

**Psalm 31:9–18**click [bit.ly/3zl01h6](https://bit.ly/3zl01h6) to hear this lesson as taught (or scan QR code→)**Main idea: Believers can take the greatest pain to their Lord, for His comforts will always prove greater than their pain!**

- 9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;  
My eye wastes away with grief,  
Yes, my soul and my body!
- 10 For my life is spent with grief,  
And my years with sighing;  
My strength fails because of my iniquity,  
And my bones waste away.
- 11 I am a reproach among all my enemies,  
But especially among my neighbors,  
And am repulsive to my acquaintances;  
Those who see me outside flee from me.
- 12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind;  
I am like a broken vessel.
- 13 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.
- 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.
- 16 Make Your face shine upon Your servant;  
Save me for Your mercies' sake.
- 17 Do not let me be ashamed, O LORD, for I have  
called upon You;  
Let the wicked be ashamed;  
Let them be silent in the grave.
- 18 Let the lying lips be put to silence,  
Which speak insolent things proudly and  
contemptuously against the righteous.

This Psalm begins with crying out to God from the memory of past mercies and deliverance (vv1–8), then proceeds to escalate the urgency of the crying out in the present distress (vv9–18), before coming back to praise God for past (and future!) mercies and deliverance (v19–24). This week, we'll be considering the second section.

**The urgency of isolation, v9–13.** "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words make my eye, soul, and body waste away from grief." It doesn't quite have the same ring as the old schoolyard taunt, but it has the advantage of being full of biblical truth.

What has brought the Psalmist into such an extremity? He has been slandered by many (v13a) who are taking counsel together against him (v13c), even to kill him (v13d). And the gossip campaign, or at least the threat of its success, has been so effective that not only his enemies (v11a), but even his neighbors (v11b) and "friends" (v11c), want nothing to do with him but have forgotten him as though he were dead (v12). Let us not take lightly a suffering so great that it constituted an appropriate part of the suffering of our Lord for us. It is plain that these verses have a fulfillment in His betrayal, abandonment, and trial.

How great is this suffering? Consider the language used to describe it:

- his eye wastes away (v9b)
- his soul wastes away (v9c)
- his body wastes away (v9c)
- his life is consumed with grief (v10a)
- his years are consumed with sighing (v10b, the inverse of Joel 2:25)
- his strength fails (v10c)
- he feels the weight of his iniquity (v10c)
- his bones waste away (v10d)

**The solitude of faith, v14–18.** If vv9–13 testify to the intense pain of being alone, vv14–18 testify to the intense comfort of being alone with God.

This section is intensely relational. There are an extra/redundant "I" in v14a and "You" in v14b. Yahweh's own "hand" (v15a) is the refuge from his enemies' "hands" (v15b–c). And where everyone else has turned their faces away, Yahweh's face (v16a) is enough light to make up for it all.

When being abandoned to ourselves sends us flying to our God, we find more in Him than in all else taken together. And, we can be sure (v17a) that what brought us into such misery (v13) will come to its own miserable end (v17b–18).

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

Psalm 31 because of the length of the psalm we've been we've set out to take it in three different sections. The first section last week by way of reminder, versus one through eight as he comes to God to cry out and has trouble. He first remembers who God is and that God has helped him in previous troubles and this makes him urgent in prayer because of the greatness of his God.

As one of the great motivations for us, we're often moved more by what we'll see this evening, the set the central or the middle part of the psalm, how how urgent his circumstances are the distress of his current circumstances. We are often moved by the intensity of our pain or distress and our circumstances.

But as a Lord shapes, our hearts and minds to be more, according to his word, will also be moved by the greatness of our God, that we have such a such a god to come to in prayer and that he displays his glories by hearing us and responding to us, that makes prayer.

I great and glorious thing. And indeed, we saw last week. Not only as he moved by the greatness of his God, but he's also moved by the greatness of God's previous answers. How wonderful those deliverances have been and thinking about how he's had that fellowship with God of being in distress and crying at to him and knowing that God heard him and knowing that God was his refuge for him in these and these previous experiences.

These eager now to have one again, the believer can do that, of course, because we know that God's purposes towards us, in Christ are everlasting blessedness, and there's no trouble that God brings us into for which the purpose for a believer isn't for God to bring us through it and at the other side and into that blessedness.

And so we may look forward to the fellowship that we have with God in being brought through it. Well, the middle section this week focuses especially on the distress itself and you can see on the sheet versus 9 through 18 I've put the versus belonging to the first point or first part of this middle section on the left hand side and that is the pain or distress or the urgency of the isolation.

That David feels the the psalmist feels. And when we come to read it, I think you'll find that you're reminded by someone else who's enemies turned upon him, and who's friends abandoned him and who was left all alone and abandoned and in God's good providence to his children where right in the middle of hearing preaching, through the very part of the gospel and which our Lord experienced those things.

And so as we hear David cry out, we know that he's also prophesying especially of the experience of Christ and we know from the scriptures that the pain and the suffering that Christ experienced in this life. Although we do not have pain that atones for our sin yet. Much of what Christ went through.

Was a model for us and how we go through our difficulty through our trial. In fact, we'll be hearing about that very thing, Lord willing and by his help on the coming Lord's day morning. As first, Peter 2 makes application of what we see in Luke 23. So the isolation and abandonment on the left hand side, but on the right hand side and the second part of tonight's passage, you'll see that if you are alone because all others have abandoned you then that can actually be sweetened to you, this that's greatest of distresses or one of the greatest distresses and pains that we can have of being abandoned or betrayed by those who are near us.

That can be greatly sweetened because when we're left all alone, we're left all alone with the Lord, and it turns us to him, finded of the Apostle, Paul and he's writing Timothy and explaining why he wants Timothy to come so quickly. And why he wants Timothy to bring Mark with him.

And someone had turned Alexander the coppersmith and turned upon the apostle Paul and he said at my first defense, no one stood with me, but all abandoned me. And then he says, but the Lord stood by me and how sweet we find our Lord. When he brings us through circumstances, in which he alone is all that we have and then we realize that we have had him all the time and it can be very instructive to us.

So let's hear the psalm red. Psalm 31 verses 9 through 18. These are the words of God have mercy on me. Oh y'all. Hi 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 saying my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away.

I am a approach among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbors and I'm repulsive to my acquaintances. Those who see me outside flee from me. I'm forgotten like a dead man out of mind. I'm like a broken vessel 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. But as for me I trust in you owe you I say you are my God. My times are in your hand deliver me from the hand of my enemies. And from those who persecute me make your face shine upon your servant.

Save me for your mercy. Says, do not. Let me be ashamed. Oh, Yahweh for I have called upon you. Let the wicked be ashamed. Let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence which speak insulins things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous so far.

The reading of gods inspired in there were inerrant words. So in the first part in verses 9 through 13 we see the urgency of isolation. He's been isolated, he's been isolated especially by ungodly speech gossip and slander. We find out what has brought one this trouble. The end of verse 13 and then we see it reflected again and versus 17 and 18.

He says, right here, the slander of many fear is on every side. While they take counsel together, again, to me and then verse 17, let them be silent verse 18. Let the lying lips be put to silence which speak insulant things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous words are harmful and the distress and the pain that they cause is real.

Probably you have well I don't know what you children have experienced but my experience of wicked and hostile children and my childhood and God's mercy to you was a higher than what you all have experienced. But in the schoolyard taunting there, there was a saying sticks and stones and break my bones, but words can never hurt me.

But if we're taking Psalm 31 verses 9 through 18 as our instruction, we will say sticks and stones may break my bones but words, make my eyes soul and body. Waste away from grief. That's a lot worse than broken bones. Isn't it? Now it doesn't have quite the same ring as the old school yard taunt, but it has the advantage of being full of biblical truth.

What has brought the psalmist into such an extremity. Such a distress such pain as we find him in here in verses 9 through 12. It was the words spoken against him verse 13 verse 17 verse 18. He has been slandered by many who are taking counsel together against him.

They have spoken lies and insulins things verse 18 and the gossip campaign against him or at least the threat of its success has been. So effective that not only his enemies first part of verse 11 but especially his neighbors, second part. And even his friends or acquaintances. As verse 11C translates it in our translation, they have all decided that they want nothing to do with him.

They forgotten him as though, he were dead, treating him like a vessel that used to be useful but now it's broken if you had, you wouldn't, but if you had a glass with a crack in the bottom, would you get it out of the cupboard? And use it to pour yourself your glass and milk.

He says, nope. I'm that broken vessel that useless one that no one wants to have anything to do with because of these who words. So let us not take lightly a suffering that is so great, that it constituted an appropriate part of the suffering of our Lord for us, slander gossip, these verbal campaigns that others may do to us or we even may end up being guilty of with others are extremely harmful and when we feel the pain of it let us not tell ourselves.

Well, you shouldn't take it so hard, it's just words. Well, if this is an accurate reflection of David and even an actor or reflect reflection of the pain of our Lord Jesus as he endured this as part of his, his passion, his trial, and his death for us, then let us learn.

Not to wave it away. As if it were nothing for God has given us a prayer, God has given us a song. God has given us a psalm in which to cry out to him and rather than treat the pain. As if it were nothing, what he teaches us to do is to treat him as if he is everything.

How great is the suffering is the pain. Consider the language that he uses to describe it, you've got the list there on your page. His eye is wasting away, his soul is wasting away has body is wasting away. His life is consumed with grief. His years are consumed with sawing either, that's an implication or that.

Whatever this trial is, is one that has going on for years or quite possibly. This is the reverse of what we saw in Joel 2:25, you're a member after repentance and restoration. God said, I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten. I will make it for you.

So good, as if all of those, all that was wiped out in the judgment was replaced and then some when he says my years are spent with saying, what he's implying is, all the good that he has enjoyed up until now as not compensation, for the pain, and the misery that he currently is in says, why it's so wonderful that the Lord himself is compensation, is comfort enough to, to make up for this.

Because if you take those two things in parallel, the Lord is better than all of the blessings that we have enjoyed all taken together up until this point, his strength fails. A third part of verse 10. He feels the way of his iniquity, my strength fails because of my iniquity.

In other words he's his strength isn't just failing because of the greatness of the distress, his strength is failing because the greatness of the distress reminds him that he deserves all of this for his sin. Now. Not so for our Lord Jesus. Why was the Lord Jesus? Subjected to be isolated and despised and slandered and falsely judged.

It was because of our iniquity. In fact, that's why the Lord. Jesus was a man in the first place. No other reason. That God, the sun would be humiliated to take the form of a bonslave and be found in appearance as a man and go to death and even the death on the cross.

He only reason the eternal son of God went through. That was because of your iniquity in my iniquity and that's often one of the greatest parts of our trouble in any distress is that when we come before the Lord, and we're honest before him, we realize this would be just the tip of the iceberg of what we actually deserve.

Thankfully, we can cling to Christ knowing that he is obtained for us and we are not in the same position as Job a couple of times in the book of Job actually starts to worry that God is dealing with him according to his iniquity and he says, if you're going to remember my sins, you might as well get rid of me because I have no hope whatsoever.

Exactly opposite. What her his friends were accusing him of claiming to have no sin at all? No, he had kept a clear conscience with God, but that conscience depended upon mercy dependent upon. Atonement defended upon God's. Forgiveness. And so David, here says my strength fails because of my iniquity, he knows that he deserves us.

And then last part of verse 10, my bones waste away. And so he has a pain in which everything put together in his life, that was good up. Until that point is, is not worth comparing his lost, everyone and everything. But the Lord himself is was abundant comfort. And so we moved from the urgency of his isolation of the painfulness of his isolation versus 9, through 13, to the solitude of faith, or the comfort of the solitude of faith versus 1913 testified to the intense pain of being abandoned, so that he was left by himself.

And yet versus 14 through 18, testified to the intense comfort of being alone with God. One of the things that we can't see as well in the English is that the eye when he says, I trust in you first part of verse 14 and the you and he says you are my God.

Second part of verse 14, you don't actually need those in Hebrew in Hebrew, the verb includes or implies the subject and you quite often don't have the extra pronoun, eye or the extra pronoun. You so, if we're going to translate it in a way that that reflects this this extra pronoun, we might say.

But as for me, I myself trust in you. Oh, you alway. I say you yourself are my God and you can hear in the doubling there and the extra pronoun, how the relationship relationships that he's lost with others are compensated for completely by the relationship that he has with God.

The, the Lord's deliverance is described here as having him in David and his times being in God's hand, my times are in your hand deliver me from the hand of my enemies. So not only is he saying please undo, the circumstances that I've been in, please defeat the words that they are speaking against me and please bring them to shame.

He's gonna say things like that in verses 17 and 18, but he sees his deliverance as coming personally, the the Lord picking him up and holding him in his hand. It's possible that that Psalm 31 verse 15 and other passages like it. You think of God saying, I have engraved you upon my hand in the prophets and so forth that these are behind when Jesus says that, no one can take us out of his father's hand and that, no one can take us out of his hand.

That's not just powerful. Yes, the hand of God is all mighty, but it's personal. It's the hand of our God. It's the same kind of thing that we're rejoicing in and Psalm 95, when we, when we sing and pray, we are the sheep of his hand. We're the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand So it's very personal.

I myself trust in you you yourself are my God, my times are in your hand, make your face to shine upon your servant and the the word for shine is actually just the word for light. Make your face the light of your servant or light upon your servant. I don't need any other brightness in my life so long as I have the smile of God, whatever my circumstances are however dark.

They get if I have the smile of God, then I have liked, make your face shine upon your servant. That's what first part of verse 16 is is saying. And so you can cling whether in life or in death or even if angels should rise up against you or demons whether sickness or whatever loss, you have, nothing can separate you, from what the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord just as we paraphrase, part of the earlier, part of the passage, nothing can separate us from the ear of God.

That we know that we have always because of Christ Jesus, our Lord. And so we have his ear, we have his hand, we have his face, which is light upon us. Save me for your mercy. Sick and that word is hesitant for your steadfast love and it's in the plural.

And so there's this abundance of God's steadfast love that whenever we turn to him, we see you don't always see God's dead fast. Love in your circumstances. Do you things happen? Think about what's been happening in our in our culture recently and many of us have been through seasons in our life when it was difficult to see the love of God in our circumstances, but we have a God who interacts with us, personally himself.

We lift our hearts to him. We speak with our voices and he listens to us and he cares. And so if we must have, if we are going to have light in circumstances, that seem to us to be only darkness, let us turn to him. Who has abundant steadfast love for.

We can have him himself in the midst of it, when everyone else has turned their faces away, you always face, there's enough light to make up for it all. And so, when being abandoned by ourselves, sends us flying to our God, we are motivated. Because now we have our great God, who hears us, and who holds us in his hand, and who shines his face upon us, and he's full of steadfast love to us and just like we were considering last week in the first part, now the honor of our God is at stake therefore verse three for your namesake lead me and guide me if someone who trusts and God and knows God and belongs to God could possibly be put to shame in those things.

Then the name of God would be blessed and so he says do not. Let me be ashamed. Oh yay. For I have called upon you. If you let me be ashamed then this will bring dishonor to your name. No, that cannot be how it ends when we are sent flying to our God.

By us our circumstances, we find more in him than an all else taken together and we can be sure that whatever whoever brought us into such misery. It's days are numbered, it will come to its own miserable. And and so you see that contrast in the parallel in verse 17, don't let me be put to shame but the wicked be ashamed but then be silent in the grave.

Let the lying lips be put to silence or speak insulins. Things proudly in contemptuously against the righteous. There's coming a day when there are no more wicked to slander. You when there's no more sin, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more death. And God has wiped every tear from our eyes.

When we embrace our God in, Jesus Christ. Who has embraced us when the word became flesh. Maybe held his glory, as of the only begotten of the father and what he was, he full of, he was full of grace and truth and that word grace often translates this word for steadfast love and verse 16.

That's what Jesus is full of and that's what we can know that God is full of towards us in Jesus Christ. Amen.