



“The God We Trust In The Storm” – Psalms 13 & 31

8/2/2026

Speaker: Pastor Dave Briggs

Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

18:26

When life gets hard and you feel absolutely overwhelmed, do you still praise God? It's human nature for us to resent the storms of life that bring unwanted waves of distress and suffering. The Psalms we're going to study this morning show us that we can either let the waves of life crush us or carry us into a deeper and richer dependence on our Lord. Will you pray with me, Father. A brief prayer.

19:10

The passages you have given for us to study this morning describe real life, real pain, and the real relief and rescue that only you provide. Please give us ears to hear and hearts to receive your wisdom, this morning we pray. Amen. This morning we're going to read two Psalms of Lament. Psalms of Lament are prayers or songs of pain, weeping, moaning and despairing. Aren't you glad you came to church this morning? Despite their name, these Psalms of Lament are not depressing. They are uplifting. They lift our eyes from our troubles. To find the strength we need in our Lord. We're going to begin with Psalm 13. You'll find that on page 550 if you want to use the Bible under the seat. And then we'll look at Psalm 31. Both of these are songs or prayers of David. Let's read together Psalm 13.

20:19

How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God, Light up my eyes lest I sleep asleep of death. Lest my enemies say I have prevailed over him. Lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken, but I have trusted in your steadfast love. My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me. This Psalm begins with a complaint in verses 1 and 2, and then it becomes a petition in verses 3 and 4, and it ends with praise in verses 5 and 6.

21:15

Let's be sure we all see that David praised the Lord before his circumstances improved. Let's read his complaint again. First two verses 1 and 2. Have you ever prayed a prayer like this? How long, Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? In these two verses, David repeated the same question four times. How long, Lord? How long will the suffering last? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and be consumed with sorrow? How long will my enemy beat me up?

22:17

Psalm 13 is another one of the Psalms that most Bible scholars believe David wrote during the time that King Saul was hunting for David to kill him. If so, then David was lamenting years of living with uncertainty and danger. David asked the Lord, how long shall my enemy be exalted over me? David's enemy was probably King Saul. Our enemy might be a person, or it could be an illness, or it could be a situation that is causing us pain and distress. David had reached his limit, and he honestly told the Lord that he did not know how much more he could take. Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever been at the end of your rope? Maybe that's where you are this morning.

23:17

This psalm, this wonderful, beautiful psalm, reminds us we're not bad believers when we get stressed and overwhelmed by the trials and troubles in this life, we are not bad believers. We're just human. We're just human like David was. We see this is important. We see that David felt like God had forgotten him, and David felt like God was hiding from him. But David's thoughts and feelings were not telling him the truth. Our thoughts and our emotions can mislead us too, especially when we're in distress. God had not forgotten David, and God was not hiding from him. The Lord was with David every moment, just like God is always with us. God's presence is not based on how we feel. It's based on what he has promised us in His Word. The Lord is with us whether we are aware of his presence or not.

24:26

One of the reasons why David was so discouraged is given to us in verse 2. David was taking counsel in his soul. What does that mean? Thank you for asking. It means David was doing something we probably do too, when we're going through deep waters. David was analyzing his situation from his own perspective. He was counseling himself, and he left God out of the conversation. Have you ever done that? As David wrestled with his worries and he pondered his problems, his heart filled with misery and sorrow. And can't we all relate to that? When we're suffering, when we are suffering, often the worst conversations we can have are the ones we have with ourselves. When we listen to our own thoughts instead of listening to the Lord. David's thoughts and emotions pulled him deeper and deeper into a pit of despair.

25:38

But as Holocaust survivor Corrie Ten Boom said, there is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still. There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still. If you know how true this is, it means you've been in some deep pits yourself and your life. Let's read now how David's complaint became a petition, a very specific request to God. Verses 3 and 4, David prayed. Consider and answer me, O Lord, my God. Light up my eyes. Light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death. Lest my enemies say I have prevailed over him. Lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. If you are taking notes this morning, here's a good one. Our Lord is the most open and accessible person in the universe. He invites us.

26:41

He welcomes us to come to him as we are with all our pain, with our sorrow, stress, fear, whatever, and come and just tell him all about it. David came to God shaken and defeated. The Hebrew word for shaken means someone who is on the verge of collapse. David was on the verge of collapse. He had reached his breaking point, but he had not lost his faith. He stopped counseling himself thankfully, and he prayed. O Lord, my God, light up my eyes. Light up my eyes. This phrase, light up my eyes, means renew my strength and hope as only you can. David prayed in his despair. Oh, Lord, my God, light up my... Bring my strength, renew my strength and my hope as only you can. When David turned his eyes to God, what happened? What happened?

27:46

He experienced a remarkable change in his heart and mind. Let's read those verses 5 and 6 immediately, David said. But I have trusted in your steadfast love. My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me. There's not a time jump here. Sometimes we find passages where there's a time jump. There is not a time jump here. David did not write verses 1 and 4 when he was in great distress, and then write verses 5 and 6 later, after everything was resolved. No, David's circumstances hadn't changed one bit. The only thing that changed was David. David was the only thing that changed. He went from shaken to secure. He went from being overwhelmed by his suffering to being overwhelmed by the love and faithfulness of God. When David looked to God, he remembered.

28:51

He remembered the Lord's unfailing love and salvation. And David's heart rejoiced. Even in the depths of his suffering, he could sing grateful praises to his good and faithful God. Here's the question. Can you and I experience this kind of remarkable transformation in the midst of our suffering like David did? Can you and I experience that? The answer is yes, of course, because David's God is our God, too. I'm going to pause here to share a personal story with you in the hope that it may encourage you. As some of you know, I was diagnosed with kidney cancer a little over 10 years ago. That time, my kidney was removed. And then over the years, I've needed to have a few lung resections to take care of the kidney cancer that had spread to my lungs.

30:14

Last year, I found out that I needed surgery to remove a small lesion of kidney cancer that was growing slowly on my pancreas. The reality of facing another difficult abdominal surgery overwhelmed me at first. I had real

concerns about the possible complications. I had real concerns about the pain because I remember what the kidney was like. I had concerns about a lot of other stuff. And the more I thought about my situation, the worse I felt. But I prayed to God and I Said, Lord, help me remember that you are in control of everything that I'm scared of. You are in control of everything I'm afraid about. Help me keep my eyes on you every second, because when I look at you, I have everything I need. When I look at you, Father, I have everything I need.

31:26

In the weeks leading up to the surgery, I prayed that prayer every time I started to feel scared and afraid. So that means I prayed that prayer a lot. And each time I found real peace because I focused as I focus my thoughts not on my situation, but on the goodness and sovereignty of God. I just felt peace, relief. On December 9, about eight months ago, I went to the USC Hospital in Los Angeles. The surgery was successful, but also very long and painful and complicated. So I'm glad I slept through it. But when I started to wake up. When I started to wake up, I was being moved off the operating table. I was still in the fog of anesthesia. But two things became instantly clear to me. Two things were razor sharp. One, I was in a whole lot of pain.

32:30

God did not spare me the pain. God did not remove the pain. I was in terrible pain. If you've ever had abdominal surgery, you know what I'm talking about. But two, the other thing that was immediately clear to me, I knew my Lord was with me. And that made me really happy. And I heard someone in the operating room say, look at the smile on his face. I spent a week in the hospital, and it truly was one of the most difficult and painful, yet joyous weeks of my life because I knew God was right there with me every moment. I knew I was in his hands. Everyone that came into my room, doctors, nurses, the food service people, everyone commented about the big smile on my face. The whole week. I was not trying to smile. I just couldn't help it.

33:32

Maybe that's how David felt. At the end of Psalm 13, I brought my Bible, this one, with me to the hospital because I read it every day. And I had made a list of some special psalms and some other passages that I wanted to have ready in case the pain got really bad and I couldn't sleep. One night I woke up about 2 or 3 in the morning and the pain had reached the level where I needed those emergency verses. Joanie got to stay in my room with me, so she helped me get out of bed. That was no easy task and sit in a chair. So I took my Bible off my bed tray to read it, but it felt like it weighed about 20 pounds because I was pretty weak.

34:28

So Joanie took my Bible out of my hand and she sat on the bed and I sat in the chair and she read those passages to me. I asked her to read slowly and I asked her to repeat some of the passages over and over because I needed to hear them again and again. The hospital, the hospital at that early hour of the morning is so wonderfully peaceful and quiet. The only sound I could hear was the voice of Joanie reading God's word to me. She read passage after passage for maybe an hour. It was the greatest sermon I've ever heard in my life. My brothers and sisters, when we are suffering, the last thing you and I need is self-counsel. We need God counsel. We need to fill our heart and mind with the promises of God.

35:32

Just like David did at the end of Psalm 13. When the storms of life come, we need to focus on Jesus as best as we can and rely on him to sustain us. And we need to trust his plan for us, even in the harsh wind and storm and big waves of life. John Newton, who is best known for his hymn Amazing Grace, said this. It'll be on the screen. John Newton said, For every one look at yourself, take 10 looks at Christ. 10 To 1 is a really good ratio to live by. We need to look at Jesus at least 10 times more often than we look at ourselves and look at our circumstances. Looking at ourselves and looking at our circumstances brings us down. Looking at Jesus lifts us up, even in the worst of times.

36:34

Many of you I'm looking at know how true this is. You and I can experience deep suffering and genuine joy at the same time. When our eyes are on Jesus. Let's turn to another Psalm of David, another Psalm of lament, Psalm 31. It is believed David also wrote this psalm while he was on the run from King Saul, or maybe when he was fleeing from Absalom, his son. We're going to Read through Psalm 31 a few verses at a time. Let's start with verses 1 and 3. In you, O Lord, I take refuge. Let me never 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. Like David, just like David, you and I have one refuge, one safe place in the world.

37:34

And it's the best place in the world. Our refuge is in God's strong hands. It's okay. It's okay to ask God to answer our prayers speedily. That's okay to do. But we need to remember God never hurries because he's always right on time. He's always right on time. And while, while we're waiting for rescue, God gives us the greatest waiting room on earth. Greatest waiting room. He invites us to wait with him in his strong fortress of sovereign protection. That's where we get to wait. And in that waiting room, God uses our times of waiting to strengthen our faith and our confidence in him. Verses 3 and 4. For you are my rock and my fortress, and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me.

38:30

For you take me out of the net, the trap that they, my enemies, have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. When we try to navigate through our troubles on our own, our footing is shaky and uncertain, isn't it? But we can trust the Lord, our God, to lead us exactly where he knows we need to go every step of the way. Even when we don't understand what's going on, we can be sure God knows. And his plan for us is always good and always for his glory. This amazing promise from God should give us real comfort and peace every single day. Every single day. Let's read verse 5, familiar one. Into your hand I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

39:29

Last week, we saw in Psalm 22 how the Psalms often foreshadow the suffering of Jesus that he endured for our sake. This, in the Gospel of Luke, records how Jesus, at the moment of his death, called out with a loud voice and said, father, into your hands I commit my spirit. When David said these words, he confidently placed his most precious possession, his eternal soul, into God's protective hands. Have you ever done that? Have you trusted your eternal soul to Jesus? If you have, maybe you discovered that sometimes it's easier to trust God with our everlasting soul than it is to trust him with today's problem and tomorrow's uncertainties. Ever notice that it's easier to trust God for where we will spend eternity? But we forget all about God today because, well, today I've got a flat tire. Let's read verse 6.

40:43

I could spend a lot more time on that verse, but I'm not going to verse 6. I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the Lord. This is a reoccurring theme in the Psalms. We've seen a lot. We either trust in the living God or we trust in substitute gods that cannot help or save us. How blessed are we, like David, who trust in the Lord. Verses 7 and 8. I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction. You have known the distress of my soul and you have not delivered me into the hand of my enemy. You have set my feet in a broad place. God does not merely know about our problems. God knows every detail of our problems personally. He knows every detail personally.

41:39

He sees every tear, he sees every fear and every struggle, even the ones who we hide from everyone else. We can rejoice. We can really rejoice and be glad, happy in the midst of distress because of God's steadfast, unwavering, unshakable love that protects us and sets our feet in a broad place. This poetic phrase, set my feet in a broad place paints an absolutely beautiful picture for us. It gives us the picture of God lifting us up and out of our tight, fearful place where we're trapped by anxiety and despair. And then God sets us down in his wide-open fortress, in his wide-open place of peace, security and freedom. When you're suffering, do you ever feel trapped by your circumstances? You and I can take heart because our circumstances are never in control, even if they look like it to us.

42:53

Our circumstances are never, ever in control. Our God is always in control. And we can rest. We can rest in his sovereignty and unfailing love. Verses 9 to 13. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress. My eye is wasted from grief, My soul and my body also. My life is spent, it's worn out with sorrow and my years with sighing. My strength fails because of my iniquity and my bones waste away because of all my adversaries. I've become a reproach especially to my neighbors and an object of dread to my acquaintances. Those who see me on the street flee from me. I have been forgotten like one who is dead. I've become like a broken vessel.

43:49

For I hear the whispers of many, the whispering of many, terror on every side as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. Wow, this is quite a list from David, isn't it? David said he was worn down by grief in verse 9, he talked about years of suffering in verse 10. In verse 11, David described the pain of being

rejected by everybody he knew. In verse 12, Dave compared himself to a broken vessel, something that is discarded and forgotten. And in verse 13, David saw reasons to be afraid everywhere he looked. David's honest and open raw prayer shows us again that we're not crummy Christians. When we get exhausted and overwhelmed, we're not failing, we're just human. We're just human. And our loving father knows that we're just human.

44:52

And he welcomes us to come as we are and cast all of our ugly, messy burdens on him. David's pain and his emotions were real, but so was David's faith in the absolute sovereign control of God. That's what we see in the next verses. Let's look at verses 14 and 16 after that big, long list of everything that David was suffering from. He says this. But I trust you, O Lord. I say you are my God. My times are in your hand. Rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors. Make your face shine on your servants. Save me in your steadfast love. Again, we see. Again, we see how deep suffering and joyful hope can coexist in the same prayer. Right? In the same prayer. We see deep suffering and joyful hope in the same prayer. Here's why.

46:00

Painful anguish is overcome by unwavering confidence in God. I'm going to say that again because I need to hear it too. Painful anguish is overcome by unwavering confidence in our God. And look at verse 15. Look at glorious, wonderful, spectacular verse 15. David says, My times are in your hand. We all need to underline that verse in our Bible and on our heart. My times are in your hand. The word times means more than just how long David would live. Times includes all the seasons, all the circumstances, and all the events of his life. Nothing in David's life and nothing in your life and mine is accidental. Everything is providential. Everything is directed by God. Our times are in his hand.

47:09

Every circumstance, every high, every low, every piece of good news, every bit of bad news is part of God's wise, loving and perfect plan for you and me. David faced lots of real enemies and genuine persecution, yet he trusted God for whatever the Lord allowed to happen. And allowed is the key word for us. My times are in your hand. Whatever God allows, we can trust that he will use it for our good and his glory. Whatever he allows. Let's rest. Let's really rest in that wonderful reality and make this our prayer every day, every night, every morning, afternoon, lunchtime, dinner, all day long. Lord, my times are in your hand. Let's look at verse 17 and 18. O Lord, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you. Let the wicked be put to shame.

48:18

Let them go silently to Sheol. Let the lying lips be mute which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt. As David prayed to the Lord, he thought about all his enemies who arrogantly mocked God and mocked him for worshipping God. The Psalms often show us the contrast between the humble who trust in the Lord and the proud who only trust in themselves. Verse 19 David cries out in the midst of this oh, how abundant, how lavish, how overflowing is your goodness which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you. In the sight of the children of mankind. God delights in pouring out his goodness not only to bless those who trust in him, but also to display his goodness to a watching world.

49:21

Notice again, please, that David rejoiced in the goodness of God long before his circumstances improved. Even in the midst of whatever terrible circumstances he was in, he was rejoicing in the goodness of God. We can too, because David's joy this is important. David's joy was not David's joy was rooted in who God is, not in what was happening around him. David's joy was based on who God is, not on what was happening around him. Faith in the Lord Faith in the Lord shines brightest in the middle of the trouble, not just after the trouble is past. Anyone can rejoice when the trouble is over, but our faith shines brightest in the middle of the storm. Verses 20 and 21 in the Cover of your presence you hide them, your children from the plots of men.

50:24

You store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. God himself is our shelter. He is our safe place when we face opposition, when we face slander and attacks from others. David praised God for his wondrous love during a time he was in a besieged city. Now, we don't know if David was actually describing an actual siege or he was using poetic language, but either way the picture is clear. A besieged city is completely surrounded by its enemies and all the escape routes are cut off. There is just no way out. You're trapped. Isn't this exactly how we feel everywhere we look when we're in a storm?

51:19

Everywhere we look we just see problem after problem and there doesn't seem to be any way of escape. You ever feel like that in a besieged city? God is our shelter and our safe place. And when we are surrounded by troubles, you know what? We're also surrounded by the love of God. Same moment. Our ultimate security is never found in our health, in our wealth, or in our favorable circumstances. Our ultimate security is only found in God's presence. Our security is only found in God's presence. The Psalms and the entire Bible declare that God's greatest gift to us is Himself. God's greatest gift to you and to me is Himself. The Psalms teach us this amazing fact of life for us. God often protects us through the storm rather than from the storm.

52:27

Let me say that again because I want to hear it again. God often protects us through the trouble rather than from the trouble. The safest place on earth is not where there are no problems. The safest place on earth is to be with the Lord. To be with God. Verse 22. I have said in my alarm I am cut off from your sight. But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help. David again remembered a moment of panic. You ever have those? He had a moment of panic when he wrongly thought that God had abandoned him. Like David, we all can become terrible theologians when we're in distress, when we're overcome by fear. Often our theology goes to right out the window. When we're scared and afraid or in pain. We need to remember.

53:32

We really do need to remember to trust God's promises, not our feelings. Please don't trust your feelings. Trust God's promises. Okay, let's finish verse 23 to 24. Love the Lord, all you his saints. The Lord preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts and pride. Be strong and let your heart take courage all you who wait for the Lord. It's kind of cool that David ended his prayer to God with this wonderful, powerful exhortation for us today. Love the Lord and be strong. That's his exhortation to us. Love the Lord and be strong. Take courage in him and trust him at all times. All times is important. Don't just trust him some of the time. Trust him at all times. Relief, wonderful relief comes when our troubles pass. But strength comes when we wait on the Lord.

54:43

Relief comes when the trouble is over. But strength comes as we wait for the Lord. God does not promise us a worry-free, trouble-free life. But he does promise that he is in control and he is working all things out for our good and his glory. And when the storms of life come, he is our fortress. He is our only safe place. Let's remember this for the rest of our lives. Okay? What I'm about to say, I need to remember it. That means you need to remember it too. We need to remember this the rest of our lives. Sometimes God rescues us by changing our circumstances. But most of the time God rescues us by changing us in our circumstances. I'm going to say that again. Sometimes it's wonderful. Sometimes God rescues us by changing our circumstances.

55:45

But most of the time, God truly, really rescues us by changing us in our circumstances. We have a prayer team that will be down here to pray with you after Communion. If you would love some dear brothers and sisters to pray with you, they would be delighted. We also have a prayer wall. You can go outside and. And to the right. Don't go outside. Go outside and turn it to the wall. Write us a prayer request. Penmanship is important just so we can read it. You don't have to sign it. And our prayer team will be praying for you. Let's close in prayer together. Father. Oh, my goodness. When we're suffering, Lord, you know it's easy for us to get overwhelmed. And yet you welcome that. You welcome us to come to you as we are, whatever condition we're in.

56:35

And you allow us to give our burdens to you. Please help us learn. We have to learn this, but help us learn to keep our eyes on you at all times. And remember that all our times are in your hand. Everything that happens, even the hard and painful things, are according to your loving and perfect plan for us. Lord our God, you are our salvation. You are our rock and our fortress, the only safe place in this dangerous world. We love you, we trust you, and we thank you in the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen. To prepare our hearts for communion this morning, let's look one more time at Psalm 13:5 and 31:5. They'll be on the screen together. Psalm 13:5. But I have trusted in your steadfast love. My heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

57:34

And then 31:5, into your hand I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God. Communion reminds us that our greatest rescue has already taken place at the cross where Jesus died to save us from sin and death forever. Before Jesus went to the cross, he said these words to his disciples. They'll be on the screen.

Matthew 26. Now, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat, this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

58:29

If you are trusting in Jesus as your Savior, the holy sacrament of communion is a special time for you to come with your brothers and sisters in Christ to remember the price that Jesus paid to save you. The price Jesus paid to save you. In a moment, after I pray, we have the elements in the front table in the back. If that's closer to you. Come, take the elements, take them back to your seat, and then spend some time in prayer. Confess your sins to God. Prepare your heart to take communion in a worthy way. If you have not trusted in Jesus yet for your salvation, you can make today the greatest day of your life by doing this. Just stay in your seat and use this time to ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins. And he will forever. Let's close now.

59:29

Let me pray for our communion. Lord Jesus, when you were in heaven, you set aside your glorious magnificence to become a man. And you came to the earth you created not to be adored and honored, but to be rejected and crucified because of your boundless love for us. Jesus, you bore the wrath and punishment we deserve for our sins so we can be forgiven forever. We come now, Lord, to celebrate the greatest act of love the world has ever seen. Amen.