

We Can Trust The God Of Heaven | Psalm 31

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Date: 07 June 2020

[0 : 00] Alright, grab your Bibles and go with me to Psalm chapter number 31. This is a longer Psalm this week, but I know that you're going to enjoy it. We know the Bible is recorded, inspired by God, but God uses the human writers of it and their emotions and what they're going on in life.

And in some ways, this Psalm is so hard to outline because David is up and down. Time of trusting, fearing, and then trusting, time of trusting, and then shame, and then praising God. And even though it's hard for me to outline and others to outline, it's not hard for me to understand because so much of life is like that.

It can be not just an emotional rollercoaster, but a rollercoaster of faith, of believing something to be true and trusting it and living it out, and then not believing and being scared and just back and forth.

That's true for me as an adult. It's true for my live TV audience today. My kids are listening to me. They wanted the live service on Saturday, so they're watching it on Sunday. That way they can watch the kids' program at the same time.

But in Psalm chapter number 31, I'll kind of give you an outline. First 20 verses are talking about the prayer, and the last two verses are the application that David would make.

[1 : 17] At the beginning, there's a prayer, verses 1 through 5. David is speaking to God, asking Him to hear Him. Then we get into this expression of trust in verses 6 and 8.

And then there's this lament where David just says, This is where I'm at. This is hard. And we hear what he says, and we hear the shame and the loneliness that he experiences. And then we hear a physical sickness during those verses, 9 through 13.

And then there's an expression of trust in God. Again, trust and lament, and then trust again. And then he praises God at the end for the troubles that he has had and what God's done in his life.

I read this week, and I loved it. Think about coming into the psalm. It says, You'll go crazy if you spend all your time analyzing the depths of evil without gazing at the beauty of God.

On the device that you're watching on, and all week long, there's been ways for you to gaze upon the look, to analyze the depths of the evil of man. Not just to hear about it, but one click can take you to another one, and you can spend your entire day, and at the end of it, you're just going to say, Man is full of sin.

[2 : 26] This world we live in is crazy. And if you do that, we'll get to a place of depression. We need to look upon God's Word and His beauty that is there.

This is one of the most quoted psalms throughout the Bible. In the book of Jeremiah, Jonah quotes it in the belly of the well. In the New Testament, it's quoted. Often, Paul speaks about it. Stephen, when he's being martyred, and then Jesus upon the cross, he says words from this psalm.

And not only does he say, take a quote from it, but when he does in the Bible, it's always in context. And so when he says, I commend my spirit into the hand of the Lord, we know that he is not only quoting the psalm, but the context of the psalm.

Let's read together, and you follow along, and then I will pray for us. Psalm chapter number 31. Everybody, follow along here. I'm going to make a few comments as I read.

Because some of the words like for and therefore are words that help you say, what was just said, now I'm going to describe them to you. So I don't want you to miss that. So in thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.

[3 : 33] Never let me be ashamed. That's said at the beginning, and at the end, it's a theme throughout the verse. So never let me be ashamed, but deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thy ear to me.

Deliver me speedily. Be thou my strong rock. What is this strong rock? It says, Be my strong rock for a house of defense to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress.

Therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privately for me, for thou art my strength. In thy hand I commit my spirit.

Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord of God of truth. And so some thoughts here about the Lord God of truth. I have hated it, David speaking. And I have hated them that regard lying vanities. But I trust in the Lord.

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. Here's four reasons. For thou hast considered my troubles. Thou hast known my soul in adversities. Thou hast not shut me up in the hand of the enemy. And thou hast set my feet in a large room.

[4 : 33] Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble. What kind of trouble are you in, David? The kind that my eye is consumed with grief. Yea, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief.

And my years with sighing. My strength felleth because of my iniquity. And my bones are consumed. Wow. I was a reproach among who?

Who were you a reproach among, David? All of my enemies, but especially my neighbors. And a fear to my acquaintances. They that did see me without fled from me.

David is alone. I have forgotten as a dead man out of mind. Like a broken vessel. For I've heard the slander of many.

There was fear on every side. While they took counsel against me, they devised to take away my life. Going down into the valley. Here we come back up.

[5 : 29] But I trusted in thee, O Lord. I said, four things I said. Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand. Deliver me from the hands of my enemies. And from them that persecute me.

Make thy face shine upon thy servant. Save me for thy mercies sake. Once again, like we started, verse number 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. Let the lying lips be put to silence. Which speak grievous things proudly and contentiously against the righteous.

Verse 19. Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for me, that fear up for them, that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them, that trust in thee before the sons of men.

That is us today. Verse 20. Thou shalt hide them. Where are you going to hide them? In the secrets of thy presence. From the pride of man. Thou shalt keep them secretly in the pavilion from the strife of tongues.

[6 : 29] Verse 21. Blessed be the Lord, for thou hast shown me his marvelous kindness in a strong city. For I have said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.

Nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto thee. O love the Lord, all you saints. For the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Heavenly Father, we come today, and we are people that need our hearts strengthened, Lord.

We are people that know the shame of hiding. Lord, as we hear in this passage, Lord, we know that, and we feel that, and we need you to strengthen us, Lord, and keep us from being ashamed.

Lord, I ask that your word will find a place in the hearts of all my brothers and sisters today. Lord, if there's one out there today that does not know you, and has not hid themselves in you, I pray that the day will be the day.

[7 : 28] In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. So as we went through this passage, I believe you probably saw very clearly the up and down, the valley that's taking place in David's life. But those first five verses, just so full of confidence.

David, a man after God's own heart, he knew him. He calls him many times in the Bible, verses 18, 19, 28, 61, 71. He is calling God a rock.

And so verse 2, it says, Bow down thy ear to me, deliver me speedily, be my strong rock, for thou art my rock and my fortress. So if we're going to hear this metaphor so many times in the Bible, we really want to make sure we understand it.

So what kind of rock are we talking about? It's a strong rock, and it's called a fortress. Another way that it gets described here is a house of defense to save him. Unquestionably, David comes from years of fleeing from King Saul.

He's often finding himself in the safety of the high rocks of the wilderness there. And we hear stories, there's that time that David's hiding in, and then Saul comes, he's back in there. He would have been cornered, but God protected him.

[8 : 32] And so he would go in there, the cave, with the men that had all been rejected from society, and those that had done wrong, and he comes out of that cave, and those men are better for being with David, where the mighty men come from.

He spent a lot of his time in the cave, so he understood it. So this rock that he would hide himself in would mean so much to him, because at night, the only thing that might have allowed him to sleep, not being afraid of King Saul or Absalom or whoever it was that was pursuing him, was the fact that he was hidden in this rock and allowed him to rest.

And then, so it says two things here. It says, you are, then be. Charles Spurgeon says this should be the prayer of every Christian. It kind of seems tense in here, but there really isn't. And we know from the Word of God, but also from experience, it says, verse 2, be thou my strong rock.

Verse 3, for thou art my rock. So why is it we need both? I mean, why is it, are we saying you are my rock, and then why are we praying be my rock? So much of our prayers are found in that, that you are, then be.

Reckoning it to be true. Romans 6, 11. I had a chance years ago to teach this in Kenya. One of my favorite experiences ever, to get to teach God's Word. And so there we were in a church, and while we were preaching Romans chapter number 6, I took a young man and I showed him how we were once slaves of sin, and how we were like almost as puppets on a string, but now God has saved us, and because of that we're no longer slaves, there's no longer any dominion over us, there's no place for that in our lives, and now we have a choice to serve Him.

[10 : 06] And so what is true in our lives, we must reckon it to be true. Romans 6, 11. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey the lust thereof. And so to know, yield, and to reckon it to be true. That's what David said. You are my rock, and I'm saying be my rock, Lord.

I know that's who you'll be in my life, but I want to reckon it to be true. And so as I preached those passages, and this young man, I told him he had to do what I told him to do, but then I said, no, I'm no longer your master.

You have your own choice of what you want to do. And then I looked at him and I said, raise your hands. And he started to raise his hands, and then he threw them down to his side. And a big smile came across his face. Because he says, I now have, he knew that he was representing the fact that he now had a choice.

And one of the best things ever happened, the organ began to play. The music there, as the points were being made. Andrew, why don't we make that happen? We can do that, can't we? And do you believe that God is all-powerful? Of course you do.

[11 : 07] Then pray that you will prove himself strong in your weakness. Do you believe that God is wise? Of course. Then ask him to display his wisdom in ordering your life. That was great.

I love that. We do more of that. So not only is there this trust being seen in David's life, this reckoning, Lord, you are my rock, be my rock. But then he goes on to say these passages that gets quoted by Jesus, Paul, and Stephen, Jonah, Jeremiah, those in the New Testament.

It says, commit thy spirit into your hands. As I said before, these are the words of Stephen being martyred and of Christ upon the cross. John Huss, martyred, when he was being killed at the stake, the bishop at the ceremony said this.

He says, And now we commit thy soul to the devil. Huss replied calmly, I commit my spirit into thy hands, Lord Jesus Christ. Unto thee I commend my spirit, which thou hast redeemed.

He is saying, I know that I have committed my entire life unto the Lord Jesus, and so you're not going to tell me at my death that my spirit is now going to be committed to the devil. I give my life fully to him.

[12 : 18] And it's that amazing confidence. You know, growing up in the late 90s, there was the Columbine shooting. And there was a story, and there's been controversy about it since then.

But at the time, the story that was told when I would go to youth rallies, a lady named, young girl named Cassie Brunel, and she had recently come to faith in Christ, and she had been in a discipleship now type weekend, and she said, I'm going to be strong in my faith when I go to school.

I'm going to let people know. She celebrated the day that she was saved, like her birthday, after that time. And she just had a testimony of the true believer. And it was said that during that school shooting that she was asked, Do you believe in God?

And she said, Yes. And it was a book that says, She Said Yes. Remember that as a teenager, I'm thinking, Man, if I were to die for Christ, I'd have to be a person that would live for Him.

So being a person that commits his spirit unto God. So this expression of trust, verse 6, I have hated them that regard lying vanities, but I trust in the Lord. This is something to rejoice in.

[13 : 19] David said, In memory of the past deliverance, it bears fruit to present confidence. God, I trusted you in the past, and you delivered me. I trust you. I can't trust anybody else right now.

Nobody else seems to care about me. Nobody else seems to care about the truth. But you, God, I put my trust in you. I know you've done right in the past, and I can trust you now. For you have considered my troubles, verse 7.

You have known my adversities. Not only, you didn't just take note of it, but you have known my adversities. And you're with me. And what did you do? You have not shut me up in the hand of my enemy.

You, Lord, have set my feet in a large room. I'm no longer cornered. I'm no longer ashamed. I'm no longer backed into this corner. But you have taken me, and you have now set my feet in a large room.

There's freedom found when we hide ourselves in God. And so now we go back down into the valley. And so we look at verses 9 through 13, and what we see is a cause and effect. We kind of work backwards here, but we're going to see, why does David feel the way that he does?

[14 : 20] The chief problem here is that the enemies have surrounded him on all sides, and they're conspiring to take his life. Verse 13, For I have heard the slander of many. There was fear on every side.

While thou took counsel against me, thou devised to take away my life. His enemies were plotting against him. Why do the enemies hate him so much?

Now we get some understanding as he talks about it throughout the psalm. Psalm 14, verse 6. He says, You have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge.

It says, When they took counsel against me, you know what it is that the world hates? You know what it is that they hated so much about David? It was the counsel of the Lord. They shamed the counsel of the Lord unto those that are needy and poor.

That's what the world is hating. No, we're not hiding in the wilderness in a physical cave, and people aren't going to kill us because they want to take the kingdom from us. But we live in a world where there's fear on every side.

[15 : 21] There's people that really do take counsel against us. Maybe not individually, but as Christian people. People devising plans against us. There's slander going on where people are saying things about us.

And we might feel this now more than we ever have in our lives. One often referred to it as a gathering storm that is taking place. From the threats to religious liberty, redefinitions of marriage, family attacks on the sacredness and the dignity of human life.

We're facing things that are not new, but there's agendas that are being pushed now more, as much as they ever have been. And we feel surrounded. We feel completely alone, that nobody has the Christian worldview that we have.

We feel that we are under attack. And that's the cause, and now what's the effect on David's life? Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I'm in trouble. My eyes are consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.

You know what that's like. You know what it is. Your eyes are consumed with grief. It changes your face. When you look in the mirror, and you can tell that you've been crying. Tracks made upon your face where the tears have come down.

[16 : 24] That grief, that soul and your belly, you know what that feels like here lately. It's just the aching in our stomach that we feel because of the grief and the waiting and wanting to know.

And, you know, as I think about so many things going on right now, there's just an aching. For my life is spent with grief, and my ears are sighing, sighing.

You know, my kids help me understand what sighing is. You tell them what to do or something, and they just thought, huh, do I have to? Huh, is this what's really going to be my day? Is this really what you want me to do this morning?

Huh, a sighing. David said his life, his ears were full of sighing. This constant sighing. His strength fell because of mine iniquity. He said, God brought him to a place of shame here.

He came to a place where he realized, because of my iniquity, I have no strength. My strength's failed. I want to think that I'm strong and powerful, but I can't be. You know, God's done something really special in my heart here lately.

[17 : 22] Not because of my iniquity, but I just recognize that my strength has failed, that I can't do all the things that need to be done, and I just come to a place and say, God, in my time of least effectiveness of life, you still love me.

And so David said, my strength has failed in my iniquity, and my bones are consumed. Wow. That feeling that goes all the way down with the bones. And at this place, he said, Lord, let me never be ashamed.

Let me not be ashamed, oh Lord. Verse 1, verse 17, let me not be ashamed, oh Lord. Let's talk about shame for a moment. It begins at the very beginning of the Bible.

The first parents, the first two humans, Adam and Eve, they rebelled against God. And remember how it was described before sin in the world, Genesis 2.25, it says, and they were both naked, the man and the wife, and they were not ashamed.

The description of us before sin was that we were people that were not ashamed. And then sin came into the world, and then we don't see the word shame in Genesis 3.9, we most certainly feel it, and it's described.

[18 : 22] And it says, And the Lord God called on the Adam, and He said unto him, Where art thou? And He said, I have heard the voice of the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

What a description of shame. He hid Himself, not just His actions. See, there's a distinction between guilt and shame. Guilt is when you know that you've done wrong, and you can go before God or somebody else and say, forgive me of my actions.

Well, He wasn't just hiding His actions, He wasn't just hiding the fruit that was eaten, and the event that took place in His life, He was hiding Himself. That is shame. Hiding Himself.

He hid Himself there. One writer put it this way, Shame is the swampland of the soul. Shame is the swampland of the soul. Shame will lead us to the withdrawal from other people.

Makes sense in verse number 11 that David said, I am as a reproach among my enemies, especially my neighbors, even I fear my acquaintances. They that see me, they fled from me.

[19 : 20] Shame is such a big piece of depression. Shame is a central piece of all addiction. It makes us pull away and draw to ourselves.

And not just hiding from other people, but it makes us hide from the God of heaven. And here's David dealing with this prayer back and forth, and talking about his shame, and saying, God, I can trust You.

So what is the opposite of shame? We most obviously think, you always think, what is the opposite? You would say, unashamed. Well, sure, that's right. That's the opposite of most words. But what more clearly does the Bible teach is the opposite of shame.

Verse 1 again, let me never be ashamed, but deliver me in Thy righteousness. The opposite of shame is righteousness. This understanding was central to Martin Luther.

German monk reading the Psalms, and he said this, and he says, it doesn't make sense, this idea that righteousness would deliver you. Righteousness, it condemns us. I don't know, he's saying, I don't understand the type of righteousness that delivers, because righteousness is what condemns.

[20 : 21] And it was there that Romans became so real to him, when he said, for I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God and the salvation of everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, and to all men.

Verse 17, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith. He realized that there is a righteousness that delivers us from our shame.

There's a righteousness that gives us pardon from our guilt. And that was the righteousness of God bestowed upon us through faith. Isn't it amazing that Adam thought the way to handle shame is to go hiding from God?

But David said the way to handle shame is to hide in God. I love that. Those parts of us that feel the most broken, that we keep most hidden, are the parts that most desperately need to be known by God, so as to be loved and to be healed.

These are the parts that contain our shame, and only in those instances when our shamed parts are known, do they stand a chance to be healed and to be redeemed. Adam and Eve, they hid themselves from God.

[21 : 26] But David says, no, that's not what you do with shame. You go and take it before God. And there was David. God, you know my iniquities. You know where I'm at. You know how I'm feeling. You know the sorrow that I have here.

God, I am before you. I confess my sins. Search my heart, O God. See if there be any wicked way in me. He took that shame and that feeling and he laid it down before God and he found healing and forgiveness.

You have to decide today, not just now, but for the rest of your life. Where will you hide? From God or in God? When you have done wrong, do you hide from God or do you hide in God?

What a statement of trust. He says, verse 15, My times are in thy hand. Wow. My times are in your hand, God. I can trust you completely with my life.

Go back to that story of Cassie Bernal. A song came out during that time and it says, This is your time. What if it is the day faced with a question, What would you say? This is your time.

[22 : 23] This is your dance. Make every moment leave nothing the chance. That spoke to me as a teenager and it just said, The life that I have now, I don't have guaranteed at 18, 19, 20, 21.

All my life in ministry may be happening right now and so God, my time, it's in your hands. Understand the brevity of life and I want you now to have my life completely. What a statement of trust.

The times of defeat as well as the times of victory God threw in your hand. The time where I feel like I'm living right and I want you to see me but also those times that I'm ashamed and I don't want anybody to know what's going on.

I take those before you as well. And we know that you work whole things together to good for those of us that love you, that put our faith in you. Paul says that he has learned in whatever condition and whatever state he's in to be content because our life is in your hand.

Praise God for being trustworthy. Oh, how great is thy goodness, verse 19, your goodness which has laid up them that fear thee which thou hast wrought for them that have trusted thee before the sons of men.

[23 : 21] You have been our rock and our protection. Verse 20, you should hide us. Thou shalt hide them in the secrets of thy presence from the pride of man. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

This pavilion as a war is taking place and you have the people guarding all around you and those leaders there that would sleep there upon the pavilion and none of the strife and all the things that were being said would come in and hurt them.

We need this shelter today in our lives. Travis Snow in Psalm 29 he talked about the power of a tornado. I've seen a tornado. I was camping in one time and we had to get in the big van and we drove there and we watched it as it come and we all came and we found shelter in the middle of that storm inside of that together just watching as it did something incredible.

Psalm 29 showed us the power of God and those of us that put our faith in Jesus we know we're now hid in Christ Jesus from the wrath that is to come that we no longer will experience that because we've been hid in Christ Jesus.

What's the application that David would tell us to make at the end of it? Be of good courage and strengthen your heart. What is he saying there? He's saying keep trusting.

[24 : 34] Keep trusting God. Be of good courage and it will strengthen your heart all ye that hope in the Lord. So David here in this application amounts to this. Don't ever lose faith in God.

Faith will be lost. Faith will not be lost if we just keep loving Him as we gaze upon His goodness. As we trust in our God and we see how wonderful and how great He is our trust will be there and we'll be people that won't be hiding in our shame but we come to Him.

You can never love God too much. You can never trust God too much but we will do both well whenever we reflect deeply on the degree in which God loves us.

Those of us brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus we know what it's like to hide ourselves in the cave. We know what it's like to be hidden and in God and say from this world that is going on.

We know what it's like to also feel that shame. God allowed us to experience that shame of our sin. I realized as a young boy the shame of my sin that I had sinned against God and God knew it.

[25 : 37] That's what really made the difference is that not only had I sinned against God but when I did He saw it and I felt the shame that led me not to hide from God but it led me to Him.

Today I don't know what your experience what emotions are going through but David says we can trust Him. That in all that's going on we can trust the God of Heaven. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.