

Psalm 31 – In Whom Do We Trust? (1 of 3)

Trusting someone is part of living in this sin-filled world. A person cannot live in this world without trusting someone. The ones who do are most miserable; they live in a cocoon and will find more comfort and solace in a pet animal or fish than in people. They have probably been betrayed very badly and have lost faith in humanity. However, they all began with trust as they grew up. They trusted their parents or relative, or even an institution that took care of them if they are orphans. But when they are betrayed, and there will be betrayal for all who grow up in this world, trust is shattered. In some cases it is beyond repair. However, in others there has been repair and many of them move on in life and continue to trust. But the syndrome of the "once-bitten-twice-shy" will still haunt those who have been betrayed. The question is always how deep that wound of betrayal was!

Trust is more important to believers because of the spiritual realm which has eternal consequences. The person can end up in hell or heaven depending on who he trusts. Trusting in the wrong Christ is a common phenomenon of the last days. The last days are days of apostasy as Christ has prophesied. Just before Christ returns for His church there will be a falling away. This is taught in **2 Thessalonians 2:3** (KJV), "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." The implication is that false Christs will come in the form of pastors and theologians and Bible teachers and preachers who will preach another gospel, deceiving many into thinking that they are saved and will go to heaven when they are actually still in sin and heading for hell. This is the tragedy when we put our trust in the wrong person who teaches wrong and false doctrines. David shares with us the importance of trusting rightly.

I. The Focus (31:1-3) – The target of the believer's trust is not in God's promises or what man says but God Himself. It is the person of God that David cried out to for all who would hear. It is God whom he trusts. It is not just God but the LORD! This is the English word for the Hebrew word "Jehovah" which is the covenantal name for the God of Israel. This means that who God is is not up to man's determination. It must be the God of Israel, the Father of Jesus Christ we must put our trust in. Otherwise, trusting in the name "God" of our own making is false and we have trusted in vain. David knew this God from the Bible. The Bible is the only Book where the LORD is known. It is the Book written by God Himself revealing to man who He is and how He is to be known. The only way to know Him is by believing in Jesus Christ, the same way David did. David believed in what was given to him at that time which was the seed of the woman who would bruise the head of the serpent. This same seed of the woman would come from the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This seed of the woman would die for him the same way the animal sacrificial system, which was a type of Christ, represented Christ's death for him. Today, we have the completed gospel and know that the seed of the woman is none other than Jesus Christ who died for us on

Calvary's cross and rose from the dead on the third day for our justification. Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour is the only way to begins his journey of trust in the LORD. There is no other way. This is exactly what David meant when he said "in thee, O LORD, do I put my trust."

Using synthetical parallelism, David cried to the LORD to not let him be ashamed by trusting in Him. He cried to the LORD to hear and to help him in time of need. This was not a cry of doubt but one of trust. David was confident that his trust in the LORD would not be in vain. That is why he said that the deliverance was based not in David's own righteousness but in God's. David's knew that God's righteousness is pure and always just but his own was not. The heart of man, even that of a child of God, is often mixed with hidden agendas and impure thoughts and desires. But this is never the case with God. It is through God's righteousness that David would be delivered. God will always do right. He will not allow anyone or anything to stop Him from doing what is right. David knew that He is no respecter of persons in His judgement.

Verse 2 (synthetical parallelism) – Therefore David continued by crying to the LORD to bow down His ear to him, i.e. to incline His ears to hear his cry. The cry was for the LORD to deliver him speedily. Just because the child of God trusts in the LORD to see him through the difficult trial does not mean that he does not want the pain and suffering to end. This was David's feeling and Joseph's as well in Genesis 40. He interpreted the dreams of both the chief butler and chief baker accurately. The prophesy on the chief baker was that he would be killed on the third day, whereas the chief butler would be restored to his office to serve Pharaoh on the third day. After the interpretation, Joseph asked the chief butler to remember him when he was restored, for he was innocent. Joseph wanted to get out of prison even though he was obedient to the LORD. He continued to trust in Him even though he was unjustly thrown into prison because of the lies of Potiphar's wife. David also wanted the LORD to bring his unjust trial to an end as soon as possible even though he trusted in the LORD in the midst of the trial.

In the meantime, while he waited patiently for the LORD's speedy deliverance, David said that the LORD was his strong rock in times of trouble. The strong rock is stable and unmoveable. It is unbreakable. It is firm and strong. The LORD is David's rock no matter what the trials that may move him. David must not move from his faith and trust in the LORD which is what trials will cause God's child to do. He is wrestling not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces in dark places. When the child of God succumbs by murmuring or complaining or stops trusting the LORD, he has transgressed. If the child of God continues to trust even though he wants it to end, he will pass the test. The test will not last forever. It will last as long as the LORD determines. The trial is good for the believer's faith even though it is a painful journey and he wants it to end. That is why David cried to the LORD to be an house of defence to save him. A house of defence is safety on all sides

like a child inside his own house and he feels absolutely secure no matter what is going on outside of the house. The fiercest storm will not be able to hurt the child who is safe in his own house. This was how David felt when he cried to the LORD for deliverance.

Verse 3 (synonymous parallelism) – Once again the word “rock” is used here. However, the “rock” in verse 3 is not the same as the one used in verse 2. The “rock” in verse 2 means “a cliff or edge.” The safety is in the inaccessibility of the place as the person hides in the edge of the cliff. The word “rock” in verse 3 refers to “the lofty height.” This refers to the height of the rock that is unreachable to the enemies. David said that the LORD is his rock which means that in the LORD David would not be reachable to the evil men who were trying their utmost to get David to sin. David said that the LORD was also his fortress. The root word for “fortress” is the same as for “rock” in verse 2. This fortress is built on a cliff which makes it safe and difficult to invade and attack and very easy to defend. David said that he felt safe and secure because when he put his trust in the LORD he was also safe and secure and would not allow the trial to bring him down to the pond of despondency.

David’s cry for his deliverance was for the sake of the LORD’s Name and not his own. David knew that his existence was to do God’s will. If David was killed by his enemies then the LORD’s will would not be accomplished in his life. Then the Name of the LORD would be jeopardized and He would be seen as a liar! David asked the LORD to deliver him because he was doing God’s will. It was not deliverance for deliverance’ sake. David asked the LORD to lead and guide him so that he would know what to do and how to decide in difficult times. The word “lead” means to go in front of David and he would follow. David wanted to follow. He followed up with the verb “to guide” which means “to run with a sparkle” like a river flowing smoothly. This is a clear guidance that cannot be missed. While the Bible was not completed yet in David’s time, the guidance of the LORD was still through visions and dreams. This guidance is found in the Bible. When the child of God studies the Bible, the LORD will show him the way to go in all circumstances. This how thorough and complete the Bible is today. The child of God does not need any vision or dream to guide him. To ask for either is wrong and sinful because it implies that the Bible is not sufficient. God already said that he will not allow anyone to add or subtract from His completed Scripture (Rev 22:18-19).

II. The Commitment (31:4-6) – David’s commitment was certain and sure. He cried to the LORD to pull him out of the net that his enemies had set privily for him. The fact that David asked the LORD to pull him out means that he was ensnared already. David was in sorrow and pain because his enemies had trapped him using stealth which is the meaning of the word “privily”. There are such people that the LORD has allowed to affect the lives of His children. These are enemies of God who get into the church or the believer’s lives by pretending to be Christians. But they are agents of Satan masquerading as messengers of light, using Christian jargon and praying theologically correct prayers mixed with false

motives. Trusting believers are often duped by these wicked men. David was ensnared by his love for his son Absalom and he nearly lost his life in the process. The time of suffering could be a few months or even a few years. But the time will be intense and the believer's faith will be stretched to its limits. In times like these, the believer will cry to the LORD to pull him out of the net!

The reason David gave was that the LORD was his strength. The word "strength" has the idea of being stout and firm. It is a description of something that cannot be moved. David said to the LORD to pull him out of the net because David had no strength outside of the LORD's. He asked the LORD to do it as he had no strength of his own. He admitted his weakness and frailty in this regard. It is a wonderful experience to be able to feel so helpless in order to know total and absolute sufficiency in the LORD. There must be helplessness in self before there can be strength from the LORD. Very often the LORD will do the same to His people today. These energy sapping experiences can include terminal diseases and debilitating tragedies like deaths and loss of jobs. There is nothing on this earth that the LORD would not use to teach us the experience of total dependence on Him in order to receive His strength. His strength will truly strengthen our faith and trust.

Verse 5 (synthetical parallelism) – There was no one David trusted but the LORD only. David said that he had committed his spirit into the hand of the LORD. Total trust is defined by this act of complete surrender. David would not turn to anyone or attempt any means to deliver himself out of the net but would only trust in the LORD. If it was the LORD's will for David to die, then David would die. The death of a child of God means going home to be with the LORD. If it was the will of the LORD that David be delivered from his enemies and remained on earth to serve the LORD further, then he knew he would be saved from the hands of his enemies. It was not up to David's enemies whether he lived or died; it was the LORD's will alone. This is the meaning of committing one's spirit to the LORD. Whatever the state or condition of the LORD's "deliverance", David knew that it would be for his good and for God's glory.

David declared that the LORD had redeemed him. He knew the LORD's deliverance. He had already experienced the LORD's deliverance from his sins – in Christ. Any physical deliverance is secondary compared to deliverance from the bondage of sin. If God could deliver David from the greater deliverance of sin, how much more would the LORD be able to deliver him from the physical. David had many experiences of the LORD's physical deliverance in the past when he was a shepherd boy looking after his father's sheep. This present physical trial would be no different. He knew the LORD would deliver him. It was only a matter of God's timing. David demonstrated this confidence by addressing God as "O LORD God of truth." Using the covenantal Name "LORD," David emphasized God's covenantal promises and the personal relationship he had with God. Using the Name "God" ("elohiyim'), David emphasized God's omnipotent power. God was able to deliver David

based upon His covenantal promises and power to help. Then David added the word “truth” to drive home the point of doing what is right! Do not help based upon personal relationship but upon truth. David did not want anyone, especially believers, to think that God helps blindly based only upon personal relationship. David wanted all believers to know that God will help but it will always be based upon His truth which is anchored on God’s truth. This is the best and only way for all believers to cry to the LORD for deliverance.

Verse 6 (antithetical parallelism) – David shared his heart with the LORD that he hated his enemies because they were liars. Their words and deceptions are called lying vanities. They might praise and flatter and even invoke the Name of the LORD in what they say but David hated these liars. These liars “regard lying vanities.” The word “regard” is translated many times as “keep” or “guard by putting a hedge around something precious”. The word “keep” is used in the fourth commandment, “keep the Sabbath day holy.” These enemies of David kept or guarded their lying vanities as something precious to them which they would keep on using to deceive believers like David. This means that these deceivers knew what they did and did them deliberately. They knew that what they said and did were vain, characterized by lying. Lying is one of the most deadly sins as taught in the Bible. Satan employed this sin on Eve to deceive her into sinning against God. Satan is known as the father of lies! David’s enemies behaved like their father the Devil. David had every right to hate these evil men whose agenda is to deceive God’s children into sinning against God and stumble others who see God’s children sin.

Using antithetical parallelism, David said that he would continue to trust in the LORD. No matter what these evil men did to him and how much God allowed these evil men to do to him, he would not budge from his trust in the LORD. This is the best kind of trust. This trust remains sure and firm in the darkest moment of the believer’s life and lasts a lifetime. The child of God goes through the most painful and lonely experiences but he refuses to sin. He continues to trust in his LORD. David knew through his experiential knowledge that he trusted in the LORD not because of the good things he received from Him. Even in the deepest pain that God gave to him, he continued to trust. This is what all believers need to learn.

To be continued