

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;  
Let me never be ashamed;  
Deliver me in Your righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> Bow down Your ear to me,  
Deliver me speedily;  
Be my rock of refuge,  
A fortress of defense to save me.

<sup>3</sup> For You *are* my rock and my fortress;  
Therefore, for Your name's sake,  
Lead me and guide me.

<sup>4</sup> Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me,  
For You *are* my strength.

<sup>5</sup> Into Your hand I commit my spirit;  
You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

<sup>6</sup> I have hated those who regard useless idols;  
But I trust in the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy,  
For You have considered my trouble;  
You have known my soul in adversities,

<sup>8</sup> And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy;  
You have set my feet in a wide place.

<sup>9</sup> Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;  
My eye wastes away with grief,  
Yes, my soul and my body!

<sup>10</sup> For my life is spent with grief,  
And my years with sighing;  
My strength fails because of my iniquity,  
And my bones waste away.

<sup>11</sup> I am a reproach among all my enemies,  
But especially among my neighbors,  
And *am* repulsive to my acquaintances;  
Those who see me outside flee from me.

<sup>12</sup> I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind;  
I am like a broken vessel.

<sup>13</sup> For I hear the slander of many;  
Fear *is* on every side;  
While they take counsel together against me,  
They scheme to take away my life.

<sup>14</sup> But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD;  
I say, "You *are* my God."

<sup>15</sup> My times *are* in Your hand;  
Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,  
And from those who persecute me.

<sup>16</sup> Make Your face shine upon Your servant;  
Save me for Your mercies' sake.

<sup>17</sup> Do not let me be ashamed, O LORD, for I have called upon You;

Let the wicked be ashamed;  
Let them be silent in the grave.  
<sup>18</sup> Let the lying lips be put to silence,  
Which speak insolent things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

<sup>19</sup> Oh, how great *is* Your goodness,  
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,  
*Which* You have prepared for those who trust in You  
In the presence of the sons of men!  
<sup>20</sup> You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence  
From the plots of man;  
You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion  
From the strife of tongues.

<sup>21</sup> Blessed *be* the LORD,  
For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!  
<sup>22</sup> For I said in my haste,  
“I am cut off from before Your eyes”;  
Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications  
When I cried out to You.

<sup>23</sup> Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints!  
*For* the LORD preserves the faithful,  
And fully repays the proud person.  
<sup>24</sup> Be of good courage,  
And He shall strengthen your heart,  
All you who hope in the LORD.

### Introduction

Psalm 31 is a passionate expression of grief. David who wrote the Psalm had endured great trials and is now looking back in reflection at God’s dealings with him.

It has been said that this Psalm makes the journey from anguish to assurance twice over.

There are times in all of our lives when we go through trials.

We all have different kinds of trials. Some of these trials involve health, others involve the loss of loved ones, and other trials involves deep hurts of a personal nature. Whatever those trials have for us, they are real and leave wounds and scars in our emotional lives.

In the book of James it tells us that these trials are allowed to make us strong in character.

James Chapter 1: v. 2-4 (N.K.J.)

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

We all go through trials in life, however it is our attitude to these trials that makes the difference.

If we depend upon the Holy Spirit in these trials it can result in great victory.

### Illustration

A Missionary was talking to a Chinese believer who was struggling in his Christian walk.

The Chinese Christian said to the Missionary “I feel as if I have two dogs inside me fighting, a black one and a white one.

(the black one representing his old sinful nature and the white one the Holy Spirit.)

The Missionary said "Who's winning?" The Chinese Christian said "It depends which one I feed."  
When we are going through trials if we feed our thoughts with our old sinful nature then we will experience great sadness. However if we feed our thoughts with God's word, the Bible, then we can experience great victory in and over our circumstances.

When the Bible was first translated into Greek, this Psalm had the title,

"Written in time of extreme fear."

However as David reflected upon his suffering he was able to say in verse 15 "My times are in your hand"  
or as another translation puts it  
"My future is in your hands"

Many of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world live in situations where they are faced with abuse, injustice, discrimination, violence with no hope of protection.

Today Christians in the Muslim world are living in a time of trial and they face terror on all sides, they can identify with David in this Psalm.

What can Psalm 31 teach us today and also give us confidence as we pray for the suffering Church on this suffering Church Sunday.

#### 1. David's Condition – v. 1-13.

It is very helpful sometimes to actually write down the problem or complaint that you might have against God in your trial.

You could write three things down.

1. Write down what you have done about your problem.
2. Write down what you are expecting God to do.
3. Write down any promises in God's word that you are trusting in concerning help that God has promised to other people in the Bible and you feel that you could trust God for too.  
Don't forget to thank God when He answers your prayers, very few people return to God and say "THANK YOU"

This is what David does in Psalm 31 and we can observe it in these verses.

David wants to be rescued (v.1 &4)

He is trusting in God alone for the rescue.

Before he presents his condition to God he makes some very positive statements about Him. (V.1-8)

He acknowledges that God is his rock and wants His name to be honoured in the situation. (v.3)

Inv. 4 David says "You are my strength"

In v. 5 David says "You have redeemed me"

Q. How often do we praise God for our Salvation when we are having a difficult time?

He acknowledges God's unfailing love and the fact that God actually cares about the anguish of his soul. –v.

7. David says "You have known my soul in my adversities."

God cares about the persecuted Church today. He wants us to pray for His children who are being persecuted.

Although our problems are small compared to the persecuted Church, nevertheless God is still interested in our problems.

It is a good thing before bringing our petitions of anguish to God to start praising Him for what He has done and for positively affirming His interest in our problems. That's what David did.

Joseph was a fine example of somebody who kept his focus upon God's goodness, even though he was going through difficult trials.

Even though he was treated badly by his brothers, and badly by other people he was able to say to his family including his brothers these words,

Genesis 50: v. 19-20. (N.K.J.)

<sup>19</sup> Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

It is a supernatural thing to praise God and affirm Him when we are going through hard and difficult times.

You can only do this through the help of the Holy Spirit.

Don't try it in your own strength, ask for God's help.

After affirming God David poured his heart out to God, telling Him of all he was going through.

It is not wrong to pour your heart out to God.

He says the following:

1. My eye wastes away with grief
2. My soul and my body are withering away
3. Misery has drained my strength
4. My friends are afraid to come near me.

How do our problems compare to David's problems?

How do our problems compare to the persecuted Church around the world?

## 2. David's Confidence (v.14-16)

In v. 14 David cries out "But as for me I trust in you O Lord, I say you are my God."

David had a personal relationship with God, it was real, it was important and it was deeper than any personal relationship with friends or family.

Perhaps the deepest relationship one can have is between a husband and wife or a Parent and son or daughter, or even a very close friend.

David's relationship was deeper than that and more important than all his others.

How about us?

Is our relationship with God deeper than our relationships with other people?

When nobody else can help you, God can.

I have a friend whose name is David. I used to play golf with him once a week in England. He was a missionary in Africa.

He put in a prison and was tortured once a week for nearly over 1 year, just for being a Christian missionary. When he finally escaped from this African country his body and his mind was a complete wreck. It took him 2 years to recover from this experience.

The only way David could recover from this horrible experience was to write a book about what he had been through.

However God has used his book for the conversion of many souls.

David's torture was horrible and yet God brought him through the whole experience and today he is praising God for all things.

When nobody else could help David, God helped him.

I would love to invite David to Japan and translate his book into Japanese, maybe that will happen one day?

Christians who have been put in concentration camps or torture cells, their bodies and their minds have been broken by the harsh treatment, have described afterwards how they just clung to their belief in God and that Jesus really did love them in spite of their situation.

We now come to that famous verse "My times are in your hand" (v.15)  
N.L.T. translates it as "My future is in your hands"

It is a wonderful truth to know and believe these words.

It is encouraging to those in the persecuted church that their times are in the hands of God.

Nobody can take our life before the time appointed by God.

We will never understand when a life is taken early, but we have to trust God who works to His own plan.

In verse 16 David asks for the Blessing of God upon him.

He uses the Jewish Blessing from Numbers 6: 24-26 to express what he desires.

Jewish tradition states that the blessing was given at the close of the daily sacrifice.

Its position is especially appropriate for it implies that God's blessing was available for all the GOD'S people and was not confined to the priests or Nazarites.

The Bible teaches here and also in Dt. 28 and Psalm 121 that the face of God is the personality of God as turned towards men.

Just as the light of the Sun brings blessing to men naturally, so the light of God's face brings grace and favour spiritually.

In v. 17-18 David cries to God for justice to be given concerning those people who harmed him.

We must never underestimate God's justice and His dealings with people who deal harshly or destroy God's people.

Hebrews Chapter 10: v. 30 says

<sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."

David was assured that one day God would deal with His enemies, and He did.

In a moment we are going to pray for the persecuted Church, with the assurance that one day God will deal with their persecutors.

Example: The Amalekites.

Have you ever wondered why God in the O/T scriptures wanted to blot out the remembrance of the Amalekites?

Well I will tell you why. When the Children of Israel moved across to the desert the Amalekites attacked the rear of the Israelite Millions.

At the rear were all the old people and the disabled people.

They did a really dirty thing, killing and attacking people who could not defend themselves.

God eventually brought judgement and wiped them out, although the Israelites were reluctant to do this.

In v. 19-22 we have "Praise and Thanksgiving"

Perhaps the thought of God bringing Justice has awoken praise in David's heart?

He highlights 4 things in these verses.

1. God's Presence – v. 19

2. God's Protection – v. 20
3. God's Deliverance – v. 23
4. God's unfailing love – v. 24.

As we go now to prayer for the persecuted Church, we can be assured that God will answer the cries of our heart and encourage and strengthen our brothers and sisters who are suffering in other parts of the world today.