

“Thou Art My Rock”
Psalm 31
(Preached at Trinity, June 20, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Psalm 31** we find David once again surrounded by evil people who are working together for his destruction. Apparently it was a conspiracy that left him feeling alone and forsaken. None came to his defense, yet God was there and proved to be a mighty Rock of protection.
 2. In David’s distress God once again proved to be faithful and David placed all his trust in God as his mighty Deliverer.
 3. We can divide this psalm into six sections which will serve as the divisions of this sermon.
 1. David’s Determination – Verses 1-5
 2. David’s Devotion – Verses 6-8
 3. David’s Distress – Verses 9-13
 4. David’s Deliverance – Verses 14-20
 5. David’s Declaration – Verses 21-22
 6. David’s Decree – Verses 23-24
- I. David’s Determination – **Verses 1-5**
- A. David was facing a severe trial but he was determined to trust God
Psalm 31:5 – “Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.”
 1. This would later be quoted by one greater than David – It was quoted by Jesus as He hung on the cross in Luke 23:46
 2. David placed his life in the hands of God – I commit my life to God
 - B. Because of this determination David looked to God as his source of strength
Psalm 31:1 – “In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust”
Psalm 31:3 – “For thou *art* my rock and my fortress”
 1. Notice the force and confidence of David’s prayers
 - a. **Psalm 31:2** – “be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.”
The word for “defense” means a fortress. It is the same word used in **Verse 3**
 - b. David says to God, “You *are* my Rock, *be* my Rock.”
You *are* my Fortress, *be* my Fortress.”
 - c. **Verse 4** – “Pull me out of their net for you *are* my strength.”
 2. What faith! David had determined that God was His God, His Almighty God. He had determined that no matter what, he would trust this God. He had determined that he would seek God’s direction in all things.
Psalm 31:3 – “therefore for thy name’s sake lead me, and guide me.”

II. David's Devotion – Verses 6-8

In these verses David switches from seeking God's protection to statements of his devotion to God

A. He begins by stating his commitment to holiness

Psalm 31:6 – “I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.”

1. This is another one of those statements that seem sharp to our sensitivity
 - a. The word “hate” seems so strong. In our post-modern world of relativism no one should have such strong feelings
 - b. In terms of our personal condition we must be very careful about the idea of hatred. The command to us is to love our enemies
2. David wasn't manifesting hatred for selfish reasons. His hatred was against all that opposed the holiness of God
3. The KJV doesn't reveal the heart of David's hatred
KJV – “them that regard lying vanities”
NAS – “those who regard vain idols”
ESV – “those who pay regard to worthless idols”
4. David's hatred was directed at everything that robbed God of His glory
David was zealous to protect the honor of God's holy name.
5. In contrast David adds, “but I trust in the LORD.”
Rather than looking to worthless idols David was totally devoted to trusting God.

B. David reveals his heart of devotion towards God – verse 7

Psalm 31:7 – “I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy”

1. David uses the familiar word - רַחֲמֵי
The love that finds at its heart God's covenant relationship with His people – a covenant love, a steadfast love
2. David knew God was mindful of his affliction
Exodus 3:7 – “And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;”

III. David's Distress – Verses 9-13

Knowing God's watchful care of him David lays his burdens before God

A. He appeals to the grace and mercy of God

Psalm 31:9 – “Have mercy upon me, O LORD”

1. The word can be translated, “Be gracious to me.”
2. David's grief was real. His suffering was real.
Trusting in God does not mean we cease to suffer.
3. David is telling God his entire body is consumed with this trial and he is looking to God for relief
4. David also knows that our sin often adds to our earthly sorrow
Verse 10 – “because of mine iniquity”
Thus David's appeal to God's mercy

- B. David felt absolutely abandoned
1. Our earthly afflictions are compounded if we face them alone
 2. David cries out in his loneliness –
Psalm 31:12 – “I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.”
 - a. He felt like a dead man, long forgotten by the living
 - b. Or as a broken piece of pottery discarded and forgotten
 - c. Even his friends had abandoned him
Psalm 31:11 – “I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.”
 3. During such times we are always reminded of God’s loving care of His children
- IV. David’s Deliverance – **Verses 14-20**
- A. David felt abandoned but he wasn’t forsaken
1. Paul’s words
2 Corinthians 4:8-10 – “*We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”
 2. In the height of David’s ordeal he trusted God
Psalm 31:14 – “But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my God.”
 3. He reminds God of his position before God – He was God’s servant
Psalm 31:16 – “Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies’ sake.”
 “Make thy face to shine upon me” – can there be a higher request.
 For God to shine upon us in His favor, His love and mercies, His powerful deliverance, His glory!
- B. And David was delivered
1. **Verses 17-18** – The wicked were shamed, their wicked lips silenced
 2. God rewards those who trust Him
Psalm 31:19 – “*Oh* how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!”
 3. He delivers them and protects them and hides them in His secret place
Psalm 31:20 – “Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.”
 The word “pavilion” refers to a place of shelter – (ESV, NAS)

V. David's Declaration – **Verses 21-22**

- A. David blesses God – “**Blessed be the LORD**”
1. The word literally refers to kneeling
It is a high offer of praise
 2. David was brought to praise God for His great deliverance
“for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.”
- B. God knows, God cares, God delivers His people
1. David felt abandoned but God was there caring for him
Psalm 31:22 – “For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.”
 2. David felt shut out and abandoned. He offered up prayers of anguish. Such prayers are often offered up in haste. We refer to them as ejaculatory prayers. But God hears even these prayers.
“nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.”

VI. David's Decree – **Verses 23-24**

As King David makes a decree to all of God's people

- A. It is made to the saints of God – “**all you his saints!**”
1. The word points to the faithful ones - Those wholly committed to God
 2. NAS – “**all you His godly ones!**”
 3. These are the ones God rewards. He protects them, preserves them. God's goodness is stored up for the elect.
“*for the LORD preserveth the faithful*”
- B. David makes a two-fold decree – a charge to God's people
1. “**Love the LORD**”
 - a. This is the highest act of religion. It is the highest worship. It is the power of obedience. It is God's great command to His people
Deuteronomy 6:4-5 – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: ⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”
 - b. This is truly the great divide – the difference between the believer and the unbeliever – do you love Christ?
 2. “**Be of good courage**”
 - a. Stand firm. Face your enemies. Boldly proclaim the name of Christ
 - b. The fearful are included among those who don't know Christ
Revelation 21:7-8 – “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. ⁸ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
 3. The fruit:
Psalm 31:24 – “and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.”
Take heart – He will defend those that Hope in Him

Conclusion:

1. Once again David stands before us an example of piety.
 1. David was facing a severe trial but he was determined to trust God
Psalm 31:5 – “Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me,
O LORD, God of truth.”
 2. He was devoted to God in holiness not falling into the idolatry of his neighbors
 3. He trusted God and he found a great Rock, a Mighty Fortress
2. Oh that his heart would be our heart.
Love God, be courageous, be strong.
“and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.”