

Background to Psalm 31

- David wrote this as a “Psalm” (to be sung).
- V.21 speaks of David in a “besieged city” — which is probably Keilah (see 1 Sam 23:1-14)
 - ✓ David went to Keilah to deliver it from the Philistines
 - ✓ And even the experienced King & warrior David had to ask God and get direction from God
 - ✓ And when he had God’s clear direction, even David’s men couldn’t sway his thoughts. He had to - and he was determined to - obey God.
 - ✓ Then he rescued the citizens of Keilah from the Philistines (even though being severely outnumbered). What victory from the LORD! David had only 400 men!
 - ✓ But the citizens of Keilah were thankless and were going to deliver David over to Saul; they didn’t appreciate what he did for them.
 - ✓ But he humbly got up, arose, and left with his men. What a Humble Warrior.

★**You need Ps 31 –an “unwavering Trust in the LORD”**

THESIS — Ps 31 provides *practical lessons on prayer so that you can commit yourself to God fully in any and every season of life.*

1. **Shelter** Me! (1-8) - fortress
2. **Sustain** Me! (9-13) - feelings
3. **Sanctify** Me! (14-24) - faith

I. SHELTER ME! (1-8) [FORTRESS]

The Hebrew images for “Shelter”:

1. v.1 - I take **REFUGE** —
2. v.2 - be a **ROCK OF SAFETY** —
3. v.2 - a **STRONGHOLD** —
4. v.3 - you are my **ROCK** —
5. v.4 - for you are my **STRENGTH** —

II. SUSTAIN ME! (9-13) [FEELINGS]

The Bible honestly shows how feelings and emotions must be *governed by and interpreted through *theological Truth**.

Psalm 31 — “Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit”

David needed to be sustained for the following difficulties:

1. v.9- Physical
2. v.10a- Emotional
3. v.11- Social
4. v.13b- Mortal
5. v.10b- Spiritual

Psalm 31 in other/later texts:

- **Jonah** prayed Psalm 31:6 (Jonah 2:8)
- **Jeremiah** was haunted by a phrase from Psalm 31:13 (Jeremiah 20:10)
- **Jesus** spoke it on the cross; Psalm 31:5 (Luke 23:46)
- Even in old age, the **author** of Psalm 71 prayed Psalm 31:1-3.
- Stephen died and prayed Ps 31:5 (Acts 7:59)

III. SANCTIFY ME! (14-24) [FAITH]

**But as for me* - I will *choose* this.*

***how do you do this? how do you grow?**

- A. You must have God to be *your* God. (14)**
- B. Your times are fully in God’s control. (15)**
- C. You let God handle the proud rebels. (16-18)**
- D. You revel in God’s exceeding goodness. (19-22)**
- E. You cling to Godly saints for fellowship. (23)**
- F. You walk in strength, courage & hope. (24)**

FAITH is not a one-time commitment.

It is a radical call for a lifetime of commitment.

Commitment is abandonment to the living God, who has promised to guard (“preserve”) his own (v. 23).

Such is the life of faith.

The outcome is uncertain;

but faith lets God be God –

by responding to him in love,

by living in the strength of “faith” (v. 24a),

by observing his word ... ,

and by waiting in the hope of redemption (v. 24b; cf. 33:18, 22)

– Willem VanGemeren

Luke 23:46 — with a loud voice, Jesus cried out: “Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit. And when he said this he breathed his last.”

Short story of Martin Luther and his trouble with Psalm 31:1

Early in the 16th Century, a German monk and seminary professor named Martin Luther taught through Psalms, verse-by-verse, at the University of Wittenberg. In his teaching he came upon this statement in Psalm 31:1 (31:2 in German). The passage confused him; how could God's righteousness deliver him? The righteousness of God – His great justice – could only condemn him to hell as a righteous punishment for his sins.

One night up in a tower in the monastery, Luther thought about this passage in Psalms and also read Romans 1:17: *For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed*. Luther said he thought about this day and night, until he finally understood what the righteousness of God revealed by the gospel is. It is not speaking of the holy righteousness of God that *condemns* the guilty sinner, but of the God-kind of righteousness that is *given* to the sinner who puts his trust in Jesus Christ.

Luther said of this experience: "I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. Therefore I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise..... This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into heaven." Martin Luther was born again, and the reformation began in his heart. One great Lutheran scholar said this was "the happiest day in Luther's life." (David Guzik)

Responsive reading

Psalm 62:5-7 and Hebrews 6:17-20

Psa. 62:5 My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him.

Psa. 62:6 He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.

Psa. 62:7 On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.

Heb. 6:17 God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,

Heb. 6:18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

Heb. 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,

Heb. 6:20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

HE WILL HOLD ME FAST

When I fear my faith will fail
 Christ will hold me fast
 When the tempter would prevail
 He will hold me fast
 I could never keep my hold
 Through life's fearful path
 For my love is often cold
 He must hold me fast

He will hold me fast
He will hold me fast
For my Savior loves me so
He will hold me fast

Those He saves are His delight
 Christ will hold me fast
 Precious in His holy sight
 He will hold me fast
 He'll not let my soul be lost
 His promises shall last
 Bought by Him at such a cost
 He will hold me fast

For my life He bled and died
 Christ will hold me fast
 Justice has been satisfied
 He will hold me fast
 Raised with Him to endless life
 He will hold me fast
 Till our faith is turned to sight
 When he comes at last

PSALM 31: PSALTER (Isaac Watts, 1700s)

Tune: Alas & did my Savior Bleed [or: Amazing Grace]

Unto thine hand, O God of truth,
 My spirit I commit;
 Thou hast redeemed my soul from death,
 And saved me from the pit.

"My times are in thine hand," I cried,
 "Though I draw near the dust;
 Thou art the refuge where I hide,
 The God in whom I trust.

Thy goodness how divinely free!
 How wondrous is thy grace
 To those that fear thy majesty,
 And trust thy promises!

Slander and fear on every side
 Seized and beset me round
 I to the throne of grace applied,
 And speedy rescue found.

Within thy secret presence, Lord,
 Let me for ever dwell;
 No fenced city, walled and barred,
 Secures a saint so well.