

Psalm 31

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- Psalm 32:1-2 – *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.”*
 - Paul quotes this verse from Psalm 32 in Romans 4:7-8 to prove his point that the Christian is found justified in God’s sight only through the gospel system – how wonderful a fact that is
 - What was once ungodly can now be justified in the sight of God through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ – the gospel that saves us (Romans 1:16)
- Psalm 19:7 - *“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;”*
 - The Psalms are absolutely beautiful writings, and we only read a few tonight
 - The law of the Lord is perfect because it speaks words of freedom, words of salvation, words of a loving Father, and words of a wonderful Savior, etc.
 - The Bible contains the greatest story of love ever known to man
 - In fact, God is love (1 John 4:7-8)
 - And it is passages such as the Psalms that contribute to that perfection as well
- The Psalms are so beautiful because in large part, they are prayers that we see God’s people using as songs
 - Ephesians 5:18-19 - *“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in **psalms** and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,”*
 - For example, if you look at Psalm 32, you’ll notice that it is a contemplation, or a *maschil* (could be a literary term to enforce deep thinking in Hebrew, but it could also be a musical term)
 - Same with the term *Selah* (could be a literary term or musical term to remind the reader to pause and reflect – even read again if necessary)
- The Psalms are a different literary style than say the NT letters, so you read them a little differently from that perspective
 - There are actually 5 books of Psalms
 - Book 1: 1-41
 - Book 2: 42-72
 - Book 3: 73-89
 - Book 4: 90-106
 - Book 5: 107-150
 - They are not organized chronologically per say, rather thematically – although most of books 1 & 2 of Psalms date back to the monarchy, most of book 3 dates to the time in and around the Babylonian exile, etc.
 - There are 150 psalms written for us in our Bibles, and David wrote about 75 of those (50%) – including the Psalm that we’re going to look at this evening, Psalm 31
- We can see a common theme of several of the book 1 Psalms – a theme of deliverance

- And rightly so – David had a lot of troubles throughout his life – both before and after he became king
 - All the trials that Saul subjected him to
 - All the internal trials that he experienced (some from his own sons)
 - God delivered him through all of that – David uses some psalms to praise Him for that deliverance (Psalm 18) and he uses others to declare his trust in God as a result of His provided deliverance (Psalm 31)
- Psalm 31 is a psalm written by David declaring his trust in God to provide deliverance for him in whatever situation he may find himself in (Psalm 31:1-2)
 - It is not known exactly when Psalm 31 was written, although it is apparent that David is in some sort of significant distress (see vs 4 & 9)
 - Potentially at the hands of Saul
 - Saul spent the bulk of his life trying to kill David – hunting him down repeatedly through the events of 1 Samuel 18-26
 - Killing anyone and anything that got in his way, including priests of God in 1 Samuel 22
 - He tried to kill him with a spear (1 Samuel 18 & 19), plotted against him (1 Samuel 18 & 19), sieged his home (1 Samuel 19), and even used his daughter as bait (1 Samuel 18)
 - Or it could have been at the hands of his own son, Absalom
 - After the events of 2 Samuel 13, Absalom fled Jerusalem following his murder of another of David's sons, Amnon
 - For 2 whole years, Absalom held a grudge against Amnon – and he finally struck and killed him
 - And upon return from his flight or his banishment as described in 2 Samuel 14, David forgives him
 - But he used his second chance and turned on his father David – he stole the hearts of Israel (2 Samuel 15:6)
 - He ambitiously attempted to usurp the throne of his father, David – culminating in 2 significant things
 - Absalom defiling David's household in 2 Samuel 16 as part of the fallout of David's sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 & 12 (this was after David was forced to flee Jerusalem due to his son's heinous actions)
 - And battle in 2 Samuel 18 that resulted in Absalom's death
 - And you may think that David is thinking "Hurray, my oppressor is dead!" – but remember, this was his son
 - Despite all that his son had put him through, David was still in distress following his death (2 Samuel 18:33)
 - So, exactly which of these events (or perhaps even another one) David is specifically writing this after, both seem to fit the setting of Psalm 31
 - And as we think of this overall theme of deliverance, we can know that just as God delivered David in all of his earthly situations, He will do the same for us
 - Philippians 4:6-7 - *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the*

peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

- 1 Timothy 2:1-2 - *"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."*
 - We are to pray in all situations – whatever the case may be
 - Do not hold anything back
 - If you have worries about the government in the case of 1 Timothy 2, pray for it
 - But then let God take care of it – so that way you can focus on what you need to be doing as a Christian
 - Living peaceful, quiet, godly, and holy lives
 - And this is pleasing in God's sight (1 Timothy 2:3)
 - Because God delivers His people
- Romans 8:1 - *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"*
- Romans 8:28 - *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."*
 - How much more assurance do you need that God delivers His people
 - Certainly exemplified by His involvement in the life of David
- Psalm 31:3-5
 - David is further declaring his trust in God for His provided deliverance because God is his rock
 - David turns to God for leadership and guidance
 - They have trapped me – but you, God, are my strength
 - And I know you will deliver – so into your hands, I commit my spirit
 - No doubt that we are called to do the same thing today
 - Romans 12:1-2 - *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in the view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing, and perfect will."*
 - We must present a sacrifice to God, and that sacrifice is none other than that of ourselves
 - This makes sense, it is logical – why?
 - Because Christ did it (Luke 23:46)
 - Christ was baptized (Luke 12:50)
 - Christ's baptism was much more literal – and with some of the final words He spoke on the cross, He quotes Psalm 31:5
 - Though He knew it would lead to His physical death, He committed Himself to the will of God
 - And as a result, He arose on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

- Triumphant over the grave as you and I can – we can become new creatures because of what Christ did for us (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Do you trust in God the same way that David did in Psalm 31?
 - He is still the God of truth (Titus 1:2)
 - We have every reason to feel the same way that David felt here in Psalm 31
 - Therefore, do you commit your spirit into His hands?
- Psalm 31:6-8
 - Further emphasizing his trust in God, David says that “...*You have set my feet in a wide place.*” (vs 8)
 - We read in Ezra 7:10 that Ezra returned to Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity primarily to lead the Jews spiritually – we read of him doing so throughout the rest of the book named after him as well as his involvement in the events of the book of Nehemiah
 - I bring up Ezra because it is possible that Psalm 118 was written or at least finalized post captivity
 - This is not 100% certain, some will argue that Psalm 118 was written by David
 - Key evidence suggesting it may have been much later than David (likely Ezra) is the use of the Hebrew word *chesed* in vs 1-4 and 29
 - The only other place we see this term used is in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles – all written post exile
 - And in Psalm 118:5, we read similar terminology being used to that of Psalm 31:8 – “*I called on the Lord in distress; The Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.*”
 - David says “you have placed me in a wide place”, Psalm 118 says “you have set me in a broad place”
 - And if you think about it, when was the nation of Israel at her peak physically and spiritually? Under David, no doubt
 - And why were they at their peak physically? – the physical answer of course is that because in 2 Samuel 5 & 8, we read that David essentially conquered all the nations around Israel – Israel was wide & broad
 - Jerusalem and the Jebusites – didn’t stand a chance against God
 - Same can be said of Philistines, Moabites, Arameans, and so many others
 - God made Israel wide and broad from a physical perspective during the reign of David
 - And David says in Psalm 31 – “God, that’s only because of You. For that and other reasons, I trust in You.”
 - And if you relate that to us today, when was the church arguably at its strongest?
 - When through the eyes of physical man – you’d think it would be at its weakest
 - When the church withstood heavy persecution beginning in Acts 8
 - Sometimes, persecution is a good thing apparently (James 1)
 - The church became wide & broad – God’s kingdom on earth was expanding
 - And it was only because of what God did for the church (Acts 20:28)
 - We can say the same thing that David did in Psalm 31 once again – God has blessed us by allowing us to be a part of the greatest kingdom the world has ever known (His church, Daniel 2:44)

- We can trust in God as a result
- David continues with further proofs and evidences as to why he needs deliverance, and why he trusts God to provide that deliverance throughout the rest of Psalm 31
- And all the trials, hardships, tribulations, etc. that David suffered throughout his life only ended in victory (Psalm 31:19-24)
 - David was staring death in the face at the hands of Saul, Absalom, the Phillistines, the Moabites, etc.
 - And God delivered him every time, just like He will do for you and I as well if we remain faithful through all of our earthly trials, hardships, tribulations, etc. (1 Corinthians 10:11-13)
- But before we close, let's notice something
 - Psalm 31:3-5 – *"For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name's sake, Lead me and guide me. Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength. Into Your hand I commit my spirit;"*
 - Psalm 31:11-13
 - This is what was said of the physical king of Israel, but now let's look at what was said of the spiritual king of spiritual Israel – God's people today whether they be Jew or Gentile (Romans 11)
 - Isaiah 53:2-3 – *"...He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."*
 - Isaiah 53:7 – *"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth;..."*
 - David is saying some things of himself in Psalm 31 that Jesus would later experience as well
 - David's enemies laid a net to trap him, Jesus was betrayed by one of His own
 - David was a reproach among his enemies and his neighbors, Jesus had no beauty that man should desire Him
 - David was a forgotten man who his enemies schemed against, Jesus was nailed to a cross at the demand of His own people
- Yet while on that cross, Jesus could still find the strength to loudly proclaim *"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."* (Luke 23:46)
 - If David could make such a proclamation while being persecuted by Saul, Absalom, and all the others over the course of his life
 - And if Jesus could make this proclamation while hanging on a cross, surely you and I can make that proclamation today
- Because *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit."* (Psalm 32:1-2)
 - Through Christ, we have the justification that we so desperately need (Romans)
- David's tribulation led to great victory (Psalm 31:19-24)

- Christ's tribulation led to the greatest victory ever known to man – the redemption of the world (John 3:16)
 - The world may have killed His body, but He arose a new creature, triumphant over the grave on the third day (2 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 15)
 - And now He sits at the right hand of God interceding for us (Romans 8:34)
 - Though it is sad that it was our sins that put Him there, He experienced a victory that is greater than anything this world could have ever thought of
- And whatever is holding you back from fighting against your fleshly desires in favor of spiritual things, do not delay coming to Christ any longer
 - There will be tribulation involved in that decision that you would not withstand otherwise (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - But there's great victory in the end for you as well – a crown of life (2 Timothy 4:7-8)
 - If you submit your life to Christ, there will be great victory after your tribulation just as there was for David and Christ
- The gospel is what saves us and we know it is simple and will never change (Romans 1:16)
- **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
 - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
- **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16*
- **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10*
- **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3*
 - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
- **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38*
 - Baptism: immerse or submerge
- **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*