

Psalm 31

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[0 : 00] If you have a Bible with you, I want you to open up in your copy of the Scriptures to Psalm 31.

! Psalm 31. In the Old Testament, if you let your Bible fall open to the middle, you'll be pretty close. If you're using one of the Bibles that we sort of leave scattered around in the chairs, just turn to page 461 in one of those Bibles, and you'll find at the very bottom of that page, you will find the beginning of Psalm 31, and it's going to go on to the next page.

We're walking for the month of January, we're walking through a few Psalms, and we'll even move into the first week of February, walking through some of these Psalms here in this section of the book of Psalms, and just each week taking one, trying to understand it, meditate upon it, and see a few ways that we can apply some of the insights that we see in the Psalms to our own lives. And so this morning, we've arrived at Psalm 31. After already covering Psalms 29 and 30, we're now at Psalm 31. And if you've found your place there, then I want to ask you to stand again to your feet in honor of the Word of God as we read.

We're going to read through this whole entire Psalm. It's 24 verses, so it's a little bit longer than the last two that we've covered. And so be patient. We're going to read through it. And I want to remind you again, as I read through, we're going to see the word LORD in all capital letters a few times.

[1 : 25] And each time I see that, as we read through at the beginning here, I'm going to read that as Yahweh, because that's the Hebrew word in the original language that we find there. It's God's covenant name by which He made Himself known to His people Israel.

So we begin, To the choir master, a Psalm of David. In you, O Yahweh, do I take refuge. Let me never be put to shame.

In your righteousness, deliver me. Incline your ear to me. Rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

For you are my rock and my fortress, and for your name's sake, you lead me and guide me. You take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

Into your hand I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Yahweh, faithful God. I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in Yahweh.

[2 : 24] I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction, and you have known the distress of my soul, and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy.

You have set my feet in a broad place. Be gracious to me, O Yahweh, for I am in distress. My eye is wasted from grief, my soul and my body also, for my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing.

My strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors.

And an object of dread to my acquaintances, those who see me in the street flee from me. I have been forgotten like one who is dead. I have become like a broken vessel, for I hear the whispering of many, terror on every side, as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

But I trust in you, O Yahweh. I say, you are my God. My times are in your hand. Rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from my persecutors.

[3 : 37] May your face shine on your servant. Save me in your steadfast love. O Yahweh, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you.

Let the wicked be put to shame. Let them go silently to Sheol. Let the lying lips be mute, which speak instantly against the righteous in pride and contempt. Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind.

In the cover of your presence, you hide them from the plots of men. You store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues. Blessed be Yahweh, for he has wonderfully shown his steadfast love to me.

When I was in a besieged city, I had said in my alarm, 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 Yahweh, all you his saints. Yahweh preserves the faithful, but abundantly replies the one who acts in pride. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for Yahweh.

[4 : 51] God, thank you for this word. May your spirit, who inspired David to write these words, teach us and instruct us this morning.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys can take a seat. The first thing you notice about this psalm as you begin to read it, before you even get to what is marked as verse 1 in our English translations, is that this psalm was written by David.

The David. King David. The king of Israel. The most well-known of all of Israel's kings. David. And yet beyond that, we know very little about the context of this particular psalm.

We don't know when David wrote it. We don't know precisely why he wrote it. We have broad, general ideas about why he wrote it, but we don't know the exact circumstances of his life.

And we said the same thing last week about the previous psalm, that we didn't know with any specificity what was happening in the life of David. And sometimes that can be really frustrating for us because we want to pinpoint, we want to know, who was it that was causing him grief, or what sin did he commit that brought him to the place where he is in a particular psalm?

[6 : 05] What's happening in his life? We want to know those kinds of details. And the more you know about David's life, the more you are tempted to really demand an answer to that question.

Maybe you don't know very much about the life of David. If you pick up in your Bible, in your Old Testament, and you turn to 1 Samuel 16 some point throughout the week and start to read there, you can read all the way through all of 1 Samuel and all of 2 Samuel, and you'll read a great deal about the life of David.

He finishes up in the first couple of chapters of 1 Kings, the very next book. But if you'll read the last half of 1 Samuel and all of 2 Samuel, you'll get most of the details of David's life.

And you will see that there are a lot of things that happen in his life that might move someone to write a psalm like this. There are many times in David's life where he faces opposition, where he has enemies that are seeking to do him great harm.

There are many times in his life where he himself stumbles and falls and sins, and he has to suffer the consequences for that sin. And yet, we cannot pinpoint any of those moments that we read about in the books of Samuel and say, this is when David wrote this particular psalm.

[7 : 19] And that's not necessarily a bad thing. As much as we might be curious about the background of a particular psalm or passage of Scripture, it's not necessarily a bad thing that we don't know all the details.

In fact, I was reading this week, and Charles Spurgeon, if you're familiar with him, the great 19th century preacher, as he wrote on this psalm, he said this, he says, it is perhaps quite as well that we have no settled season in the life of David mentioned, or we might have been so busy in applying it to David's case as to forget its suitability to our own.

In other words, it might be good that we don't know when this happened in David's life, what events he's talking about, because we might be so focused on understanding David's situation that we forget that this psalm has much to speak into our own lives, that this psalm is suitable in many ways for us to read and reflect on and respond to when we're going through troubles, when we're facing difficulties in our own lives.

David has written this in such a way that we can connect to what he says. We can relate to what David says. Now, this psalm is actually a difficult psalm if you were to set out to try to write a detailed outline of this psalm.

It's difficult to follow sometimes. It really and truly is. I struggled with it a little bit this week. We know that the book of Psalms is a book of poetry. These are all songs, and most of them were meant to be sung at some point in the life of Israel.

[8 : 50] We know that they are poetic, and many times as we're reading through the psalms, we can sense and feel the poetry of the psalms themselves, even though they're being translated from one language to another.

We can still sort of sense and feel it. Think of Psalm 23, for instance, where the Lord is described as our shepherd. He walks with us through the valleys of the shadow of death.

It sounds poetic even in English, and we can sense and feel that there's something poetic here, but this psalm is almost a little bit chaotic. It's back and forth, and even in all the various commentaries that I read this week, none of them could agree on what's the outline of this psalm?

What's the structure of this particular psalm? It's difficult, and I think the difficulty of trying to find the flow of this psalm is actually intentional. It helps you to feel the turmoil in David's life.

If you can't neatly sort of outline this psalm or see how each line relates to all the lines around it, that may very well be because David intends for us to read in this his own heartache and the turmoil and the confusion that he feels in his own life, and that's good for us to know that David felt those things because we feel them too at times.

[10:07] When life doesn't take the course that we thought it would, when suffering comes into our lives, when bad things happen, whether they're our fault or the fault of our neighbor or someone else that we know, it doesn't really matter.

When turmoil and suffering and strife come into our lives, we find it very difficult to express ourselves eloquently, don't we? To say in clear verbiage what we're really feeling.

We see a bit of that in this psalm, I think, as we jump back and forth from one topic to another and from focus on one thing to another.

So it's a difficult psalm for me to lay out for you and for us to track through it in a logical manner. But I'll do my best. I do want to break it apart into some sections and warn you ahead of time that these are not airtight sort of divisions that I'm going to give you for these psalms.

I'm going to describe one section in one way and another section in another and show you why and yet you might say, yeah, but I see some of the characteristics of this one there. Let me just show you what I mean. All right? The central part of this psalm, the center of it, is really, I think, verses 6 through 13.

[11:18] And that's where we get the most detail from David about the circumstances that he was facing. These are not the kind of details that will, like I said, help us to pinpoint when this happened, what events were going on in the life of David, but these are details that help us to understand what David is feeling and experiencing at this point in his life.

And what we learn there is that there are two principal causes of David's anxiety and of David's trouble. And that is, he has enemies. He has people that are seeking to do him harm.

And then in addition to that, he has his own sin that complicates matters. Let me show you what I mean here. He begins in verse 6 by expressing his own hatred and his disdain, not simply for those who oppose him, but for those who oppose his God.

I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, he says. In verse 7, he goes on and he speaks, he says, you have seen my affliction, you have known the distress of my soul.

And then he says, and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy. So that these enemies are the ones causing his affliction, the distress of his soul.

[12:35] He goes on, he mentions in verse 11, these enemies, he calls them his adversaries.

Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors and an object of dread to my acquaintances.

Those who see me in the street flee from me. In other words, nobody wants to be around me right now. Maybe they think that David's bad circumstances will rub off on them and they'll experience it. Or maybe they see David as one who's perhaps cursed himself and they want to avoid him. Whatever the case may be, even his neighbors and his acquaintances that are around him flee from him and stay away from him.

He says, I, in verse 12, I have been forgotten like one who is dead. Have you ever felt that way?

Have you ever just felt forgotten? Forgotten by God?

Forgotten by others around you? He says his neighbors and his acquaintances flee from him. They don't want anything to do with him because of the things that he's suffering. Have you ever felt like that?

[13:31] Whether or not it was really true experientially, it still feels that way. You feel abandoned. You feel disconnected from people in the midst of your suffering.

Suffering has a way of doing that because suffering concentrates all of our attention upon our problems and the things that we are facing. And everyone around us is not necessarily focused

upon our problems and the things that we are facing because they still have to get up and go to work.

They still have to get their kids dressed in the morning. They still have to run all of their errands. However much sympathy they might feel for us, we often don't know it because all of our focus is upon ourselves and our sorrow and our anguish and very little of theirs just due to them living normal life is focused upon it.

And you can feel oftentimes like David feels. He feels forgotten. He feels forsaken because he's so focused upon his own sufferings.

But for David, it's not just his imagination. He does have adversaries. He does have enemies that surround him. And he prays over and over against those enemies throughout the psalm.

[14:50] Not just here. I said that this is where we get the greatest glimpse into David's circumstances, but we see it in other places. This is where we see some of that. You can't tightly, you can't put barriers between these sections.

So for instance, if you look up in verse 4 before this section begins, he says in verse 4, you take me out of the net they have hidden for me. Here it's the imagery of not a fishing net but a hunter's net. The kind of net that they would lay out on the ground to catch small prey oftentimes. And he says, they've laid a net out for me. They've captured me and caught me. They're seeking to get me and yet you have thwarted them, God.

You've rescued me from their net. But he speaks of these people, these enemies. Or verse 15, rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors.

Verse 17, let the wicked be put to shame. In verse 20, he speaks of the plots of men. So David has actual, real enemies.

[15:53] He has enemies. enemies. And here we need maybe a little bit of a warning, I think. Because yes, we want to take what David is saying here and do our best to apply it to our own lives.

We even want as much as we can to sort of connect to some of the things that David himself is expressing. And a part of that is he has real enemies who are seeking his life, who seek to do him harm, and he prays against those enemies.

But we need to also be reminded that we are not King David. And we don't live in the same time period in which King David lived.

David is the anointed king of Israel. Even before he's recognized as the king by the nation itself, he is anointed by God's prophet to be the king over Israel.

He is the one who has promised that this long-awaited redeemer, first mentioned in Genesis chapter 3, that this long-awaited redeemer would come from his family line and he would be a king that would rule and reign forever.

[17:00] David has great and precious promises given to him, a covenant made with him that we ourselves cannot claim. We receive the benefits of those promises, the benefits of the covenant that God made with David, but we don't belong to that covenant.

It wasn't made with us. We're not David. Not only that, but David lives more broadly in a different time period than we do. He lives under a different covenant than we do.

Never mind the covenant God made with him. God had made a covenant on Mount Sinai with all of Israel. He had given them the Ten Commandments and many other laws that they were to follow, given them the sacrificial system, all of these things, food laws, rituals, details, that they were to follow and that David as the king was responsible to make sure that the whole nation followed.

And we're not under that covenant. We're not under what the New Testament writers call the old covenant that God made with Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. We are under a new covenant that Christ has entered into and ushered us into by his blood.

We live at a different time and under a different covenant which means that we can't just automatically assume that everything David experiences, everything that David expresses, we have something that's equal to that.

[18:27] We're different. Now, sometimes we can be confused by those things and we can even begin to think that God has somehow changed. That he acted one way, behaved one way, and seemed to be one sort of God under this covenant in the Old Testament and that he's somehow changed and he's different under the New Covenant.

Or even some people go so far as to say they see the differences between life under the Old Covenant and life under the New Covenant before Jesus and after Jesus. They see the differences

there and some have gone so far as to even think that there's a different God at work in the Old Testament than we see in the New Testament.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus over and over appeals to the very God that David appeals to. Jesus quotes from what we call the Old Testament over and over throughout his ministry.

We're under a different covenant but we are under the rule of the same God and he never changes. The covenants change.

What God requires at times under different covenants changes but God himself never changes.

Maybe a good way to understand this would be to think of a coach.

[19 : 49] Alright? Could be any sport you want. We'll stick with basketball this morning because my kids are playing basketball right now and that's what I keep thinking about. But a coach may have a plan for a basketball game.

He may have a plan to run one sort of offense in the first quarter or the first half and then to switch it up to maybe throw off and confuse the other team or he may plan to run a full court press in one quarter and in another quarter but in between to back off a little bit.

He's changing things up. He's switching things. He has a plan. His goal is to win the game but he has a plan and at different times in the game he's going to have his players follow a different offense, a different defense, do different things.

But it's the same coach, same temperament, same personality, same goal at the end of it all. He hasn't changed at all but he has a he has a wider view of the game.

He's seeing the whole thing and often times those who are wondering why does he keep changing? Does he not know what he wants to do? Does he not have is he back and forth?

[20 : 59] Does he not even know how to defeat this team? We're just seeing the little bits and pieces and comparing and contrasting them with one another. God has a plan for all of human history that he himself is working out and he in his wisdom and his sovereignty has set up that plan so that it runs according to various what we call covenants, solemn agreements that he makes with his people and the two most important covenants that we find in the Bible are the old covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai and the new covenant that he brings in through the blood of Christ on the cross and there's a world of difference in the lives of those who live under those two covenants.

David lived under the old covenant and more than that David was the anointed king of Israel. There are things about David that can be said that cannot be said about us as individuals and before we leap ahead to apply this psalm to our own lives we need to recognize those differences and one of the most important most significant differences is the attitude of David toward his enemies and the attitude that Jesus calls us to have toward those who set themselves up as our enemies.

David's enemies were enemies of the people of God. David's enemies were those who sought to take the life of the king of God's people. And so David rightly prays against his enemies.

But our enemies are not really our enemies in this world are not ultimately our enemies. In fact they are not people that we seek to destroy they are people that we seek to win so that they might move and become a part of our team.

Move from being in the camp of those who oppose God's people to joining God's people and becoming one of God's people. So that Jesus goes so far as to say in Matthew chapter 5 in the midst of the Sermon on the Mount he says you have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

[23 : 19] Because that's an old covenant perspective perspective from the life of Israel. And he says but I say to you I'm bringing in change.

God has not changed God's plan has not changed but I'm ushering you into a new age and now I say to you love your enemies pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven for he makes his son to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

If you love those who love you what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers what more are you doing than others?

Do not even the Gentiles do the same? David is justified in his attitude toward his so-called enemies and he is justified in the prayers that he offers up for God to destroy those enemies but we are not David and we live under the rule of King Jesus who calls us now to love our enemies to sacrifice for them to pray for them so that they might be won over and no longer be our enemies so

do not do not take the words of David in this psalm and any other psalm when he prays against his enemies and use them to pray against the people that are causing trouble and strife in your own life don't do that it's not the intent of scripture and it's not what we are supposed to do instead recognize that while your next door neighbor or or your relative who constantly causes trouble they are not your enemies but you do have a true enemy

Ephesians chapter 6 the apostle Paul says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood it's not the people around you that you have a fight with but against the rulers against the authorities against the cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places there are real enemies that we face we have an enemy the devil whom Peter says prowls around like a roaring lion seeking people to devour he's the great tempter he's the accuser of God's people and he really is our enemy and all those who serve him demonic beings really and truly are our enemies we have enemies but it's not your neighbor it's not your boss it's not the person who keeps causing trouble in your life the enemy might be using people like that to bring pain and suffering into your life but they're not your enemy they are the ones you pray for who do you pray against who do you want to be put to shame the real enemy the true enemy

[26 : 20] David is facing enemies and we would do well to understand that we can apply some of the things that he says about his enemies to our true and ultimate enemy but we are called under the new covenant to love those around us David has real genuine problems caused by people who want to do him harm in his life and we will experience the same things we will have troubles that are not our fault unlike the passage we saw last week where David's troubles were the result of his sin we will have troubles that are not our fault that people bring into our lives and we can bring those troubles to the Lord but we will as we saw last week we will have some troubles brought into our lives because of our own sin and the truth of the matter is it's not always easy to make a neat division between the two it's not always easy to say oh this season of life all of my troubles are caused by people who want to do me harm and Satan is at work through them to do me harm and in this season of life

I struggled here because I messed up and I sinned it's not always easy to divide things up that way the fact of the matter is our own sins that bring troubles and complications will be mixed in with the difficulties and troubles that others will bring into our lives it's all sort of mixed together and it's very difficult for us at times to discern what and what are the bad things that are happening in my life are the consequences of my own sinful behavior and what are simply the product of other people seeking to do me harm it's not always easy to discern the difference and they will become entangled at times I think David experiences that because for all of his focus throughout this psalm upon his enemies and others who are coming against him and causing him trouble in the middle of this section where he describes his own circumstances he also makes mention of his own sin verse 10 we skipped over it earlier he says my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing and my strength fails and you expect at this point in the psalm for him to say because of all of my enemies but he says instead because of my iniquity because of my own sinfulness because of my own wickedness

I experienced sorrow and sighing and a failure of my own strength that woven into all of this trouble brought into his life by others do not be too rash in ascribing your troubles to your own sin and do not be too rash in ascribing your troubles to someone else's sin who's come against you but recognize they're going to be mixed together and God has answers God has solutions for our troubles even when we can't precisely pinpoint the cause of all of those troubles yes we need to repent of our sins we need to be clear we saw that last week we'll see it again in the next psalm that we look at next week but we don't have to always discern the exact causes of every difficulty that we face they'll come from others they'll come from within ourselves and our own choices that we make but sorrow and suffering will certainly come and that's the main point of this psalm sorrow and suffering will come so we see here in the middle of the psalm this section where mainly we're seeing some of the circumstances of

David's suffering and the causes of David's suffering now the rest of the psalm let me show you how I'm going to divide it out even though these aren't neat divisions we have this kind of back and forth between his request do this for me Lord and then his confession about God's greatness and goodness and power that gives him confidence that God will answer the prayer so he asks for something and then he gives the reasons for why he is confident that God will answer that prayer so we see the first ask in the first two verses take a look at them again with me he says in you oh

Lord do I take refuge and here's the ask let me never be put to shame in your righteousness deliver me incline your ear to me rescue me speedily be a rock of refuge for me and a strong fortress for me God help me be the one I can count on be the one I can depend upon listen to my prayers and respond that's the ask and then here's his confession for the reason for his confidence verses three through five for you are right he is asked be a rock be a refuge be a fortress for me but then he says for you are my rock and my fortress and for your name sake you lead and guide me you take me out of the net that they have hidden for me for you are my refuge into your hand

I commit my spirit you have redeemed me oh lord faithful god god is faithful god is the rock he is the refuge he is the fortress where we can find safety and shelter in the midst of life's difficulties and because those things are true we can cry out to god be a rock and refuge and be faithful our prayers for help need to align with who god has revealed himself to be and that's what we see throughout this psalm prayer and then the reasons that he's confident god will answer it we see the same thing it happens again it happens in verses 14 all the way down through verse 20 verses 14 through 18 are David's prayer verses 19 and 20 the ground the reason why he's confident god will hear the prayer look at the prayer verse 14 i trust in you oh yahweh i say you're my god my times are in your hand rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors make your face shine on your servant we talked about that last week to experience the goodness of god's presence and his mercy displayed as his them go silently to shell let lying lips be mute which speak instantly against the righteous in pride and contempt oh god hear me answer me stop those who oppose me don't let me be put to shame in your righteousness answer me and then verses 19 and 20 why is david confident that god will hear such a prayer oh how abundant is your goodness which you have stored up for those who fear you and work for those who take refuge in you in the sight of the children of mankind in the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues in the beginning of the psalm he prays that

[33 : 57] God would rescue him and be a refuge and he confesses God is my rock and my refuge and now he asks! that God will deliver him from the hand of his enemies and not let him be put to shame and in his righteousness come and save him and now he says his goodness is abundant that his presence covers he's prayed let the light of your face shine upon me and now in the cover of your presence you have hidden them do you see how David's understanding of who God is fuels his prayer life it should do the same for us we don't want to be people who think great thoughts about God and learn things about God from his word just for the sake of possessing knowledge no we want to know who God is we want to know what God is like because it actually impacts the way that we live here it becomes fuel for the prayers that we pray

Without a knowledge of who God is we will pray for God to do things that God by his very character is not going to do we will ask God to give us things that God will not give us because they are not good things how many times have you heard someone pray a young single person pray that God would let them have the person that they are infatuated with and yet that person is not a believer they may be nice they might be attractive they might have a lot of qualities that they're looking for but if they're not a follower of Jesus they are not for the believer sometimes we pray for things but because we don't know God's word well we pray for things that he's not going to give us we seek to know who God is to know what he's like to know and understand his will and when we do that that will fuel and direct our prayer life and we begin to pray for things that are aligned with God's will and character not because we have some sort of prophetic insight in what God's going to do next but simply because we know him to whom we pray you must know him if you would pray in ways that he's going to answer and all that David knows about God in the midst of his suffering and his despair all the things that he knows about God are driving him driving him into prayer so that he prays!

those are the kinds of prayers that God answers in the midst of our pain in the midst of our distress God hears those prayers and he answers and what we see as we continue to read in this psalm we see in verses 21 and 22 a corner is turned David has acknowledged the pain that he feels he's acknowledged the dual cause of that his own sin and the oppression of others he's acknowledged that David has confessed who God is and prayed in ways that match up with that confession and now a corner is turned it's almost as if we fast forward in the life of David and in verses 21 and 22 David begins to speak as one who's already heard those prayers answered these are the later reflections of David when God has responded to his pleas for mercy take a look at them with me verses 21 and 22 blessed be

Yahweh for he has wonderfully shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city I had said in my alarm I'm cut off from your sight but you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help now here is a pattern that we can follow from the life of David when we pray when we ask even in the midst of our distress and pain when we pray and we cry out to God to do something change something move something help and then he comes and he acts and he does things and he helps us and he delivers us we don't always even see it because it's not always a dramatic change right if David is walled up in a besieged city with an army around him that's the imagery that he uses whether it's literal or not we don't know but that's the imagery that he uses it's obvious when the enemies give up are defeated and they leave but it's not always obvious for us sometimes slowly the trouble fades away the people who've been causing difficulties move out of our lives and focus on other things or the sicknesses slowly subside we're not often sick one minute and feel great the next but they slowly go away we heal we recover

[39 : 09] God's faithfulness is shown to us at the end of it all but when we realize that the corner has been turned when we realize that God has answered our prayers how do we then respond to God's goodness in our lives David says blessed be Yahweh he responds in praise and worship he responds by acknowledging God's wonderful display of his love and mercy toward him he acknowledges you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy the truth is when we are crying out it often feels as if our cries and our pleas are not heard in the moment it feels as if as David says you you couldn't see me but he heard all along and he responded and he delivered and when we recognize that that deliverance has come even if it hasn't come in the exact form that we were hoping when we realize that that's come and

God has helped us the right response the right response of God's people to God's answers to our prayer is to praise him and acknowledge his hand at work in our lives and not only that but David follows this up his own praise he follows it up by calling upon God's people to join him in praise that's the very end of this psalm verses 23 and 24 suddenly he turns his attention he's blessing Yahweh but now he turns and says love Yahweh all you his saints because he preserves the faithful but he abundantly repays the one who acts in pride be strong and let your heart take courage all you who wait for Yahweh so what does David do he moves from despair praying in the midst of despair to answered prayers to responding and praise to those answered prayers and what now is that it no it's to call upon others in the midst of their waiting to praise him it's to call upon others to recognize

God has delivered my friend God has delivered my loved one God is at work among his people so all you his people as you wait upon the Lord go ahead and start praising him because my life is now evidence that he hears and he answers the prayers of his people that's what you can become if you respond rightly to God hearing and answering your prayers you can become a beacon calling upon others who are now waiting the way that you were waiting you can call them to praise and confidence that God will indeed answer just as he heard your cries God's answers to our prayers in our times of trouble are not meant for us alone but they are to be shared and rejoiced over with God's people and that's hard for some of us I'm the kind of person it may not seem like it because I'm up here preaching and talking and teaching and sharing things all the time but I'm naturally the kind of person not inclined to share what's happening really internally and in my life with other people I'm not inclined to do that it doesn't even occur to me most of the time to do that and some of you may be the same way you don't have that inclination to share with others the things that are going on but you do have the biblical expectation that you will share when God shows up that we have a kind of obligation to our brothers and sisters around us because they too are facing difficulty to say to them I was hurting and he heard me so don't stop I was hurting and he answered and I'm praising him will you join me in my praise toward him we have an obligation to not just receive the prayers be thankful for the answered prayers but to then turn to the rest of God's people and share and say join me and be encouraged by what

God has done in my life but of course as we so often see in passages like this that's not a that's not a blanket thing that we're supposed to spread to everyone in other words David doesn't say!

[43 : 55] world hey everybody God did good to me so he's going to do good to you that's not what David does he says love Yahweh all you his saints Yahweh preserves the faithful Yahweh preserves the faithful which is another way of saying it's the same root word as the word to believe or to trust Yahweh rescues those who in their lives continually trust in him and they are opposed they are the opposite of those who act in pride because we could divide people into two categories

those who act in pride are those who rely upon their own strength or if you ask them what confidence do you have that things will go well for you when this life is over well I'm a pretty good person it's the person whose strength is founded upon their own abilities their own goodness that's the prideful and the opposite of prideful are the faithful those who continually trust two times in this psalm

David has confessed his trust his faith in the Lord verse six I trust in Yahweh verse 14 faith makes the difference because faith despairs of its own strength leaves its own strength behind in the dust and says I will rely upon God alone faith in Christ is the means by which we become a member of the saints the saints are not the ones who are more holy than everyone else the saints are all those who put their faith and trust in Jesus and if you want to be among them if you want to be among those who are called upon to praise God if you want to be among them who are encouraged! and told that you wait patiently on the Lord and he will answer you take heart in the midst of that if you want to be among them what you need is not confidence in your own holiness or your own goodness what you need is trust in Jesus because Jesus has indeed done everything that he needed to do to defeat the enemy who comes against us Jesus has like David faced down his enemies Jesus has like David faced those who would seek to take his own life but David's life and David's courage were mixed with his own iniquity and his own sin Jesus Jesus his courage Jesus his willingness to face off against his enemy and our enemy was never mixed never tainted by sin indeed as Jesus hangs on the cross in the gospel of Luke as he deals with the enemy the right of Hebrews says he came to destroy the works of the devil and he did that by dying as he hangs upon the cross he identifies with David and David's struggle in this psalm verse 5 of psalm 31 into your hands I commit my spirit verse 43 of Luke 26 from the mouth of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross into your hand I commit my spirit David is not alone in his suffering because he has a redeemer who has suffered like him and we are not alone in our suffering we have a redeemer who has suffered more than we can ever imagine indeed David suffers for his sin in this passage Jesus suffered for your sins and for mine and if you trust in him you will be among his saints who can yet wait with hope when distress comes into your life let's pray and!