

When we are out numbered and surrounded by enemies, the last thing you feel like doing or being is courageous. When we find ourselves threatened by negative intimidating forces who are against us, the temptation we have is to go on the defensive and not the offensive.

David saw it different. He had learned that with his relationship with God, he could be courageous. He could have hope of deliverance no matter how bad things looked. That is exactly what Psalm 31 is all about.

Psalm 31 has been called a psalm which prays for God's protection, but it is also one that appeals to God's people to be courageous in the face of many enemies. The primary point to see is this:

WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SURROUNDED BY FEROIOUS ENEMIES AND FACE TERRIBLE OPPOSITION, GOD'S PEOPLE MAY HAVE HOPE AND COURAGE THROUGH PRAAYER AND THROUGH THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

It does not matter how bad things appear to be, there can always be hope and courage when one is in a right relationship with God because one can always pray and wait on God to deliver.

This text breaks down nicely into six main parts:

PART #1 – David acknowledges His total dependency on God. 31:1-5

David was totally relying upon God to deliver him and in this part of the psalm, David tells God exactly that. **When you trust God, you can always turn to God.** Because David turned to God as His refuge, there are a series of desires and expectations he had:

Desire #1 - David asks God to never let him be ashamed. 31:1a

When our great desire is to ask God to never let us end up being ashamed before Him, we have the kind of spirituality David had. When someone asks God to keep him from being ashamed, it means that he truly wants to live a life that will not bring shame and reproach to the name of God.

Desire #2 - David asks God to deliver him. 31:1b

Now notice the deliverance is consistent with the righteousness of God. God cannot lower His righteous standards to deliver someone, but He can deliver someone in conformity with them.

Desire #3 - David asks God to listen to him. 31:2a

When someone calls us who is in need of help, we tend to really closely listen to what they have to say. That is the way it is with God's people. When they are needing His help, He tends to incline His ear to listen.

Desire #4 - David asks God to rescue him quickly. **31:2b**

This is a request for immediate action.

Desire #5 - David asks God to save him. **31:2c-3a**

David realized God was his rock and fortress. God was the One who was in position to save. David could not save himself any more than we can save ourselves.

Desire #6 - David asks God to lead him and guide him. **31:3b**

Now the primary reason why David wanted God to lead him and guide him was because of the name of God. David wants God to sovereignly control everything around him so that God's name will be glorified and David will not do things to shame the name of God. What a heart this man had for God.

David had a confidence that God would pull him out of secret traps (**31:4**). I doubt seriously we even begin to grasp the number of times God has delivered us from people who have tried to trap us. David believed God was his strength (**31:4b**).

Notice **verse 5**, He committed his spirit and his soul to God. This is one of the advantages of going through dangerous and difficult things; we can commit our soul to God.

These living words of David have been the dying words of many. This very verse has been often quoted by those facing death. Jesus quotes these words when He was dying (Lk. 23:46). Stephen quoted these words when he was dying (Acts 7:59). These words were also quoted by Polycarp, Huss, Luther and Melancthon. Great strength and courage comes by knowing this verse.

Of course the reason why David could commit his soul to God was because of the truth he states in **verse 6**, God had ransomed him. God is a God of truth. God paid the price to give David a relationship with Him and because of that, David could have confidence in a total dependency on God.

PART #2 – David acknowledged his personal relationship with God. **31:6-8**

David was the real deal. He had a personal relationship with God that was not phony. He did not hide things from God, but was open and honest. Since God is a God of truth (**verse 5**), that is the way the relationship must be.

There are three facts brought out about David's relationship with God:

Fact #1 - David states who he hated. **31:6a**

Godly people have godly hatred. David hated people who gave themselves over to empty, worthless, vain religious idolatry. By the way, notice the target of his hatred were people, not the sin. He hated the people who made their god something other than the true God of the Bible.

Fact #2 - David states who he trusted. **31:6b**

David totally and completely trusted in the LORD. This does present an interesting point. David is praying to the LORD, but now he states that he trusts in the LORD. It is possible to pray and not trust in God. Most people trust in themselves or others, but David trusted in God.

Fact #3 - David states his joy. **31:7-8**

In the midst of circumstances that were troublesome, David could always rejoice and be glad for five reasons:

(Reason #1) - Because of God's lovingkindness. **31:7a**

(Reason #2) - Because God had seen his affliction. **31:7b**

(Reason #3) - Because God had known of the troubles of his soul. **31:7c**

(Reason #4) - Because God had not given David over to enemies. **31:8a**

(Reason #5) - Because God had expanded David's status. **31:8b**

David found great joy in the midst of troubles because of all he had seen God do. What we learn here is that at times it is not wrong to hate. At all times it is right to trust God.

PART #3 – David appeals to God for grace in terrible personal circumstances. **31:9-13**

David was in a difficult situation. Thomas Constable said one reason for David's difficult situation was his own sin. In fact, in **verse 10** he mentions his own iniquity. He needed God's help and he needed God's grace. There are twelve descriptions he gives of the trouble he was experiencing:

Description #1 - David was in distress. **31:9a**

Description #2 - David was suffering physically, emotionally and spiritually. **31:9b**

Description #3 - David was sad. **31:10a**

Description #4 - David was weak. **31:10b**

Description #5 - David was surrounded by adversaries. **31:11a**

Description #6 - David was a reproach to his neighbors. **31:11b**

Description #7 - David was an outcast to everyone. **31:11c**

Description #8 - David was a forgotten man. **31:12a**

Description #9 - David was a broken man. **31:12b**

Description #10 - David was a slandered man. **31:13a**

Description #11 - David was an afraid man. **31:13b**

Description #12 - David was a target for evil schemers. **31:13c**

This is what sin does to God's people. It does not leave them happy, but miserable. When we find ourselves in this state, we need to do exactly what David did; go to God and ask for His grace.

These are terrible circumstances that literally did surround David. He was hurting, afraid and alone. But there was one thing he could always do and that was to go to God.

PART #4 – David specifically asks God for His intervention and deliverance. **31:14-18**

Again we may notice that David reiterates the fact that his trust was in God. He realized the times of David's life were in God's hands (**31:15a**). There are eight specific requests David makes:

Request #1 - David requests that God would deliver him from enemies. **31:15a**

Request #2 - David requests that God would make His face shine on David. **31:16a**

Request #3 - David requests that God would save him in His lovingkindness. **31:16b**

Request #4 - David requests that God would not let him be put to shame. **31:17a**

Request #5 - David asks God to specifically let the wicked be put to shame. **31:17b**

Request #6 - David asks God to let the wicked be destroyed. **31:17c**

Request #7 - David asks God to silence those who lie. **31:18a**

Request #8 - David asks God to silence those who are arrogant. **31:18b**

No matter how terrible things get, we can always go to the Lord and ask for His help. In fact, that is what we should be doing.

PART #5 – David praises God personally. 31:19-22

Even though David was struggling and hurting, he was still also praising God for four realities:

Reality #1 - He praised God for His goodness. 31:19

Reality #2 - He praised God for His protection. 31:20

Reality #3 - He praised God for his lovingkindness. 31:21

Reality #4 - He praised God because He listened. 31:22

As abandoned as David felt he was, he always knew he could pray to God and God would hear him. God may take us into a lion's den and we may not see answers until we are in that den. He may put us in a fiery furnace so we are able to see, smell and feel the flames, and it is in those very moments when we may expect to see God answer.

PART #6 – David exhorts godly people to love God and hope in God. 31:23-24

David wanted godly people to:

- 1) Love God.
- 2) Be strong.
- 3) Be courageous.
- 4) Have hope.

God will always preserve His faithful people and He will always fully recompense and pay back the proud evildoer. He will pay back in ways of retaliation, tragedy, disappointments, disease and demise.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

1. When surrounded by terrible problems and pressures—run to the Lord in prayer.
2. Any relationship with God that can expect to move God must be based on truth.
3. Times of great trial can become times of great trust.
4. We can be courageous when facing enemies, knowing God will fully recompense them.