

Into Your Hands

Psalm 31

[This is a long psalm, so as usual with the longer psalms, rather than including the entirety of it here, I encourage you to read it before continuing on with this devotion.]

Into your hand I commit my spirit.

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last (Luke 23:46).

Not my hands, Your hands, O God. My life is in Your hands.

How blessed to be able to pray words that like, words of faith. Far more often we take matters into our own hands and try to shape our own destiny, our own future, do what we want, and what we think is best. Yet how often has that blown up in your face? What you thought was good turned out not to be as good as you thought it would be. It brought you into conflict with others. It actually made things worse.

Into your hand I commit my spirit.

Jesus prayed those words with His dying breaths on the cross. But they are really a summation of His whole life. Throughout His life, He committed Himself to God's Word, God's will, and God's ways. That isn't always easy - which you know! - but it is good. And so when He got to the end of His life, He ended it as He began: ***Into your hand I commit my spirit.***

Maybe that's easy when you have no where else to turn; God as a refuge of last resort. How hard this is to do when life is going well, when God can be so easily forgotten and we can go our own way. That's why praying this prayer at the start of each day might be a good exercise. To train yourself to live each day this way, and that come good or bad, ease or hardship, joy or sorrow, trial or temptation, it is not all up to you - ***Into your hand I commit my spirit.***

Throughout this psalm there are words of trouble and hardship, and talk of the need for refuge, protection, and strength. That's a pretty good description of life! But there are also words of confidence and faith in this psalm - that God will surely keep His Word and promises. It might take awhile. There might be times of darkness and uncertainty, and even suffering. There may be times of doubt and questioning. But in the end the psalmist says: ***Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord!***

After Jesus prayed from the cross, He waited. Three days until His resurrection from the dead. But the resurrection proved that not the hands of Judas, not the hands of Pontius Pilate, and not the hands of the soldiers had the last word! ***Into your hand I commit my spirit***, Jesus prayed. The hands that are the source of our life and all things.

So next time you want to take matters into your own hands, don't! Oh, do your work, fulfill your vocations (callings), do good to others - but as you do, and in all you do, don't follow your own wisdom or rely on your own strength! Rather, pray with Jesus, ***Into your hand I commit my spirit***. And know that the Lord hears your prayers, and will certainly bless.

Lord God, Your hands created all things in the beginning, guide, protect, and provide for all now, and came down from heaven in Your Son to be nailed to the cross. By Your Word and Spirit, help me to see Your goodness and love for me and to never doubt Your will and Your ways. Enable me to pray Jesus' prayer and to commit my life in Your hands, that I go about each day confident and trusting not in me, but only in You. Forgive me when I do not, and give me the joy of Your salvation, and the joy simply of being Your child, always under Your loving and protecting hands. Amen.