

Psalm 31:1-5 (NIV84)

1 In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.

2 Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.

3 Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

4 Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge.

5 Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.

It has been said that COVID-19 is an invisible enemy. How do you battle against an invisible enemy? Well, we take precautions: social-distancing, hand washing, sanitizing surfaces, staying away from people who are sick.

If you can't see the enemy, you avoid places where it might be lurking and you stay where you know you are safe.

There is another invisible enemy, immeasurably worse than a coronavirus.

Satan lurks in his usual places, but he doesn't limit himself to his usual places. He prowls about, looking for victims, looking for the careless and the vulnerable. He is not a respecter of persons. He doesn't care what your skin color is, or about your socio-economic status. He will take one, or he will take all; he wants all he can get. And even though he may profess love for his victims, he is a liar and cares not a whit for a one of them.

How do you battle against this invisible enemy? It won't do to simply wear masks, or to lock ourselves behind closed doors. He knows how to infect us; he knows how best to gain access to our homes and to our lives. He is an expert at finding gaps in our defensive measures.

Ah, but there is one defense that Satan cannot defeat, a refuge that Satan cannot penetrate. That refuge is Jesus Christ our Lord. We've been told to shelter-in-place; let us instead shelter in Christ.

Psalm 31:5 says, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." Those were the final words Jesus spoke from the cross just after He had said, "It is finished!"

Right then and there you and I were redeemed by Christ! Satan was defeated and the power he had over us was broken. We don't fight this invisible enemy alone; we have the Valiant One -- the victorious Lord Jesus -- on our side. Take refuge in Jesus; arm yourself with His almighty word. Trust Jesus to bring you safely through this battle -- He will! -- because the war is already won.

Safe with you in Christ Jesus our refuge, Pastor Golm

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May 1

## In the Father's Hands

O Lord . . . thou art my God. My times are in thy hand. Psalm 31:14-15

A traveler in the Scottish highlands saw a clump of beautiful flowers far down the mountainside. He promised a reward to a shepherd boy if he would pick them, offering to let him down by a rope. The boy eyed the stranger suspiciously, and then, without a word, disappeared into the woods. In a moment he was back, but with him was his father. He was willing to be let down the mountainside, provided the rope was in his father's hands!

Our Father in heaven permits our feet to come upon steep and slippery places, far down the mountainside of human suffering; but no matter how deep the valley or how difficult the descent, we can always rest secure in the conviction that our times are in his hand. He holds the rope!

We shall go just so far down the hillside of adversity as his love would have us go. He knows our strength, he knows our weakness. He knows what we are to bring up with us from the valley- what lesson in humility, what lesson in trust, what lesson in Christian virtue- and he will bring us up again as soon as we have plucked these flowers for which his love has sent us.

What a comfort, when our cross seems heaviest, when it seems that our life has neither plan nor purpose, when it seems that we are being pushed about by a blind and merciless fate, to remember that in every valley of affliction God holds the rope, and that our times are in his hands. He will guide us. He will hold us. Our faith is that of the poet who wrote:

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, Never let me fall.  
I am trusting Thee for ever And for all.

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, Trusting only Thee; Trusting Thee for full salvation Great and free.