

# Psalm 31

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Preacher: None

[ 0 : 00 ] Please do grab your Bibles again and turn to Psalm 31. Psalm 31, it's on page 461. Most of it's on 462. We'll probably be there.

! Let me pray for God's help as we consider His word. Lord God, we need you. We are lifeless without you. So we pray that you would speak to us today.

Help us to see Christ. Speak to us by your Spirit and your word. Encourage us and turn our eyes to Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.

The world is a scary place. The world is a scary place, isn't it? And this is the first point I want to make today. Jumping straight into the first point.

The world is a scary place. There are dangers on every side. So many things can turn against us in this world.

[ 1 : 05 ] And it can feel so easy to feel trapped. We can feel like there's no escape, like things are out of control. Think of all that can happen to us. People close to us can turn against us. We can be abandoned, betrayed, attacked.

Think of the wars out there. Human enemies are out there for us. Satan is out there for us.

It's like we're walking on a tightrope. And anything can happen to us with one little nudge. Or it's like we're walking through the dark wilderness and something can jump out and get us at any time.

That is what David is experiencing here. Look at the words of verse 13. Terror on every side. that really captures this world doesn't it terror on every side there's terror all around us and we can feel trapped by it like there's no escape like it's out of control like there's nothing we can do the world is a scary place and that might be how you're feeling today either like you're on that tightrope and you're worried and anxious of what could happen of what's out there and it feels like you don't know what you can do it's out of control that there's no escape from this world and it's overwhelming or maybe you feel like you're not even on the tightrope anymore you've fallen off or you're deep in the darkness of the world and you're not even thinking about what dangers there could be out there you know this world is a scary place because you're experiencing it right now and it feels like there's no escape and it's overwhelming the world is a scary place well this psalm speaks to the dangers and darkness of this world in this psalm all the scariness and all the dangers of the world they're all falling down on david all at once so he's not just going through one difficult thing in his life he's going through everything he's feeling all the darkness and dangers of this world all at once it's all piling on top of him look at verse 13 again terror on every side not just one side of his life but but every side all that all that terror it's not just out there for david it's fallen on david all at once just see what david's going through look at verse 8 he speaks of the hand of the enemy verse 11 there are adversaries out to get him verse 17 he speaks of the wicked in verse 13 he says they plot to take his life they scheme against him whisper about him terror on every side the picture here is of enemies armies evil forces utterly surrounding david and they're out to get him and he's nowhere to run nowhere to hide no escape he feels like he's out of control he's on a tightrope he's in the dark dangers of the world and this for david is likely human enemies it could have been when there was an uprising in israel and david's own people turned against him and david had to run for his life it's definitely that kind of picture but it's not just enemies he's in a whole web of terror this one problem has triggered so many other things in his life that's how distress usually works one problem can begin to infect all aspects of your life and all things start to crumble it feels look at verse 9 he's in distress verse 10 there's sorrow he spent years just sighing in sorrow it sent him into a very low place a depression we could say and he doesn't even have anyone to run to look at verse 11 i'm a reproach to my neighbors an object of dread to my acquaintances those who see me in the street flee from me verse 12 i've been forgotten like one who is dead i've become like a broken vessel he's in this scary world terror on every side and he has no one to turn to it feels like there's no

escape and then look at verse 10 my strength fails because of my iniquity and my bones waste away his own body is giving out we saw in psalm 30 last week how the body can affect the soul and the soul

can affect the body well this is really the case we're seeing it again here he's physically weak and wasting away because of his sorrow and top it all off look what else is a terror to him in verse 10 my strength fails because of my iniquity his own heart is even against him in all this he can't even say well at least i've done the right thing no he looks at his own heart and it crushes him his own sin is wasting him away where can he escape from all this he can't even find rest in his own mind the world is a scary place and david is feeling all of it and as we look at this psalm you could well be thinking that's me i'm in a depression i feel like troubles and terror surround me and there's no escape i'm anxious and on edge of what could happen and this tension it just won't end and i've spent years sighing i can't even find rest in my own mind my mind is the problem my own sins burden me well this psalm shows us that's normal that's how the world is that's not an unusual feeling to have in this world david is with you on this the world is a scary place the troubles of this psalm are not only unique to david we will feel this too just think about david's enemies while we may not have enemies like david we're not a king with armies against us actually we have worse enemies out to get us who is the great enemy of the church it's satan who schemes against us who plots to take our life who wants our souls it's the devil we do not wrestle against flesh and blood we wrestle against the cosmic powers over this present darkness we wrestle against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places our enemies are spiritual and they're out to get us they're out to drag to drag us into sin to drag us into dark places and to take our souls we are bombarded with attempts to shred our faith to corrupt the church to lead us down paths of sin and folly we prayed in the lord's prayer earlier lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil why do we pray that it's not because it's unlikely it's because there is terror on every side we can be troubled by our sin we can find our minds are in a dark are a dark place to be in we can feel like whatever we're going through we have nowhere to turn no one to go to we feel like i've been forgotten we can feel like our faith is being eaten away the world is a scary place and we can feel like it's out of control and it's overwhelming isn't it and even if we're not going through anything right now we can be anxious about what could happen it's surely no surprise that the rise of anxiety in the past few years, few decades it's come with the rise of the internet hasn't it we're constantly being bombarded with all the dangers and terrors of the world there are news and notifications on every side and the problem with that is not necessarily that those dangers aren't real or true but the problem is

[10:19] we're never told what can be done about it it's just given to us and left there to burden us so what can we do with all this? is there no escape?

is my life out of control? if you're not a believer here today you could be asking that too you're trying to make sense of this scary world and it's like there's no escape no one to turn to well this psalm doesn't lie to us by telling us well this world isn't so scary no it tells us there's something greater than this scary world it tells us we are not alone in this scary world we have someone in control in this world we have someone who protects us in this scary world this psalm tells us yes this world is a scary place but do not be scared because God protects us in a scary world that's my second point today God protects us in a scary world in all the scariness and anxiety of this psalm there is so much comfort there is the comfort and the answer we need in this scary world as terror is all around him

David doesn't despair or give up does he? no he rejoices look in verse 7 I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love how can anyone rejoice when surrounded by such terror?

we'll look at the rest of verse 7 because you have seen my affliction you have known the distress of my soul God says to us in the terror of this world I've seen what you're going through he says to us I know what's going on in your soul you're not alone I know how you feel I know and that can be some of the best words to hear when we're going through hard times isn't it?

when we come to our wife or our husband or we come to our mum or dad and we tell them how we feel and they respond to us by saying I know I know and that is what we can say about our gracious God I'm not alone you have known the distress of my soul but this isn't like God is up there and he's just peered down from heaven and he said oh yeah I've seen your affliction oh yeah I know about the distress of your soul he's not saying this in a detached or irrelevant way no he really knows what you're going through in the deepest way possible because he suffered with us did verse 5 stand out to you a bit?

[13:18] look at verse 5 into your hand I commit my spirit do you recognise those words? those were the words Jesus spoke before he died Luke chapter 23 the sun's light failed and the curtain of the temple was torn in two then Jesus calling out with a loud voice said Father into your hands I commit my spirit and having said this he breathed his last God knows the dangers of this world and the distress of your soul because Jesus felt it too this psalm these are the words of Jesus it was against Jesus that all the forces of darkness all the schemes of Satan the rejection of his own people the abandonment of his closest friends all the forces of the Roman law even the full weight of God's wrath it was against Jesus that all these terrors came all at once for Jesus there was terror on every side whatever distress you are feeling today you need to know

Jesus has felt it too he suffered everything with us he knows your weakness he feels your pain yet Jesus did not despair he wasn't hopelessly lost in anxiety because even as he approached death itself he had a comfort a hope he had a protection in all this he had his heavenly father father into your hands I commit my spirit in the terrors of this world Jesus was not alone he had somewhere to go this world isn't a world of no escape there is someone to run to someone to protect you in this scary world it is the Lord God it is your heavenly father and so Christ calls his people calls you today come join in with this psalm come know true comfort come and experience true protection in a scary world yes this is a scary world but there is no need to be scared come find protection in the hand of your heavenly father so when you have no one when it feels like there is no escape where can you turn you can turn to your heavenly father you can come to God with your troubles you can pray to him you can cast your burdens onto him and he will always be there for you you are not alone whatever you are going through today there is someone to protect you someone watching over your life someone in control when Jesus was in the midst of these terrors when he was moments from death who was in control where was Jesus' life it was in his father's hand into your hand I commit my spirit the picture here is of protection of security like if you've ever caught a butterfly with your hand there was a butterfly came into our conservatory a couple of days ago and I was tempted to catch it so I could actually say this for real but have you ever tried that have you ever done that try to capture a butterfly in your hand and you cup it in your hand and you don't want to crush it you want to protect it and hold it and you don't let anyone hurt it it's safe in your hand well that is our spirit our lives are in God's hand this might be a scary world but it isn't out of control your life is fully and always protected in the hand of your heavenly father your life is not in Satan's hand your life is not in the hand of a chaotic world your life isn't in the hand of your boss or your doctors no your life is in God's hand your soul however distressed it may be

God has it in his hand and he protects us in a scary world and not just our spirit but look what we can say in verse 15 my times are in your hand every moment every event every timing of your life are in your father's hand when trouble finds us we can often think why now why is this happening now in my life and it feels like the times of your life that they're out of control well the timings of your life are not out of control things don't catch God by surprise things don't suddenly happen outside God's plan there is no such thing as random there's no such thing as bad luck no all your times the way your life unfolds when things happen how things happen it's all in God's hand protected in control perfectly secure things are happening now in your life in complete control and how they should be so God doesn't now and again kind of look down on the world and intervene he doesn't notice sometimes when you're in distress and then maybe come and help you no your life is always always in God's hand and if it's always in God's hand he will never let you go and being in God's hand and his protection over our lives this is called

God's providence and it's one of the most comforting truths about God your life isn't out of control God is in control the Heidelberg Catechism one of the greatest pieces of Christian writing says this about God's providence just hear these words God's providence is His almighty and ever-present power whereby as with His hand He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures and so governs them that leaf and blade rain and drought fruitful and barren years food and drink health and sickness riches and poverty indeed all things all things come to us not by chance but by His fatherly hand God protects us in a scary world you are in God's hand so when you feel like terror is all around and you're worried about what the future holds or you're going through a dark time right now you are in God's hand you're not alone

God is with you look at verse 3 for you for you are my rock and my fortress and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me God is your fortress think of a big castle with the toughest walls and the most indestructible gate and the best security system in the world imagine that fortress that

castle and your life is at the centre of that fortress and what can get to you nothing nothing so while Satan is out to get you and the dark things in your life feel overwhelming or you're very worried about what could happen God will never let those things destroy you He will not let this be the end of you He is your fortress and not only that He's leading and guiding you through it all did you notice that verse 3 for your name's sake you lead me and guide me

[ 21 : 44 ] He's not just sent you out into this scary world no He's with you He's leading you making sure your foot falls in the right place making sure that you don't make the wrong turn He's in complete control of your life and He has good things stored up for you look at verse 19 oh how abundant is your goodness which you have stored up for those who fear you the Lord doesn't have evil stored up for you what lurks behind the corner is not evil what awaits for you in this world is the goodness of God whatever happens in your life you need to know that it is from your heavenly Father and that can meet only mean that it's good for you now it may be hard it may be painful it may involve sorrow and distress but we need to understand it's all from our good Father which means it may be hard really hard but it's the right thing for you at the right time now that won't mean that we'll understand God's plan fully we won't be able to understand all the details why am I going through this at this time we won't know the details we will still call out to God why but God says we don't need to know the details but what you can know is so comforting your heavenly

Father is leading and guiding you through it all he's with you in this he's in control and he has good things stored up for you God protects us in a scary world which means even in death we have nothing to fear when Jesus approached death what did he say into your hand I commit my spirit his spirit was in his Father's hand and for those in Christ even in death your spirit is in your Father's hand it is not a mystery where we go to after death and it's not scary when we breathe our last where do our spirits go we go to our heavenly Father death is not God abandoning us death is God calling us home our souls are forever and ever in our Father's hand and he will never let you perish for those who have died in Christ where are they now it's actually where they've always been they're in their Father's hand perfectly cared for and there's even more goodness stored up for them the goodness stored up for us all the day when all the terrors of this world will be over the day when our spirits will be reunited with our bodies and we will be reunited with each other the glorious day of the resurrection is stored up for us and we wait for that day this is the hope and the comfort that Christ has secured for us so be strong and let your heart take courage all you who wait for the Lord let's pray a