

God's Protection

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[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little to the Psalms, Book of Psalms, Psalm 31, Psalm we read, and reading verses 22 to the end.

Psalm 31 at verse 22, I said in my alarm, I am cut off from your sight, or that is when it says I had said in my alarm or in my haste, I am cut off from your sight, but you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help.

Love the Lord, all you who sins. The Lord preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.

Now as we've often said before, David had to experience many, many things.

He had to experience many things for himself, he had to experience many things for the sake of the cause, and for the glory of God. He had to experience many things for us here today.

[1 : 16] Because as you know, David, he often ploughed the depths, and some of the experiences he went through were absolutely harrowing and devastating. And some of the experiences that he went through were so wonderful that he sang a higher song than probably most people did in this world.

And the great thing was that in the hand of God, or under the hand of God, David turned these experiences into song.

As he was inspired by God's Spirit, these experiences, both the ones of darkness and the ones of light, the ones from the depths and the ones from the height, were turned into song.

And that is why the Book of Psalms is the greatest songbook in the world. There is no greater songbook. Because there we touch upon virtually every kind of human emotion and every type of experience.

And also we are brought in to see so much of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, in this particular psalm, we find David, of course, as was so often the case, he was surrounded by enemies, he was under pressure.

[2 : 33] Things were really, really difficult for him. And sometimes everything is coming in on top of him. And David does something that he's done on quite a few occasions.

He comes to a decision in haste. He makes a hasty decision. That's what he said. I said in my alarm or in my haste that I am cut off from your sight.

And often we can make a wrong decision when we're under pressure. And particularly a wrong decision when we make that decision in haste. When we make an assessment of how things are. And particularly if everything is pressing down on us and we feel our world is upside down. We come to a conclusion. We make our conclusions. We make our assessments. But often these assessments are wrong.

And David discovered that the assessment that he had made was wrong. He had made an assessment like that before. He had said on another occasion, he said, surely. Remember Saul was hunting him.

[3 : 37] He said, surely I will one day die by the hand of Saul. God had given him great and wonderful promises. God had assured him that he was going to be king.

And yet there were moments when David was so surrounded by Saul and the enemies. And he felt so helpless. That in the darkness of his moments and thoughts.

Now he said, I'll never be king. I'm going to die by Saul's hand one day. But he made that as a hasty conclusion. A hasty, just as he did here. I said in my haste.

And that's what he did then. It's the very same as Jacob. And again, we can understand why. Jacob, remember, he had lost Joseph. And then Benjamin was taken.

Remember when they went down to Egypt to get food. And Joseph kept Benjamin. And of course, the brothers didn't know it was Joseph. Jacob thought that Joseph was dead.

[4 : 36] And then, of course, when Benjamin was taken. He said, all these things are against me. And that was the obvious. That would be the natural conclusion.

If you had been in Jacob's place. If I had been in Jacob's place. I probably would have said the exact same thing. I've lost Joseph. And now Jacob. All these things are against me.

But they weren't. Because Jacob and Joseph were restored. And in fact, Jacob was to discover. Rather than that. Rather than being against him.

It was part of all the good. With God working all things together for good. Because God was going to turn it all around. And God was working for the good of Jacob.

He was working for the good of Jacob's family. And he was working for the good of Egypt. He was working really for the good of the whole world. So we often come to a conclusion.

[5 : 36] Halfway through an issue. Or we come to a conclusion when things are tough. And afterwards, sometimes as time goes on.

And we're able maybe to step back and say. Whoa. This is not. It's not exactly how I thought. It's not working out as I thought. So that's exactly where we are here with David.

He comes. And he makes an assessment of a situation. And he's got it all wrong. And of course, the assessment of the situation that he has made. Is one that can never ever happen.

Because David has come to a conclusion about something that cannot happen. I said in my alarm, I am cut off from your sight. That is something that cannot happen to God's people.

At no point ever in your experience or in your life, however dark it may be, are you cut off from God's sight. His eye is upon you all the time.

[6 : 39] His ear is open to your cry all the time. There is no point where he has turned his back upon you. All the time he is with you. But there are times when we fear.

Just like David. We can sometimes say, I said in my haste, I am cut off from your sight. There are times we feel that. Sometimes, particularly when we might be going through troubles or trials and difficulties.

And life is tough. And just, you seem to be hitting a wall everywhere. And nothing is making sense. Your world has been turned upside down. And through all that is happening, you are thinking, God has forgotten me.

God has abandoned me. God has turned his back upon me. God is not in this. God has turned his back upon me. And so, just like David, it's all too easy for us to say, in our haste, that we've been cut off from God's sight.

But we haven't. Again, sometimes when we're bombarded by temptation, there are periods when we are absolutely bombarded by temptation.

[7 : 47] Where we feel that every thought is sinful. At one level or another. And when we reach that particular point, we wonder, was there ever grace in my heart at all?

And if I am like that, maybe the Lord has cut me off. Maybe I was never his in the first place. Or if I was, he's abandoned me.

He's just given up. Sometimes we can come to that conclusion by our own careless walk. If we're not walking in the way that we should. If we're not walking in step with the Lord.

And we begin to walk in darkness rather than in the light. And that can happen to God's people. Where they walk in darkness rather than the light. Because they're not walking in step with God. And when that happens. When we move sideways from the light or back from the light. We don't enjoy the presence, the peace of God in the same way.

[8 : 46] And we can begin to go down. And we can begin to question things. And we can come to the conclusion. I've been cut off. Or the Lord has forgotten all about me.

I'm cast out from his sight. And our sense of sin and guilt and all these things. There's just so many different things that can cause that to happen upon us. But the wonderful thing here is.

This is what we see with David. I had said in my haste I am cut off from your sight. But. You heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. What did David do?

When he felt that he had been cut off from the Lord. He just cried to him. And he cried and he cried. And the beauty of it is. That David didn't go and start saying.

All right. I have written by the inspiration of God's spirit. I have written so many psalms. David was a theologian. There's no question about it.

[9 : 48] He was a natural theologian. Being taught by the Lord. And he was somebody who was so full of God's word. But David didn't take great theological prayers to the Lord.

His cry was a very simple one. It was one for mercy. And you know. That's where we go over and over and over again. That's how we began.

At the very, very, very beginning of our Christian walk. That's how we began. A cry for mercy. A cry for mercy means. We have a need. When we have a need.

It means that we're aware that there is somebody who can meet that need. That's what happens. God's spirit opens our heart to see our need.

And to see himself as the one who can meet that need. And that's what a cry for mercy is. Lord, be merciful to me. And you know this.

[10 : 46] That is a cry the Lord will never, ever, ever, ever turn away from. Why? Because he is a God who delights in mercy. I love that word.

That phrase. God delights in mercy. It's something that he takes great pleasure in. Is displaying his mercy. Is showing his mercy.

In giving his mercy. And so we began our Christian journey. Calling and crying for mercy. And we do it every day.

And we will do it as long as there's breath in our body. And we're able to call to him. We will be calling. Our first cry will be for mercy. And our last cry in this world will be for mercy.

Because we are always in that state of need. And of course when David cried for mercy. But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. When I cried to you for help.

[11 : 44] And the Lord will hear your cry. And he'll hear my cry. Always has. And always will. Doesn't mean that he's going to answer immediately. Or answer in the way that we want. But he will.

He will. And that's why David then. Typical David. When God helps him. Or releases him. Or delivers him.

He doesn't keep to himself. And say oh dear that was good. He is so full of joy. And thanksgiving to God. He wants everybody to join in.

David was obviously one of the most charismatic people. That you've ever met. And he enthused everybody. He wanted everybody to be in on this. Love the Lord. Not just me.

He didn't just say I love the Lord. Love the Lord. All you his saints. Every single believer. Everywhere. Let's get together. Display this. Our love to the Lord.

[12 : 42] And for the Lord. This is a great debt of gratitude. That we owe to the Lord. Is love to him. Do you tonight love the Lord. And probably the one thing you say to yourself is.

I wish I could love the Lord more. I think I've said it before. Because I think it's so often the way we feel. But I reckon tonight. You'll be saying to yourself. You know I'm sure.

Everybody in here. Loves the Lord more than I do. I love the Lord. You say to yourself. But I'm sure they. They have a greater ability of loving the Lord than I have.

Well that's how we feel. We feel our love for the Lord is so poor. And so inadequate. And we think all other Christians can love the Lord a lot better.

So David is saying right. Everybody love the Lord. I just have to move on quickly. Go to the last verse. And then there's this. Be strong and let your heart take courage.

[13 : 43] All you who wait for the Lord. And so here's David. And he's saying. Be strong and let your heart take courage. All you who wait upon the Lord.

Actually. The. The. The. The AV translation. Is to. To be strong and let your heart take. Take courage. It's. Translates.

Possibly more accurately. He shall strengthen your heart. Rather than be strong. He shall strengthen your heart. And take courage. Here's David. And if there was one. Well there's a lot of features of David's life.

And a lot of. Characteristics of David's life. One that stood out was courage. David was a man who never ever ever lacked courage. From the time he chased the lion and the bear.

And faced the great giant Goliath. If you could call David. There were many things that we could say about David. But one thing we could never say. Was that he didn't lack courage. From the time he was young.

[14 : 40] Courage. Was a feature of his life. But David is so conscious. That the courage and strength. That's needed. To go through life.

Is God given. It's not man made. It's God given. And so this is what he's calling upon us to do. To depend upon the Lord. The Christian life.

It's a strange mixture. Because on the one hand. There is this strength and courage that is needed. And on the other hand. There is a meekness that is required.

Now some people think that being meek. Is being timid. Some of the most. The meekest men were the most courageous. Moses is a classic example. Moses was termed the meekest of men.

And yet Moses. As he led Israel through the wilderness. Was one of the most courageous. Strong men that ever lived. But his meekness. Was a submission.

[15 : 42] And a humility before God. That was his meekness. And Jesus tells us. That it's the meek. Who will inherit the earth. Not the proud. But the meek.

They're the ones who will inherit. Because God tells us. That he will repay the one who acts in pride. Pride goes against God. Pride is an affront to God.

But the meek. Who are dependent upon the Lord. He will strengthen their hearts. And give them courage. As they go through life. May the Lord encourage us.

Through his word tonight. We pray then Lord. That you will bless us. As we give thanks for your word. We pray that you will equip us. And bless us. We pray to bless the family.

With whom we gather tonight. We pray especially for Effie. And she mourns DS. And we pray for Stuart. And Christina. And for Neil.

[16 : 38] We pray to bless them. And their respective families. We ask now that you will be with us. And take us home safely. Parting us with your blessing. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing.

Psalm 62. And this is from Sing Psalms. Psalm 62. Verses 5 to 8. It's on page 80.

There's just two stanzas. Psalm 62. Verses 5 to 8. Find rest my soul. In God alone. In him my hope is ever sure.

My safety for this sheltering rock. In him alone I am secure. My honor and salvation rest. On God my rock and mighty fort. O people trust in him always.

To him alone pour out your heart. These verses of Psalm 62. Find rest my soul.

[17 : 41] In God alone. In him my hope is ever sure.

My safety for this sheltering rock. In him alone I am secure.

My honor and salvation rest. On God my rock and mighty fort.

O people trust in him always. To him alone pour out your heart.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.