

How to Delight in God in Hard Times

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Preacher: Paul Martin

[0 : 00] Open your Bibles to Psalm 31. We're very thankful to have our brother Paul Martin here from Toronto Grace Fellowship Church.

And once I finish reading this chapter, our brother will be preaching from this text. Psalm 31.

In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge. Let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in your righteousness.

Turn your ear to me. Come quickly to my rescue. Be my rock of refuge and strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name, lead and guide me.

Free me from the trap that is set for me. For you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit. Redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth.

[1 : 14] I hate those who cling to worthless idols. I trust in the Lord. I will be glad and rejoice in your love.

For you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not handed me over to the enemy, but have set my feet in a spacious place.

Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress. My eyes grow weak with sorrow. My soul and my body with grief.

My life is consumed by anguish and my ears by groaning. My strength fails because of my affliction and my bones grow weak.

Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors. I am a dread to my friends. Those who see me on the street flee from me.

[2 : 17] I am forgotten by them as though I were dead. I have become like broken pottery. For I hear the slander of many.

There is terror on every side. They conspire against me and plot to take my life. But I trust in you, O Lord. I say, you are my God.

My times are in your hands. Deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your unfailing love.

Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I have cried out to you. But let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave. Let their lying lips be silenced.

For with pride and contempt, they speak arrogantly against the righteous. How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.

[3 : 30] In the shelter of your presence, you hide them from the intrigues of men. In your dwelling, you keep them safe from the strife of tongues.

Praise be to the Lord, for he showed his wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city. In my alarm, I said, I am cut off from your sight.

Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help. Love the Lord, all his saints. The Lord preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full.

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord. Brothers and sisters, it is a great delight to be back with you.

We love your church. We love your pastor. Most of your deacons, except for Stan. No, we love Stan, too. And I want to bring you greetings from Grace Fellowship Church in Toronto.

[4 : 44] On Easter Sunday next week, we will celebrate 22 years. And many of you were faithful to pray for us in those early days. As we, with a group of six of us, began.

And what an answer, so many answers to prayer we have seen through the years. And so I want you to rejoice that God answers prayers. And he has done a good work there. And he has continued to build the Church of Jesus in the city of Toronto, for which we are extremely thankful and glad.

And like you, we have had our trials over the last couple of years. I don't know if you noticed anything was going on. Oh, maybe it isn't down here. It certainly is up there.

But I also found that, I'm sure as you found, the Lord did not change. Amen. And he remained faithful to his people.

That's why I think the old George Mueller, famed for his starting of the orphanages in England, was right when he said this. The first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day is to have my soul happy in the Lord.

[5 : 59] What do you think of that? The great primary business to which I ought to attend every day is to have my soul happy in the Lord.

But dear brother Stan just read for us from Psalm 31, which speaks about a soul that is full of sorrows and sighings. And so when one hears about being happy in God, it can come off as rather trite, kind of shallow.

But I want you to look at the last verse of that psalm again. Forgive me for being in the ESV, but as John said in Sunday school, the older we get, the more English versions they are, and at some point we just stick with our own, so I'm not changing.

But look at the last verse of Psalm 31, where David says, Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.

And so here is David saying, I'm praying that all of us would find this kind of inner strength, this inner courage when life is hard, when life is difficult.

[7 : 10] Now that's where we're headed. Kids, I want to tell you about my most favorite character in all of English literature. It is a donkey.

Do you know who Eeyore is? Eeyore is one of the, well, the only donkey that I'm aware of that runs around with Winnie the Pooh. And I think Eeyore is remarkable because Eeyore is never happy.

He is always discouraged. He has a remarkable gift for finding something wrong with everything. And he trods through life with this cloud of gloom over his head and the constant anticipation that whatever could go wrong will go wrong.

As he gets tumbled over by a group of friends, thanks for noticing. There goes Eeyore. Are you an Eeyore?

I don't think we ought to be Eeyores as Christians. At Grace Fellowship Church in Toronto, we have a church motto. I don't know why, but it seemed like a good idea.

[8 : 21] It goes like this. We exist to delight in God for the glory of God and the good of all people. So we're saying as Christians in Toronto, that's why we're here on the planet, to delight in God, to make God our greatest treasure, our greatest happiness, to find our soul's happiness in the Lord.

But if we're honest, this commitment to soul happiness in God has been tested in these last couple of years. And maybe you were tempted to get a little angry.

Maybe grow discouraged. Maybe even somewhat anxious. Maybe even depressed. In other words, not happy.

Not rejoicing. Not full of delight in God. And if that's you, then here is a psalm for you. A psalm to help you. Because in this psalm, we are being taught how to be happy in God when life stinks.

When life is hard. Now notice how the psalm begins. It has one of these inscriptions written by David himself. He tells us that he wrote the psalm. But he also dedicates this psalm to the choir master.

[9 : 34] And by dedicating the psalm to the choir master, David is giving us as the people of God something to sing. And you will notice in this psalm that it's not just some petty fluff.

But here is a psalm that includes lament and pleading with God and deep sorrow and delight. Which is just one of the reasons that it's good for us to be singing from God's hymn book, the psalms.

So this psalm is tackling the question, How as a Christian do I delight in God when I'm getting squeezed by life's troubles? And David gives you five ways to delight in God when life stinks.

Here's the first one. Declare your delight. Declare your delight. This is how David begins. Verse 1. In you, O Yahweh, do I take refuge.

By that capital L-O-R-D, he is signifying. It's not any God. But it is Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God of Israel. In you, O Yahweh, do I take refuge.

[10 : 38] 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.

Now, there's lots that we could say about those first two verses, but I want to only draw your attention to three words. Refuge, fortress, and rock.

Now, the word refuge appears twice. Verse 1. In you, O Lord, do I take refuge. The end of verse 2, that he's asking the Lord to be a rock of refuge for him.

Now, the first time, David uses a word like, well, Jane's Park. The next time you're at Jane's Park and a sudden shower comes, you look around for what? Somewhere to get out of the rain.

A little pavilion. And I saw the other day there's a nice one there. And so when the rains come, you seek a place of shelter. That's the first word of refuge that he is using.

[11 : 35] And then the second is something like Masada. If you've ever seen pictures of that sort of fortress at the top of an outcropping there in Israel. It's a place of protection, a place of security.

And so one emphasizes safety. One emphasizes security. And then he says that God is his fortress. A strong fortress. Which means something like the protected high ground.

Our church offices are in a Christian school. And I recall this winter when we got a lot of snow. And the parking lot was plowed. And the snow was all piled up high.

And the kids would go out for recess. And inevitably, there would be a boy who would climb to the top of the snow pile. And guess what he would say? Right. I'm the king of the castle. And you're the dirty.

Is this just Canadian? Yes. The rascal. And of course, that's a declaration of war amongst primary school students. And so everybody tries to climb up and claim that position of authority and power.

[12 : 38] And that's kind of the picture that David is using here when he says a strong fortress. It's an elevated ground from which to fight. And then he says that God is his rock. When I was a kid, people did something very odd.

They sent money away in an envelope. And somebody else mailed them back a rock. The pet rock. Remember the pet rock? This was a waste of your money. If I'm just breaking this to you now, I'm sorry.

This was a man giving you a rock. There was nothing special about the rock. But when David calls the Lord his rock, he's not speaking about God being a stone or a rock. In fact, he uses kind of a technical word that speaks about a cleft in the rock.

If you've ever maybe been in the Grand Canyon or somewhere else where there's a cliff face and you could slide into the cleft of the rock. It's a place, again, of respite and protection and safety.

And then in verses 3 and 4, he repeats these three terms. He says, You are my rock and my fortress.

[13 : 40] And for your name's sake, lead me and guide me. You take me out of the net that they've hidden from me, for you are my refuge. Now, I'm pointing out these words to you in case you have ever gone hiking.

When I was a Boy Scout, we did strange things because we wore a sash that we sewed badges onto. I don't understand any of that now. But anyway, you just do what you're told when you're a kid. And one of the strange things we had to do to get one of those little badges was go on a hike.

A 30-kilometer hike. I don't know how many miles that is. And not only that, we had to have a 50-pound backpack. And when you're a little tyke Boy Scout with a 50-pound pack, that feels, well, it's misery.

Because that's what all hiking is. It is misery. And not only did we have to wear a 50-pound pack, but it rained the entire weekend. I'm not joking. And the guy leading us got lost.

It was as bad as anything you could imagine. But I recall when we finally got to our destination, taking off my pack and throwing it into the back of my dad's station wagon, and sitting down in the seat and saying, Turn on the heat, Dad.

[14 : 53] Ah, respite. Refuge. Safety. Security. Where do you find your refuge?

Are you happy in it? David is talking here about God being his delight.

Was I happy in the station wagon? You bet I was. Is having a stronghold, a fortress, a good place to be when the enemy attacks? You bet it is. And by telling God that God is his refuge, David is making a statement about pleasure, about joy and delight.

He's saying, You're my delight, Lord. You are my safety. You are my security. But more than this, you are where I want to be. I want to be with you. Which is why the psalm ends the way it does.

And people that delight in God like this, they know how to pray the truth. If you were here in Sunday school this morning, you'd heard a little bit about this.

[16 : 00] People that understand who God is and are delighting in him, they're the kind of people that take what God has revealed about himself, and they pray it against him. They pray it toward him.

When David is calling on God to act according to God's righteousness, he's leveraging revelation. That's the best way to pray, Christian. To leverage revelation.

We'll come back to this a bit later, but here, God has revealed things about himself to David. God has said these things are true about God. And so now here's David calling on God to act like God.

You told me you were my refuge. Be my refuge. You told me that you were my fortress. Be my fortress. You told me that you were my deliverer. Be my deliverer.

Christians who are delighting in God have no problem praying this way. I would argue that God himself rejoices to hear these kinds of prayers. Because when we're praying this way, we're taking God at his word.

[17 : 01] In other words, we're exercising faith. We're living our lives like God is real, and what he says is true. We're choosing to believe that what God has revealed about himself is true.

We're choosing to delight in God. We're choosing to treasure God, and to treasure him above everything else. Thou art coming to a king. Large petitions with thee bring.

So with all of this soaring confidence in God, it's no wonder that David exclaims in verse 5, Into your hand I commit my spirit.

You have redeemed me, O Yahweh, faithful God. Brothers and sisters, that's a statement of confidence, not despair. Rather, David has been redeemed by God.

And therefore God will not let him be destroyed. And so David commits his entire self into the mighty hand of his rock, his fortress, his stronghold, of God himself. Later on, verse 15, he'll say, My times, my existence is in your hand.

[18 : 04] David is absolutely certain he is immortal until the moment God calls him to himself. When you leverage revelation, you can pray with imperatives.

You know what an imperative is, right? A command. A demand. And as you look at this psalm, what do you see? David praying to Almighty God. Deliver me.

Be my rock. Incline your ear. Save me. Lead me. Guide me. Take me out of the steps of the enemy. Don't let me be put to shame. This is not timid prayers.

Are you an imperative praying Christian? Do you dare come before Almighty God with the imperatives that he has revealed that you can pray back to him? If you're not, it might be because you're not delighting in God.

Your delight in God has been clouded. It's been disrupted. And most often, our delight in God is clouded and disrupted by our circumstances. What's an idol?

[19 : 07] An idol is anything you worship above the real God. Now, all we know so far in this psalm is that David has some enemies who've set a trap for him.

He faced many such traps in his life. We'll see more about this in a moment. But here, what David does when his enemies are attempting to get him to fail, what does he do?

He leans into God. He doesn't look to an idol. So that's my second thing. Don't worry, they get shorter as we go. Affirm your allegiance. Affirm your allegiance.

This is verse 6. I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in Yahweh. I trust in the Lord. Do you remember when David escaped from Saul?

Saul, it actually was with the help of an idol. It was the household idol. And Michael, his wife, took it and put it on the bed and put some goat hair on it.

[20 : 06] And, you know, it was the old fake dude in the bed guy trick. So when the guys from Saul came to kill David, they looked over at the bed and she said, oh, he's sick in bed.

And so David escaped. The help of an idol. In other words, they used that idol for the only thing it was good for. A lump in the bed. Worthless idols here in verse 6 could be translated vain breaths.

Vain breaths. In other words, that which is insubstantial, meaningless, a mere vapor. A thing that appears like something when it is nothing.

You know, like your phone. Do you bow down to it? Bing!

Does it control you? Do you give it your money? Oh, a phone can be an idol if you let it. But you cannot find your soul's satisfaction in a phone.

[21 : 15] David models for us how to seek the delight of the soul in God alone. Look at verse 6 again. I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols. But I trust in Yahweh.

I will rejoice and be glad in your chesed, your steadfast love. Because you have seen my affliction. You've known the distress of my soul. And you've not delivered me into the hand of the enemy.

You have set my feet in a broad place. So think about this. The man who is saying that he chooses to rejoice and be glad is the same man who is finding his life getting strangled by his afflictions.

He uses a bunch of words here that make the reader of the psalm feel like David's in one of those weird movies where the guy's running down the hall and the walls of the hall are closing in on him. That's kind of David's experience here.

He's afflicted. He's distressed. He's living this oppressed life pushed down and in from every side. If you've got an enemy at work or worse, an enemy at home, then you know what it is to be in this kind of state of affliction and oppression where the stomach is tense and the teeth clench and you're getting crushed by your oppressor.

[22 : 32] And yet David tells us that in the midst of all of that, he's happy. I will rejoice and be glad in the steadfast love of the Lord. Why, David?

How? How is it that you are happy? He tells us because God has seen. God knows. He knows my troubles. How did God know? Well, you know, Pastor, the Lord is sovereign.

He sees all things. He declares the beginning from the end. And we say amen. But I don't think that's what David's getting at here. David is saying, look, Lord, you know because I told you. I've laid my heart out before you.

I have brought you all my requests. It's like David is saying, I have told you all about my troubles and trials. And then you took my soul and you picked me out of the crushing weight of all my circumstances and you set me down in a broad place.

This is the vocabulary of answered prayer. Paul and Silas sang hymns while chained in a prison. Joseph cried out to the Lord from the bottom of the pit.

[23 : 31] A man can be in the worst of straights and be full of joy because his delight is not dependent ultimately upon his outward circumstances but upon his inward connection to God.

He's got his soul happy in the Lord. God might even keep bringing these difficult circumstances into your short life to help you taste and see that he is good.

So that you can learn to rejoice and be glad in his steadfast love. After all, it's hard to prove something is steadfast unless it's tested.

David, David's circumstances had provided the soil in which to grow his delight in his God. Life is very hard. And yet he's rejoicing. And it's not a fake joy.

It's not some cheesy, manufactured, you know, pious, evangelical catchphrase, Christian bookstore, weird poster stuff. This is David being true and real.

[24 : 38] And if you're going to be true and real, then you've also got to be real with your sorrows. Point number three, lament your losses. The very next words in verse nine, be gracious to me, O Yahweh, for I'm in distress.

My eye is wasted from grief. Ever cried that much? 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. This is interesting. The man both rejoices and laments.

And you might wonder how, especially if you're young, how a person can be joyful and lamenting at the same time. If you've not discovered it yet, just live long enough.

You know, one of the interesting things about lament as a form of speech is that it is directed at God. It's not moaning to the moon. But it is crying out to God, bringing to God your sorrows and your troubles.

[25 : 47] Lament is a formal expression of grief to the one person who can do something about your sorrows. This is not one of those inscribed psalms that gives us a lot.

It just tells us this is for the choir master. It's by David. So you could go to, say, Psalm 3, and it said when Absalom, his son, was trying to usurp his throne. And we get a sort of historical context here.

We don't really get that in this psalm. Psalm's more general, likely, because so much of David's life was taken up with trouble. And we like to remember David slinging the stone and down goes the giant.

But then there's his sin and the death of his son. And then another son trying to usurp the throne. And then there's his arrogance and pride near the end of his reign.

And thousands dying under God's hand of judgment. I mean, this man's life was not a perfect life. And so in the middle of his own unjust sufferings, he acknowledges his own sins.

[26 : 43] And I don't know about you, but I can relate to verse 10. For my life is spent with sorrow, my years with sighing, my strength fails because of my iniquity. And my bones waste away.

David was a realist. Life, even though he was delighting in God, was also nothing short of 70 years of sorrows and sighings.

And were it not for the grace of God, we would sink under the weight of our own guilt and our own unrighteousness. But added to that is the weight of everybody else's sins against you.

Verse 11, because of my adversaries, I've 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've been forgotten like one who is dead.

I've 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. Man, oh man, if life wasn't hard enough, Satan invented Facebook.

[27 : 48] Okay, Satan didn't invent Facebook, but I think you know what I mean. The devil's got all kinds of ways to get at God's people. And in David's case, he could see the writing on the wall.

He knows people are whispering behind his back. And kind of whispering behind his back in a way they're sure he's going to find out. They're plotting to get him. Sometimes I read these biographies of great World War II leaders and such.

And they say, yeah, at such and such a time I realized, they're all British. At such and such a time I realized he was going to do this and that. And so I did this, which of course ruined him. And I'm brilliant.

Something like that. And I read those things and I'm like, man, do these guys just lie all the time? Or are people actually that smart?

Because in my petty little brain, small brain, I'm just trying to figure out tomorrow. And like when our elders pray, a lot of times we're leaning into that Old Testament prayer.

[28 : 46] Lord, we don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you. Because we don't know what to do. I want to live that kind of simple, dependent life on the Lord Jesus.

I want to stand with David, who I think is leading that same kind of life. Who's just willing to go to God and lament his losses. And continue to pray. That takes me to number four.

Leverage his law. So declare your delight. Affirm your allegiance. Lament your losses. Then leverage his law. We've seen a bit of this already, but verse 14. But I trust in you, O Yahweh.

I say, you are my God. See, that's important. You, Yahweh, you're my God. My times are in your hand. Rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors.

That's a lovely, lovely prayer. You're my God. Not Malak. Not Baal. Not my phone. You are my God.

[29 : 43] And my times are in your hand. So rescue me, rescuer. We were talking this morning in Sunday school about praying God's word. And here's David doing it again.

He's leveraging revelation again. And this time, I think he's leaning into the benediction of Numbers chapter 6. In Numbers chapter 6, remember, The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you. What does he pray in verse 16? Make your face shine on your servant. And it's as if David says, look, I've been going and doing the sacrifices every time I can.

And the priest there blesses me. I hear this benediction by the priest over and over again. So, Lord, you told me that. So do that. Make your face to shine on your servant.

Save me in your steadfast love. Then he leverages God's character. Lord, you say you're the one that you're not going to let the wicked prosper?

[30 : 43] Well, it's wicked men who are attacking me. So deal with them, Lord. Keep your promise. This is verse 17. Oh, Yahweh, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you. Let the wicked be put to shame.

I'm the one who calls on you. Let the people who are not calling you be put to shame. Let them go silently to the grave. Let the lying lips be mute, which speak insolently, arrogantly, against the righteous in pride and contempt.

Now, remember, David's David. He ain't us. And he's got particular promises that God has made to him. And he's looking at his situation and saying, well, those promises are not yet fulfilled, Lord. I'm not sitting at ease on my throne with peace all around me.

And yet that's part of what you have promised me in your promised covenant to me. And so David is pleading with God to deal with the wicked around him. Lord, go deal with the liars. Deal with the insolent.

Deal with the proud. Deal with the contemptuous. Might be a lesson for us there that we don't need to deal with them. David is sure God will.

[31 : 45] And he is sure God will because he's a man who chooses to find his happiness in God himself. But he ain't doing it alone. And that takes me to number five, the last one, the crescendo of this song.

Fortify your friends. Fortify your friends. So this man with so many enemies who's getting squeezed on every side by whispering traitors, who's got to endure affliction and trouble and lies, this man has the audacity in the psalm to turn from talking about his experience toward all of us and essentially to say, delight in God, brother.

Delight in God, sister. And he does it with the last three little couplets of the psalm. Three groups of two verses. And each one, David is giving us, well, something to say to one another.

Delighting in God is never a solo project. It's never run away to your secret little room and get your happiness all worked up and come out and I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm happy.

A part of what you are doing is you gather together as the church of God is looking at other weary saints and saying, what truth can I speak into your life to elevate your treasuring of God himself?

[33 : 12] How can I be praying for you? What can I say to you? What can I remind you of so that your delight in God will increase? David gives you three things. So here's three things you can say to one another.

The first one is this. God is with you. And he will be with you. God is with you. Verse 19. Oh, how abundant is your goodness which you have stored up for those who fear you.

Do you fear the Lord? This is for you. And works for those who take refuge in you. You're seeking refuge in God? This is for you. Who seek refuge for 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. And notice how David moves again from talking about his experience to our experience.

And he's speaking about all those who delight in God. All those who take refuge in God. And God is doing things for these people. The first thing God does is he stores up goodness for them.

[34 : 22] Now it would be enough if all that meant was that God stored up a lot of goodness and it was there reserved waiting for us in glory. That would be enough, right? And the day would come when we would cross the River Jordan.

We'd go from this life to the next and we would behold all of that goodness. And that would be wonderful and that would be enough. But David says that God is going to cause these things to be displayed in the sight of all men.

In real time. In this life. And the way God does that is by answering the first prayer of the psalm. Do you remember what that was? Go back to verse 2.

Incline your ear to me. Rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me. A strong fortress to save me. He says in verse 19.

You've stored up goodness for those who fear you. And then he says you store them in verse 20. To stores. He stores up goodness by storing us in his shelter. Which seems to be saying that the good God gives is nothing less than God himself.

[35 : 30] God hides them in God's presence. God tucks them away in God's impregnable shelter. God cuts off all the plots and whisperings of others.

And God gives them himself. Again, look at what God is saying here. It is not a promise to be spared trials. It's a promise to be given God in the midst of those trials.

In one of my greatest trials. I found it a constant battle. A battle of this heart. To keep going to the Lord. I had an enemy. And that enemy was not nice.

And used of the enemy. He knew all the places to come at this weak soul. All the places of weakness. All Paul Martin's little fear of man.

And all Paul Martin's little idols. And they were all getting pummeled. And there were times I would look at Susan and say sorry. I got to go read the word. Because I'm just trying to stay close to the Lord.

[36 : 30] I am so tempted to depart. And worry. And to be anxious. And you know. Every time I did that. Without exception. The Lord met me in his love.

That's the second thing we tell each other. Not just he will be with you. But he loves you. This is verse 21. Blessed be the Lord.

For he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me. For when I was in a besieged city. That's when it came. I had set in my alarm. I'm cut off from your sight.

From God's sight. But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. When I cried to you for help. What kind of crazy things have you said in your alarm?

We all say things in our alarm that are over the top false. God has forgotten about me. No one's had it as bad as me.

[37 : 31] You don't care about me God. You don't love me. That's what David is admitting here. Things got so difficult in his life.

He thought the Lord had shut him out. Verse 22. I had said in my alarm. I'm cut off from your sight. But that was what he felt. Not what was true. One of our elders, Tristan, was leading a prayer meeting several weeks ago.

And I don't remember what song he was in. But he said these words. A wise person interprets their circumstances by God's character. They never interpret God's character by their circumstances.

And I don't know if it was after David spoke out in his alarm that he came to his senses. But somehow he went from despairing to praying. Instead of losing heart, he launches petitions.

And there's a part. And there's a part. He's telling us there's a part of God's great love that we are only going to experience as we rely on him and delight in him in the worst of our trials.

[38 : 37] David pleaded with God. David pleaded with God. And God wondrously displayed his love. Perhaps the Lord has you in the thick of troubles today so that he can show you the depths of his love tomorrow.

It's good to delight in God when your city is blessed. Maybe it's better to delight in God when your city is besieged.

Blessed be the Lord, verse 21. For he's wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. Besieged kids means the enemy is attacking on every side.

And they're going to come in and get you. They've cut off food and water. Think Ukraine. Not only will this God of yours be with you.

Not only does this God of yours love you. But he will strengthen you, verse 23. Love the Lord, all you his saints. All you his saints.

[39 : 39] The Lord preserves the faithful. But abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. Be strong and let your heart take courage. All you who wait for the Lord.

Again, pay careful attention to the promise that is given here. It is not a promise to have all of your troubles erased. It is a promise to be preserved and strengthened through those trials.

God will take care of the justice that your enemies deserve. In the meantime, he will make sure that you have the courage to move forward. You know what courage is, right?

Courage is choosing to do what is right or true regardless of the outcome. Courage does not mean, Her, her, her, manly man, I feel...

No, that's not courage. Courage is not whipping yourself up into something. Courage is making the choice to do the right thing. Even when it looks like that might lead to death.

[40 : 43] I'm thinking of sisters in my own church. Two of them that I know. Who find just conversating with other human beings a difficulty. Touches some fear of man issues for them.

Or fear of woman issues for them. And they've prayed about it. And then they've sought to step forward and engage people. And I've watched them over the years become two of the most influential, encouraging, faithful to pray for other sisters in the church.

And I look at them and I go, there. That right there? That is courage. That's why this psalm is so important.

The greater our personal delight in God, the more faithful we will be to live for God. Even in our sorrows, even in our sufferings, even in our fears.

It's a very popular psalm in the Bible. Jonah quoted this psalm. Jeremiah quoted this psalm. There was another man who quoted this psalm.

[41 : 50] Look at verse 7 for a moment. We see echoes of this man. You have seen my affliction. You have known the distress of my soul. Verse 9.

My eye is wasted from grief. My soul and my body also. We know a man who suffered greatly in a lonely garden. Who prayed in deep distress of soul to his heavenly father as his body sweat great drops of blood.

Look at verse 13. They schemed together against me as they plot to take my life. We know a man who endured the lies of his enemies as they falsely accused him of sin and secretly plotted to murder him even though he was innocent.

Look at verse 22. I said in my alarm, I am cut off from your sight. We know a man who never said anything in his alarm and yet was cut off from God's sight as he endured the penalty for sins that he never committed.

Look at verse 5. Into your hand I commit my spirit. We know a man who spoke these very words while hanging from a Roman cross.

[43 : 18] Not as an expression of defeat or resignation or surrender. But just as David intended them as an expression of total confidence in his father.

When David wrote those words, he wasn't expecting to die. He was expecting God to intervene in his case and to deliver him. And when the greater David, our Lord Jesus, took those same words to himself, he elevated their significance to a new and a greater level.

He knew that in just a moment he would give up his spirit and die. But he quotes these words of Psalm 31 so that all of us would know his untouchable confidence that his father would raise him from the dead to never-ending life.

Not just one rescue from one trial, but ultimate rescue from the greatest of trials. Our Lord Jesus breathed his last and he was instantly in paradise. And the same Lord Jesus offers the same paradise, the same eternal life, the same uninterrupted delight in God to all souls that are hidden in him.

Have you repented from your sins? Have you put all of your hope for eternal life in Jesus? Oh, friend, the only way to be happy in God is to first be right with Jesus.

[44 : 39] The only way to be right with Jesus is to renounce all the things you've said, all the things you've done, maybe even this week. Something you've said, something you did, and you had this pang of conscience and you became aware, I am a sinner, I do sin.

It's to take not just that sin, but all the sins of all your life. Every lustful thought, every lie, every harsh word, and to pile them up in a heap and to renounce them.

To say, I reject these. My sin is against me. It cries out against me, and I'm renouncing it all as sin. I'm agreeing with you, God, that it is evil and it's wrong.

But I'm looking up at a cross, and I see the man hanging there, and I know that that man died for sinners like me. And so, mercy of mercies, I'm asking you to take all of my sin, and I'm asking you to give me all of Jesus.

Do you know that that prayer, when given in faith, that prayer, when made from the heart, has always been answered? Which means there's no reason for a soul to leave without knowing God.

[45 : 53] Christian, when you remember what God has done for you at the cross, shouldn't we look at one another and say, let's leave behind our Eeyore days. Let's keep reminding each other what God has done for us in Christ.

Let's be like John Huss, the Czech reformer. As they hauled him off to burn him at the stake, his accusers come around him and say, we devote your soul to the infernal demons.

And Huss looked him in the eye and said this, but I commit my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ.

And they burned him at the stake. And the moment that soul departed that body, he was with the object of his delight forever.

May God make it so for each one of us. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.