

Psalms 31:0 ¶ To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

Another psalm David wrote for the chief Musician to be used in praising God before the tabernacle.

1 Chronicles 6:31–32 “And these are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after that the ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem....”

Psalms 31:1 ¶ In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

David opens this song with a declaration of his trust in the LORD as his protector and his place of refuge. It's interesting to me that he often asks the LORD not to let that trust be ashamed or disappointed. We know that when we trust in the LORD, He will never let us down or disappoint us even though we may not understand all the hows and whys of the process He chooses to use.

The king asks the LORD to deliver him in His righteousness; David knew his own righteousness would never qualify as an acceptable basis for his request.

Spurgeon: “No mention is made of merit, but faith relies upon divine favour and faithfulness, and upon that alone.”

Psalms 31:2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.

Psalms 31:3 For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

David asks the LORD to “bow down” and listen to him because he recognizes the greatness of God over man that he pictures as bowing down to get to his level. It reminds me of his words from another psalm.

Psalms 8:4 “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?”

David also prays specifically; he asks the LORD to answer his prayer quickly. His trust is in the LORD as his rock of strength and his fortress of defense. He makes his request to the LORD in light of upholding the honor of His name. Recognized as a man of God, David reasons that what happens to him directly affects the honor of God's name. Moses used this same reasoning when interceding for the people of Israel after they sinned.

Exodus 32:11–12 “And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.”

David also asked for the LORD to guide him. The Hebrew for “guide” was a bit surprising—“to run with a sparkle...and (by inference) to protect, sustain:—carry, feed, guide, lead (gently, on).” David wants to have the LORD by his side as his protector, sustainer, provider and leader.

Psalms 31:4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* my strength.

Psalms 31:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

David had evidently fallen into a trap that his enemies had laid for him, and he wants the LORD to take him out of it. He knows that God’s strength can overcome any enemy. David has totally committed his life to the LORD. David is confident that the LORD will rescue him because He is the God of truth; He is trustworthy.

I often find myself following David’s example. I go to the LORD in prayer asking for His deliverance and then ending that same prayer by thanking Him for that answer in advance. The caveat is always the fact that I understand that the answer may not come in the timing or manner of my choosing, but according to what He deems best. It has taken me many years to learn to truly rest in that truth.

The New Bible Commentary made a thought-provoking statement: “The hand of God is not the place where we are immune from life’s troubles; it is the place where they happen to us; our security is not from trouble but in trouble.”

Psalms 31:6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.

Many time throughout the psalms David boldly declares his hatred of those that reject God as their LORD. In this verse, he identifies those people as regarding “lying vanities.” The Hebrew seems to be making reference to worthless false gods. In contrast, David is always quick to publicly declare his trust in the LORD, the self-existent, eternal, all powerful God of Israel.

Psalms 31:7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;

Psalms 31:8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.

I liked the NLT wording for verse 7: “*I am overcome with joy because of your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.*” These thoughts brought to mind the words of Peter.

1 Peter 5:7 “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

Spurgeon: “the Lord Jesus knows us in our pangs in a peculiar sense, by having a deep sympathy towards us in them all; when no others can enter into our griefs, from want of understanding them experimentally, Jesus dives into the lowest depths with us, comprehending the direst of our woes, because he has felt the same.”

David was also thankful that the LORD had delivered him from the enemy and set him in a “large room,” or a place of safety that the enemy can’t enter without His permission, an idea repeated in another psalm.

Psalms 18:19 “He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.”

Psalms 31:9 ¶ Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.

Psalms 31:10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

David often calls out for God to show him mercy—His kindness, favor, pity and graciousness—when he is in trouble. He seems to be experiencing a time of great sorrow in light of some specific sin in his life. The burden of his sin is affecting his whole being—spiritual, emotional and physical. The wording seems to indicate that he is an older man at this time.

Psalms 31:11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.

Psalms 31:12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.

Psalms 31:13 For I have heard the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

Once again, I think the NLT states it well: *“I am scorned by all my enemies and despised by my neighbors—even my friends are afraid to come near me. When they see me on the street, they turn the other way. I have been ignored as if I were dead, as if I were a broken pot. I have heard the many rumors about me, and I am surrounded by terror. My enemies conspire against me, plotting to take my life.”*

In other words, David is at a very low place in his physical and emotional life.

Spurgeon re “neighbors” in verse 11: Those who are nearest can stab the sharpest. We feel most the slights of those who should have shown us sympathy.”

Psalms 31:14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my God.

Psalms 31:15 My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

Spiritually, however, David is steady and firmly trusting in the LORD as “his” God. He knows that his life is in God’s hand and that He can deliver him from his enemies and those that are hunting him to do him harm.

Another Spurgeon gem: “The sovereign arbiter of destiny holds in his own power all the issues of our life; we are not waifs and strays upon the ocean of fate, but are steered by infinite wisdom towards our desired haven.”

Psalms 31:16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies’ sake.

Psalms 31:17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.

Psalms 31:18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

“Make thy face to shine upon thy servant” is a call for the LORD to show David favor and grant his request. It’s a quote from the priestly blessing as recorded by Moses.

Numbers 6:24–26 “The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Again, he repeats his request from verse one—LORD, please don’t disappoint me since I have prayed to you in faith. He asks for the LORD to destroy his enemies and let them die. He wants their lying lips to be put to silence so that they can no longer persecute those that love the LORD.

David lived under the law. Such a prayer is no longer appropriate for those of us who are under the new covenant of grace through Jesus, who introduced a radical change of behavior towards our enemies.

Matthew 5:44 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

Psalms 31:19 ¶ Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Psalms 31:20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

David breaks out into words of praise about the great goodness that the LORD has hidden and waiting for those that fear Him, those that have publicly declared their trust in Him. David describes God’s presence as a covering of protection over His people.

We, as Christians, are so blessed to enjoy God’s presence through the indwelling Holy Spirit. He is with us to empower us, to intercede for us in prayer, to instruct us in the truth of God’s word and to strengthen and comfort us as we confront the trials and tribulations of this life, and so much more.

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

1 Corinthians 2:12–13 “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

John 14:16–17 “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

Psalms 31:21 Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

Psalms 31:22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Again, I like the simplified wording of the NLT: “Praise the LORD, for he has shown me his unfailing love. He kept me safe when my city was under attack. In sudden fear I had cried out, ‘I have been cut off from the LORD!’ But you heard my cry for mercy and answered my call for help.”

David is praising the LORD for answered prayer.

Psalms 31:23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

David closes his song by urging the saints, those who have chosen to trust the LORD, to love the LORD, to show him by their actions that they love Him. The LORD rewards faith with protection and provision; however, He will judge the proud (arrogant, haughty).

Psalms 31:24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

David then urges the saints to be of good courage, to stand strong in their faith. When you trust in the LORD, He will strengthen your heart and make your faith even stronger.