



Tim Pauley
PO Box 58403, Charleston, WV 25358
304.767.8430
tim.pauley@capitolcom.org

Our Times are in His Hands

Psalm 31

Life in the capitol is full of many highs and lows. The winning and losing of elections. The passage and defeat of legislation. The gain and loss of positions of leadership. The relief of the end of a session and the stress of passing a difficult budget. Add all this to the ups and downs we all face in our daily experience and life in the statehouse can be extremely difficult and challenging.

God gave us examples in His Word of those who faced such peaks and valleys in their lives. King David is the best example of this and the Psalms he wrote describe how he dealt with the highs and lows in his life. Psalm 31 is a passage that can help bring you encouragement and peace as you deal with the highs and lows of life in the capitol.

In Psalm 31 we can see David's heart as he deals with the peaks and valleys in his life. He has experienced great blessing and deliverance from God. He has endured his own sin and failure and the consequences as a result. He has seen his own family and close friends betray him.

I encourage you to stop for a few moments and read this Psalm in its entirety. As you do, take note of the highs and lows, the peaks and valleys David experiences. Here are the opening verses.

***1 In You, O LORD, I have taken refuge;
Let me never be ashamed; In Your righteousness deliver me.***

***2 Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly;
Be to me a rock of strength, A stronghold to save me.***

3 For You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me.

4 You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength.

***5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.***

In this Psalm David testifies of his confidence in God and cries out for help. He vividly describes his difficult situation and vehemently seeks for God's deliverance. David confidently and thankfully expects God's answer. He then shares how everyone might follow his example and trust in God's mercy and faithfulness.

There is one statement in this verse that is the key to how we can find peace during the most difficult of circumstances:

***14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD, I say,
"You are my God."***

15 My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me.

We must see David's amazing statement here, "**My times are in your hand**". How could David endure the great challenges and trials he experienced? How could he deal with the dreadful consequences of his own sin? How could he overcome the betrayal and abandonment of his own family and friends? It was by understanding that his "times" – each and every circumstance of his life was in God's hand – it was under God's control. This describes God's **providence** – how God provides for His children through every circumstance and situation of life. One of the historic catechisms describes God's providence and our response this way:

What do we mean by the providence of God?

The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by his fatherly hand.

What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by his providence does still uphold all things?

That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate

us from his love; since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move.¹

This is the description of the truth we find in Romans 8:28 –

...We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

The great truth is this—all that concerns the believer is in the hands of the Almighty God.
C.H. Spurgeon

You can find peace in knowing that even these challenging days of budget negotiations and special sessions are in God's hand. He allows or He brings all things into our lives for His plan and purpose.

That fact that our times are in God's hands brings humility when things go well as we realize these blessings come only by God's grace. The truth that our times are in God's hands brings encouragement when we are suffering as we trust that God has a purpose and a plan for all that happens in our lives. Octavius Winslow describes how we might respond to this wonderful truth:

Let this precious truth divest your mind of all needless, anxious care for the present or the future. Exercising simple faith in God, "Do not be anxious about anything." Learn to be content with your present lot, with God's dealings with, and His disposal of, you. You are just where His providence has, in its inscrutable but all-wise and righteous decision, placed you.

It may be a position painful, irksome, trying, but it is right. Oh, yes! it is right. Only aim to glorify Him in it. Wherever you are placed, God has a work for you to do, a purpose through you to be accomplished, in which He blends your happiness with His glory. And, when you have learned the lessons of His love, He will transfer you to another and a wider sphere, for whose nobler duties and higher responsibilities the present is, perhaps, but disciplining and preparing you.

Covet, then, to live a life of daily dependence upon God. Oh, it is a sweet and holy life! It saves from many a desponding feeling, from many a corroding care, from many an anxious thought, from many a sleepless night, from many a tearful eye, and from many an imprudent and sinful scheme.

Repairing to the "covenant ordered in all things and sure," you may confide children, friends, calling, yourself, to the Lord's care, in the fullest assurance that all their 'times' and yours are in His hand.²

How Psalm 31 Points Us to Christ

We cannot leave Psalm 31 without noting the most striking thing about it. Jesus quoted from this psalm at His death (see vs. 5). His last words as He hang suffering and dying on the cross come from this Psalm: Jesus cried out, ***"Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit!"*** And ***having said this, He breathed His last*** (Luke 23:46). Jesus trusted His Father's care and providence at the point of His greatest suffering.

Jesus well could have also proclaimed with David, ***"My times are in Your hand"***. We know that Jesus was ***"...Delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death"*** (Acts 2:23).

We can read Psalm 31 and imagine our Lord Jesus praying this prayer. This gives us a greater understanding of the suffering He endured for us. In verse 10 David prays ***"My strength has failed because of my iniquity"***. In one sense, Jesus could not have prayed this because He was holy and had no sin. Yet in another, He could make this statement because He took our sin upon Himself. ***(God) made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21)***. When we repent and trust Christ, our sins are forgiven, we become God's children, and then we can indeed trust in His care and providence on our behalf.

David finishes this Psalm on a great note:

***Be strong and let your heart take courage,
All you who hope in the LORD.***

We can overflow with praise and thanks as we rest in God's absolute sovereignty and providence over our lives and rejoice when we can say, ***"My times are in your hand"***.

¹The Heidelberg Catechism. Questions 27-28. A catechism is simply a method of teaching Bible truth using questions and answers.

²Winslow, Octavius. *MORNING THOUGHTS, or DAILY WALKING WITH GOD* (Kindle Locations 344-354). Kindle Edition.

SPECIAL SESSION BIBLE STUDY

TUESDAY, MAY 16

12:00 Treasurer's Conference Room (MB 54 in Basement of East Wing)