at verse 6: *"I have hated those who regard useless idols, but I trust in the LORD."* I'm sure you would say, "I would never bow to an idol!" But are you sure?

David, the inspired writer of this psalm, drew a contrast here between those who trusted in useless idols and those who trusted in the Lord for their security. There was no middle ground. If you were not completely trusting in the Lord for your care, protection, and deliverance, then you're at least showing some favor toward trusting in the worthless "idols" of our culture.

Do you see the practical application? Are we - am I - completely trusting the Lord for care and protection and guidance? Or am I - are we - bowing even slightly to other things - "idols" - for our security? This does not mean that we shouldn't have jobs, or life insurance policies, or saving accounts, but it does raise the question of where we are putting our complete trust for security for ourselves, our families, and our future.

Let's stop bowing to idols!