

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## *A Psalm for Anguished Hearts*

Psalm 31

**Keywords:** Stress, trials, hardship, despair, hope, encouragement, joy.

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** none

**SermonAudio Blurb:** There are moments, sometimes years, where a Christian comes under great anguish. More than merely an external hardship, these are those moments in our lives when all appears to be dark and growing darker! What are we to do? We feel alone and that no one understands our situation. Helpful people give us advice that smacks of criticism or crass assumption. Others simply seem to avoid us, leaving us even more despairing. It is here that David brings us much instruction in this psalm. Here is a passionate song that describes the ebb and flow of one man's struggle in the face of great difficulty. We witness the fulness of the human experience when it takes faith in God and puts it up against the darkness of this fallen world.

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. There is a book that I highly recommend to you. It shall be in the library shortly but there will only be two copies. The book is *Polishing God's Monuments* by Jim Andrews.
- B. In Psalm 31 we have David in the grip of that same type of all-encompassing anguish.
  1. He is beset by enemies once again and it has been going on for quite some time. And add to that mix the awareness of how his own sin was playing into the whole mess and you have a broken man at the end of his rope.
  2. And like anyone who is having to endure great hardship for a long time he is now coming to a point of breaking.
  3. But in all of this we see a man who is a man of faith. It doesn't make him exempt from great suffering, but it does control how he deals with it, even when the battle is at its most intense.
  4. And so, this Psalm is very emotional and it describes the ebb and flow of a battleground in the heart of a man committed to the one True God.

**M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p**

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**II.      First Lesson: Turn To God in Prayer (1-4).**

**III.     Second Lesson: Trust in God (5-8).**

**IV.     Third Lesson: Seek God's Mercy (9-13).**

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**V.      Fourth Lesson: Expect God's Answer (14-18).**

**VI.     Fifth Lesson: Praise God' Goodness (19-22).**

**VII.    Sixth Lesson: Invite Others To Praise God with You (23-24).**

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## VIII. Conclusion.

- A. Jim Andrews, in his book makes this powerful point:
- B. “One mark of a truly walking faith as opposed to a merely talking faith is where it goes with its doubts. In the walls of faith there are always hairline cracks that great stress exposes.

For example, we read in Psalm 10 where David cried out, “Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?” (Vs. 1) Actually the Lord wasn’t hiding; David is describing his emotional perceptions not theological reality. To embattled believers it sometimes seems like God is hiding. In reality the Lord has promised that he will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

So what sets a living faith apart from a dead faith is not the presence or absence of doubt, but the triumph of faith. Where it is genuine, faith is deeper than doubt and in the rough and tumble of life’s battles, living faith always wins out. (275)

- C. **Psalm 146:1-10** Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! <sup>2</sup> I will praise the LORD while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. <sup>3</sup> Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. <sup>4</sup> His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish. <sup>5</sup> How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God; <sup>6</sup> Who made heaven and earth, The sea and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever; <sup>7</sup> Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. <sup>8</sup> The LORD opens *the eyes of the blind*; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous; <sup>9</sup> The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow; But He thwarts the way of the wicked. <sup>10</sup> The LORD will reign forever, Thy God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!