



A Cry for Help

In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me. Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me. You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me . . . For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away. I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. For I hear the whispering of many—terror all around!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. Do not let me be put to shame, O Lord, for I call on you. . .

Psalm 31 is the lament of one whose life has fallen apart; whose future is, at best bleak; and who feels totally vulnerable and alone. There are enemies about, but there are also enemies within. Whatever emotional, physical, and mental resources he may have had are long spent. *My eyes waste away from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing and my strength fails because of my misery and my bones waste away.* Even allowing for some measure of hyperbole, the psalmist's circumstances are dire.

Perhaps you have been there yourself or know someone who has—there on the edge where there are but two choices—surrender to the darkness or hold to the hope of dawn. The psalmist chose the latter. Remembering God's presence in better days and recalling God's intervention in his life in other times, he confesses: *My times are in your hands...You are my God.*

Sometimes that is the best that we can do—be honest with God about our fears, our struggles, and entrust ourselves to his care looking to him as the *rock and fortress* that will enable us to endure “until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

Prayer

W. F. Lloyd, 1854

*My times are in Thy hand," Whatever they may be;
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright, as best may seem to Thee.
"My times are in Thy hand." Why should I doubt or fear?
My Father's hand will never cause His child a needless tear.
"My times are in Thy hand," Jesus the crucified!
The hand my cruel sins had pierced Is now my guard and guide.*