

**Psalm 31: 1-24; “Committing Your Spirit to God”, A Communion Meditation,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 21st, 2016. (Part of a series
entitled – Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection,
as noted in the Psalms and Remembered.)**

We have come here once again to remember the death of our Savior on our behalf. I am firmly convinced that when Jesus used these words, when He was hanging on the cross, that He was thinking of His people. He knew that the way that He died would have a direct effect upon each believer when it comes their time to die. Because He committed His spirit to God, each of us here by grace, will be able to have the same confidence that they will be heard by God at the time of their death. We will be able to do so because Jesus Christ has become our rock of refuge; it is He who has become to us a fortress of defense to save us by His work on our behalf on the cross. In verse 5 David says, “Into your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.” This is why he could commit his spirit into the hand of God; because God had redeemed him through the sufferings of His beloved Son. David was sustained in all of his trials because of the grace that he received as a result of Christ’s sufferings. It will be no different for us. We need to remember 4 things before we come to the table this afternoon; things which will help us commit ourselves to Him as we live our lives for Him, and which will also enable us, by His grace, to commit our spirit to God at the time of our death. Let us remember, 1st of all, what our sin did and does to us. (verses 9-13) 2nd – Let us remember the importance of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (verses 14-18) 3rd – Let us remember the goodness that is laid up for us in this life because of Christ our Lord. (verses 19 and 20) And 4th – Let us remember to love the Lord Jesus and be of good courage because He preserves us forever. (Verses 21 - 24)

1st – Let us remember what our sin did and does to us. (Verses 9-13)

David says, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye wastes away with grief, yes my soul and my body!” “For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away.” It is our iniquity that brings such results as these to the soul and body. Sin brings a sense of guilt and misery; it brought sighing to David’s heart and mind. Perhaps this was written, about the time of Absalom’s rebellion against David, when so many were speaking against him. Verse 13 says, “For I hear the slander of many; fear is on every side; while they take counsel together against me, they scheme to take away my life.” It was David’s sin with Bathsheba that had brought these consequences upon David which were really very difficult. He was told by God, through Nathan the prophet in 2 Samuel 12: 11: “Behold I will raise up adversity against you from your own house.” And so it came to pass.

But as we think about the Lord Jesus Christ this afternoon, let us remember that He had no sin of His own, and therefore He did not deserve to suffer the consequences of the mistreatment He endured at the hands of men; neither did He deserve to have the wrath of God placed upon Him at the cross. Yet He, for our sakes, suffered all the things that David mentioned that he suffered; and indeed, He suffered much more, because He was suffering for the sins of all God’s elect people. Christ suffered for David, and He has suffered for you dear Christian, so that you, like David, can be born up and sustained, through all of your trials and difficulties which you come into, on account of your sins. Jesus suffered the wrath of God against us; we who are sinners, so that we might be disciplined by God in love. Because of Christ’s love, we shall never be forsaken or punished for our sins by being cast into hell. Jesus suffered the equivalent of the punishment of hell, which we so richly deserve. David was most certainly suffering at this time; but he came to realize that he would not be forsaken by God, but rather saved. He would eventually be delivered, and he would even be restored to his kingdom, because of the sufferings

of Jesus Christ on his behalf. It is indeed a beautiful statement in verse 7 which we should take notice of here this afternoon. "I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities, and have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a wide place."

Let us remember this afternoon, that God the Father does consider carefully the trouble of every one trusting in His Son for salvation. He truly does come to help us in the midst of our difficulties, for Jesus' sake. He knows when your strength is failing. He does know when you are sinfully weak. God does know how much the reproach of our enemies affects us. He does know what the slander of many people does to a person. He knows it; actually He knows it better than we do, because of how His own dear Son was treated. He who never deserved such punishments as He received, was not suffering for His own sins, but for yours. Jesus' royal dignity was mocked. He was deliberately maligned, and evil spoken of. He was mistreated for our sakes. It was because of our sins that He suffered so dreadfully, so that we can now know God's power sustaining and strengthening us, moment by moment, and day by day. This is why we, too, can pray to God and say, "Into Your hand I commit my spirit."

2nd – Let us remember the importance of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Verses 14-18)

Verse 14 says, "But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.'" This is what we are doing here this afternoon. We are publicly declaring, by our partaking of this supper, that we believe in Jesus Christ. We trust in the merits of His obedience and His death on the cross for us. We are deliberately taking from Him, anew and afresh, all that we need to be saved, and all that we will need to live the Christian life. We give to Him, we commit to Him, all of our future days. "My times are in Your hand." "Deliver me from the hand of my enemies". We have come to know and to realize that sin is our greatest enemy. And so we pray as David did: "Deliver me from persecuting men". We pray: "Make Your face to shine upon me." This is what we seek now to remember now, and this is what we will seek to remember all of our days. It is the truth that God is continually supplying us with grace, based upon what Christ has done for us. Therefore we pray, and we ask the Lord "not to let us be ashamed" by our future thoughts, our future conduct or our future speech; but that we would "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil age." We remember the importance of our faith being engaged in our Savior. We should have our trust so fixed upon the Lord that we see everything of spiritual strength and righteousness coming from Him, and not from ourselves.

That is the whole purpose as to why Christ gave us this Supper. It is so that your faith and hope and love, which are graces which He has given to you, might be strengthened. I think of that hymn, Jesus lover of my soul. "Just and holy is Thy Name; I am all unrighteousness; false and full of sin I am, Thou art full of truth and grace." That is what we should remember this afternoon about ourselves. Since we are this way in our sin, even after we become Christians, we should be wary of ourselves, and see nothing good coming from me; that is my flesh. We yet on the other hand, we should have full confidence in what Christ has done, and what He is doing for us; that we would see everything good coming from Him. All of our strength is to be found in Him; all of our springs of joy are found in Him.

3rd – Let us remember that goodness is laid up for us in this life because of Christ our Lord.

All the goodness of God toward fallen sinful mankind is to be found in Jesus Christ. Verse 19 says: "Oh how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men!" We have come here today to speak of God's goodness in Christ. It is a goodness which is laid up for all of His people; for everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ. It is the goodness of His great, and powerful, and sufficient grace, that we here extol in the presence of the sons of men. Let us

remember that God has great and mighty purposes in the salvation of each one of His dear people. And interwoven in the outworking of those purposes, our God will be found showing each of His people His great goodness in many practical ways. It says in verse 20 – “You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in the pavilion from the strife of tongues. Perhaps none of us knows how often God has done this in our lives, but we should believe it, and we should be thankful for it.

There is a good example of the goodness which was “stored up” for David, by God, which is found in 1st Samuel chapter 23, verse 1. “Then they told David, saying, ‘Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors.’” “Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Shall I go and attack these Philistines?’” “And the Lord said to David, ‘Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah.’” “But David’s men said to him, ‘Look, we are afraid here in Judah.’” “How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” 4 Then David inquired of the Lord once again.” “And the Lord answered him and said, ‘Arise, go down to Keilah.’” “For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand.” “And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock.” “So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.” “Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he went down with an ephod in his hand.” “And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah.” “So Saul said, ‘God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.’” “Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.” “When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, ‘Bring the ephod here.’” “Then David said, ‘O Lord God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake.’” “Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand?” “Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard?” “O Lord God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.” “And the Lord said, ‘He will come down.’” “Then David said, ‘Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?’” “And the Lord said, ‘They will deliver you.’”

“So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go.” “Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.” “And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph.” “Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.” “So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest.” “Then Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God.” “And he said to him, ‘Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you.’” “You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you.” “Even my father Saul knows that.” “So the two of them made a covenant before the Lord.” “And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.” You can see from these verses how great was God’s goodness which was stored up for David. All of this grace of care and protection and friendship from Jonathan was a type of the kind of grace which is given to us through our dear friend – Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lay down His life for us.

The verses of our text are saying that it will be God’s grace in Jesus Christ that we shall extol, when we are in the very presence of our enemies. Psalm 23 says, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.” “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Verse 20 of our text is saying the same thing. “You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” Oh how precious is this kind of goodness to all of God’s people. It is our God who prepares a table of goodness for His persecuted, slandered, and afflicted people, in the presence of those who are trying to work against them, and to hurt them. He hides them in His

presence. This is what Christ has died to give to you, dear believer. Let us now come down to the front where I will have a few more words for you.

4th and finally – Let us remember to love the Lord Jesus and be of good courage because he preserves us forever. (Verses 21 - 24)

Verse 21 says: “Blessed be the Lord, for His has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!” Let us remember, now, that we are about to partake of this Supper, that our Lord Jesus suffered and died in order that He might show us His marvelous kindness in a strong city; in “a besieged city” it says in the NAS. Sometimes in our experience we feel as though we are in a besieged city. There are many things coming against us and we do not know whether we have the strength of heart to face them. We are sometimes going to think as David did in verse 22, “For I said in my haste, ‘I am cut off from my eyes,’” when we face various situations of difficulty and distress with people who do not like us, or who do not care for us. But let us remember at those times to be prayerful, even as David was. He says in verse 22 b – “Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried out to You”, it says there. Let us love the Lord Jesus Christ today by blessing and praising Him that He has shown us His marvelous kindness in a besieged city!” “Oh love the Lord, all you His saints!” “For the Lord preserves the faithful.” You see that David was not sinless, but still he was faithful. He was faithful to keep trusting in God and doing right by His grace. That is the perseverance of the saints. Each of us who trusts in Christ should be of good courage as the text says, and remember that He will strengthen your heart. He will strengthen your heart as you hope in Him. He will give you grace so that your heart will take courage. This is even how we will be able to face our own death as well; by trusting in the Lord Jesus and confessing your love for all that He has done for you. It is He who makes you strong in your faith, as you feed upon Him and His faithfulness. Let us now partake of these elements and let us be glad and joyous this afternoon; glad and joyous that He is living and risen and sitting at the right hand of the Father, conveying these blessings to us. Let us be glad and joyous that He is able to come to our souls to change us, so that we will learn to do His will and to live for His glory.