

### Psalm 31 – In Whom Do We Trust? (3 of 3)

**V. The Trust (31:15-18)** – Time is always a precious commodity while we are on earth. It is limited by death. Time pieces are invented and purchased in order to keep time. Hopefully when we keep time, we will learn to save time. Time waits for no man. The time in our lives keeps on ticking regardless of what we do or do not do! The moment we begin to exist in our mother's womb, we are locked into time. Time just ticks on until our time on earth is done. Time continues on earth and even after death into eternity. Death does not stop time. Time will forever exist because it is in the hands of an eternal all powerful God who invented time and transcends time. Therefore, David, the psalmist cried to the LORD that his times are in His hand. The times of persecution, joy, sorrow, illness, etc. are all in God's hand. There is no time in the believer's life that is not in God's hands. Time on earth as well as in eternity is in God's sovereign hands. What it means is that every minute of the believer's life is in God's control and not in man's, especially evil and powerful men. When they persecute him, it is the LORD who has allowed it. The LORD who allows it can also stop it anytime! David did not want to do anything that was against the will of God. He wanted to be in God's will even though the will of God might include persecution and suffering!

So David cried to the LORD to deliver him from the hands of his enemies and from the ones who persecuted him. He did so by using synthetic parallelism in verse 15 to emphasize his point. Submitting to the will of God in times of persecution does not mean that believers cannot cry to the LORD for deliverance. David would walk in God's will all the days of his life. However, in times of persecution he cried to the LORD for deliverance. They were David's enemies because they wanted to stop the will of God from being fulfilled in David's life. David was not crying to the LORD in the context of being punished for any wrongdoing. That is why persecution was used rather than punishment! He acknowledged that his times were in God's hands and so he asked the LORD to take him out of the persecution of his enemies! Believers today are supposed to do the same when evil men persecute them for righteousness sake.

**Verse 16** (synthetic parallelism) – David cried to the LORD to make His face to shine upon him. When the face of the LORD shines upon someone, it means that the LORD is pleased with that someone. This means the LORD will deliver His servant from the pain-filled life that he is enduring. It does not mean that when the servant of God is suffering for Christ's sake, the LORD is displeased with him. It is not because of sin that His servant was being persecuted. It was because of righteousness that David was suffering. To cry to the LORD to make His face to shine upon him is the same as asking for deliverance of persecution (dark moments in his life) and to bring peace and tranquillity back when the persecution has ended (sun shining brightly in the believer's life).

The basis for his cry to the LORD to shine His face upon him was God's mercies. David did not appeal to his own righteousness or calling as God's faithful servant. When the mercies of God were appealed to, God's servant acknowledged that he deserved the pain and the suffering that he was going through even though he was suffering for righteousness sake. It may not be because of a particular sin that David was being persecuted like in this instance, but generally, David knew that he was a sinner saved by grace and nevertheless, deserved the persecution. Mercies are the removal of punishment that one deserves. This is the best reason to plea for cessation of persecution - the mercies of God.

**Verse 17** (antithetical parallelism) – If the LORD did not answer David's cry, then David would be ashamed in the eyes of his enemies. He would cry to the LORD and there would be neither help nor reply from Him. It appeared as if God had completely forsaken David or that God is not real and He is not alive! At the same time, David understood that it is all in God's hands whether his cry was heard or not. The cohortative is used here to highlight David's appeal to the LORD for deliverance and not let him be ashamed. David had called upon the LORD based upon the covenantal relationship he had with Him. This is clear from the repeated use of the covenantal name "LORD" (Jehovah). A covenant is very important to God. It cannot be broken. The faithfulness of God is at stake if it was ever broken. This was another basis of David's appeal. He appealed to the LORD to hear his cry based entirely upon the covenant of salvation in Christ!

To answer David and deliver him would put his enemies to shame. Not to answer David would put him to shame and his faith and trust in the LORD would be in vain. This cannot be because the LORD is not a God who makes vain and empty covenants! David was probably defending God's Word and God's honour when he faced the persecution from his enemies! David wanted them to know that his God, who is the LORD, is alive and well and He helps his servants who are in real need. The LORD's honour is on the line more than David's deliverance! Let these enemies of David, who probably mocked him when he leaned on the LORD for help and refused to take matters into his own hands, be silenced even in the grave. Let them go to the grave having seen the deliverance of David by the LORD! They probably said it would not happen! If the LORD did not deliver David while the enemies were alive and if they died without seeing the deliverance, then they would go to their graves thinking that they were right and David's God is not real! David cried to the LORD to not let that happen. This means that the LORD's deliverance had to happen within the lifetime of David's enemies.

**Verse 18** (synthetic parallelism) – David called the lips of his enemies lying lips. They lied about David's faith and trust in the LORD. Their purpose was to get David to stop trusting in the LORD. This will always be the purpose of all persecutions. When God's servants hold on to their faith and trust in the LORD and refuse to retaliate and turn the other cheek, and go the second mile, the enemies of God will laugh and mock. They will lie about God's

omnipresence, or His omnipotence or His omniscience. His love for His children or the veracity of God's Word could all be part of their mocking! God's servants must hold on to their faith and trust in God's promises in His holy and perfect Word. Do not be moved. Let these enemies' lying lips be silenced for good when God hear the cries of His people.

The enemies spoke grievous, i.e. impudent, things. They did so proudly and with contempt against the righteous! David did not do anything wrong to them except to obey the will and Word of God in his life. There was no justification for their dastard deeds of mockery. They just wanted to devastate his faith and trust in the LORD. David cried to the LORD to deliver so that these enemies would be proven wrong. They would be seen as liars and for what they really were! Do not let them be victorious in their pride and contempt toward the righteous who desire to walk uprightly according to Holy Scriptures! The New Testament reveals the same treatment that will befall all of God's faithful in **2 Timothy 3:12** (KJV), "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." They are never wrestling against flesh and blood but always against principalities in high places and in the spiritual realm. These enemies can mock all they want but God's servants must not capitulate and must hold to their life of righteousness and continue to cry to the LORD for deliverance the way that David did. This is the reality of trust experienced in the face of the enemies of the righteous.

**VI. The Outcome (31:19-24)** – The result is one of great praise and thanksgiving. David praised the LORD for His goodness. David experienced the deliverance that he sought for. His enemies' lying lips were silenced! The goodness of God was the deliverance in David's life. However, we must realize and understand that there have been, and will be, instances in the lives of believers whereby they lost their lives to the enemies of God. Many did not go down to their graves in silence for they did not see the deliverance from death. This does not mean that the LORD did not deliver His people at all. The LORD still delivered His people but in another manner in that those who died for their faith are in heaven. Their service on earth unto the LORD is done. However, in David's case, the goodness of God was in his physical deliverance because his service unto the LORD was not yet done. His life was spared for God's purpose. David said that the LORD helped the ones who feared Him. God's goodness is laid up, i.e. reserved, for those who feared Him. To fear the LORD means to obey His Word at all costs. Under no circumstance must the believer disobey the Word of God, even in the face of his own death or the death of his loved ones. The fear of God will keep the child of God from disobeying Him. God's children should not want the LORD to be angry with them.

Using synonymous parallelism, David emphasized this truth by stating it in a different manner. Here the child of God is described as one who trusts in the LORD in front of the sons of men. This is testimony at its best! The faith and trust of the child of God regardless of the external circumstances of his life is crucial in witness. The sons of men will see Christ

through the steadfastness of God's servants. Other men might change and capitulate in the face of trials and great persecution but not these servants of God who remain steadfast in their obedience to God's Word. The Word of God is the anchor of their soul. The enemies are the storms of life that will buffet them but they remain strong and unyielding in their trust in the LORD. The outcome is that they will experience the goodness of God and the sons of men will see the goodness of God in their lives!

**Verse 20** (synonymous parallelism) – The LORD will hide His obedient servants in the secret of His presence so that the pride of men will not be able to see. This is a spiritual experience that the pride of sinful men will not be able to see. These are the enemies of God who will be silenced and die in their evil deeds. But the servants of God will hold on to their faith and continue to trust in the LORD. They will become stronger as they draw nearer to God. This understanding of hiding in the secret of God's presence must not be understood as only physical deliverance, as was the case here in David's psalm. It must also include those who hold on to their faith even unto death. Some of these courageous Christians include John Hus who was martyred on July 6, 1415. He refused to recant in the face of the charges that were brought against him by the Roman Church. On the day he died he is said to have stated, *“God is my witness that the things charged against me I never preached. In the same truth of the Gospel which I have written, taught, and preached, drawing upon the sayings and positions of the holy doctors, I am ready to die today.”*[<http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/10-famous-christian-martyrs/>] God gave Hus and many like him the strength and courage to hold on to their trust in the LORD. This is what it means to be hid in the presence of the LORD from the pride of wicked men who are blinded by their hatred for Christ.

To emphasize this point, David used synonymous parallelism to restate the same truth. The LORD will keep them secretly, i.e. conceal them by covering. The LORD will conceal them in a pavilion (a tent or cottage) from the strife, i.e. contentions of tongues. The words of these evil men will not impact the heart and mind and conduct of God's faithful servants. They can reason and slander and cast doubts on God's Word but the servant of God will hold fast in obedience. The Word of God is everything to all of God's servants. They will not be moved by taunting and evil philosophies!

**Verse 21** (synthetic parallelism) – The ultimate result of receiving help from the faithful LORD is one of praise. David blessed the LORD for what He had experienced and seen in his life of persecution from his enemies. What an amazing revelation that sinners such as ourselves, saved by God's grace, can now praise Him and bless His holy Name. To bless the LORD is to honour Him and to glorify Him. He is to be praised and exalted above all.

The reason expressed by David was that the LORD had shown to him His marvellous kindness in a strong city. This is not a reference to Jerusalem. This is a figure of speech used by David to express the nature of the LORD's protection toward him. David's life was like

that of a fugitive when he fled from King Saul who hunted him like an animal. David had to flee and hide in caves in the mountains. But these places were like a strong city because David was kept very safe from the wrath of wicked men. The kindness that David experienced from the LORD was His nearness, peace of mind and heart, and deliverance from his enemies. David's enemies were silenced. His faith and trust in the LORD were honoured. David experienced the protection and provision of the LORD in the darkest moment of his life when his enemies persecuted him.

**Verse 22** (synthetic parallelism) – The elaboration of the kindness of the LORD is seen in this verse. David testified that in his haste he declared that he was cut off from before the eyes of the LORD but that did not happen. The dangerous experiences from his enemies were so critical that on many occasions David felt as if he would be caught and killed. That was why David admitted here that in his haste he told the LORD that he was cut off from before His eyes! This means that because of the extreme situation of persecution and being so near captivity and death, he felt as if he would be cut off, i.e. destroyed by his enemies.

However, the LORD delivered David in the nick of time. It was not too early that David did not learn his lesson on trust and not too late that David was destroyed by it. The timing was just right in teaching David the lesson of faith and trust! Therefore David said that the LORD heard the voice of his supplications when he cried to Him for help. This was an amazing experience which every believer needs to have. There is no other way to learn such trust in the LORD other than through the way of persecution and prayer.

**Verse 23** (synthetic parallelism) – David's cry to all believers was to love the LORD. Love Him with all our heart, soul, strength and mind – this is how the LORD describes how every believer should love God. All the saints, i.e. holy ones, are to love the LORD. Just as He helped David when David trusted in Him in his time of great need, the LORD has done and will continue to do the same in saving and helping all His children who trust Him. Love is the epitome of biblical motives. This love of God that is given to all believers of Christ will sustain and keep them regardless of how dire their trials might be. There is nothing as powerful as the love of God constraining the children of God in their devotion and love for their God. Their service and worship will surely be enhanced and sustained. They will be faithful till the end of their days of service on earth. They will continue to trust the LORD even when they are surrounded by naysayers and mockers and persecutors. Nothing will move them, not even for one centimetre, to disobey his God. This love conquers all!

The reason we love Him and trust Him is that He will preserve the faithful. The ones who trust Him will be kept safe by Him even though at times they might feel as if God has deserted them because of the severity and nearness of the death that they encounter. The LORD will preserve, i.e. guard, all His children as they serve and witness for Christ on earth. They might lose material things and earthly relationships but they will never lose God's love for them. The LORD will preserve all His children into eternity. But the proud ones He will

reward accordingly. These are the arrogant ones who believe that they are the captains of their own souls and who take matters into their own hands and do what is right in their own eyes all the time. God will plentifully reward these proud ones according to His perfect justice. They will receive from God a just punishment for the evil done to God's children. They will surely spend eternity in hell and ultimately the Lake of fire if they die in their sins. God is a holy God. He will not be moved and mocked by sinful men. No one will ever escape His just judgement. If it is not on this earth and in this life, then they will all face Him in the life to come. As for the just, God will keep them safe forevermore and the proud God will punish forevermore.

**Verse 24** (synthetic parallelism) – In the face of trials, the child of God must be strong in the LORD. Courage is a rare commodity today. There are those who know the truth of God's Word but do not have the courage to speak up at the right time and do what is right. Their silence is consent and sin is allowed to flourish. Courage without knowledge is damaging. Saul had courage before his conversion but he hindered the work of God because his courage was not based upon the truth. Knowledge and truth must go hand in hand in order to bring righteous results. Here David challenged all believers to be courageous. Wait and trust in the LORD at all times by obeying His holy and perfect Word, and in God's time He will strengthen every believer's heart! They will be established in the inner man and will not be moved.

These ones are also called the ones who hope in the LORD. The hope of believers is found only in the Bible. The more we study the Word of God, the stronger will be our hope, and the stronger and deeper our trust in the LORD will become. Conversely, it is also true that when hope is weak, the trust is shallow, and the knowledge of the Word of God is poor. The believer cannot trust the God that he does not know or knows vaguely. The more he knows God's truth the more he trusts. The more he trusts, the deeper his faith is in his God and the stronger is his hope in things eternal.

Trust in the LORD, for He never fails. Amen.