

## **In God's Amazing Hands**

Psalm 31:1-5

It was January 15, 2009. It seemed a normal day for the 150 passengers who were ready to board the flight going from New York to Charlotte, NC. The boarding went as expected, no delays, and the airplane took off with no problems.

The aircraft was ascending when all of a sudden it struck a flock of Canada geese. Then, the nightmare began. The plane lost all engine power. Soon the pilots realized that they had no chance of making it back to the airport. It was then that the captain of the aircraft decided to ditch the plane in the Hudson River. The accident came to be known as the "Miracle on the Hudson."

I remember watching the news in shock. I was astonished and ecstatic by the fact that there were no casualties in such an emergency landing, or crashing as the experts call it. I remember listening to reports highlighting the qualifications of the pilots. At the moment of the tragedy, both aviators had tens of thousands of accrued flight hours. One of them had served in the Air Force. Both officers were quite experienced.

The pilots and flight attendants handled the incident with mastery. I recall one of the headlines reporting on the accident reading, "In Amazing Hands." No doubt, the whole situation could have ended in a worse tragedy had not a calm, capable pilot been in the cockpit.

We all want to be in good hands. There is an insurance company (Allstate Insurance) that recognizes the longing of human beings to have proficient guardianship and protection. The slogan the company uses for its promotion is, "Are you in good hands?". I remember hearing the phrase "in good hands" several times as people commented on the reputation of the hospital where my mother was being treated after a serious car accident.

We all want to be in good hands. That's why we make sure that the people we entrust with the education of our children, the care of our health, and the managing our finances, etc. are competent. Knowing that we are in good hands, especially during difficult and trying times, is reassuring. It gives us confidence, peace and hope.

King David had a very messy life. David's family was painfully divided. His children fought among themselves. His own son, Absalom, rebelled against the king.

David's kingship was defined by strife. The king had enemies inside and outside the borders of Israel. He had so many enemies that at some point David wrote, "*Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head*" (Psalm 69:4).

Coming face to face with David's life makes me question the severity of my problems. Very often I interrogate myself with questions such as, do I objectively assess the challenges I face, or

do I like drama so much that I tend to exaggerate such challenges? Am I so focused on the difficulties that come my way and the feelings they trigger that I blow the facts of my reality out of proportion? Am I looking at my problems from a healthy distance, or am I so immersed in them that they become my only world, a world dominated by negatives with no positives? I believe these are questions we need to ask ourselves, so we don't fall into a state of self-indulgent pity where we neglect to see the resources and possibilities in our surroundings.

Reading about David's reality not only helps me practice self-examination, it provides me with the best way to live life. David wrote Psalm 31 in the midst of a chaotic moment in his life. When we read this psalm in its entirety, we come in contact with terms such as distress, affliction, weak bones, despised and forgotten. Yet, it was while experiencing trying circumstances that David prayed, "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (v. 5).

You probably recognize David's prayer. Jesus, in the most excruciating moment of his earthly life, used David's words to pray to the Father while hanging on the cross: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). These were the last words Jesus pronounced before he died. From Jesus, we learned that the Lord entered his death the same way he lived his life, sustained and guided by God's amazing hands.

Some people may see this prayer as dreary resignation. Others may use it as magic words to be said while in desperation, when there is little else one can do. Yet, none of these views are endorsed in the Bible.

These words are not an expression of resignation and desperation. The words of David and Jesus show absolute trust in God. This prayer is a statement of faith. The declaration of a heart that longs to be in good hands. Do you want to be in God's amazing hands?

I believe this prayer is a statement of trust and faith. The total giving and surrendering of oneself will never take place if it is not done in faith and trust. In order to say this prayer earnestly and wholeheartedly, one needs to trust that God has our best interest in mind regardless of the circumstances and the immediate outcomes. One needs to trust that God works all things for the good of those who love him. One needs to trust that God will bring us to a better place, even if the path is full of pain and suffering. One needs to trust that there is no better place to be than God's amazing hands.

So, it was in a moment of distress that David prayed, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." However, I want to share with you another instance when David put into practice his unreserved faith in the goodness of God. This time, we see David not as someone subject to persecution. Actually, the king was enjoying some degree of peace.

The Israelites had won many battles and the sweet taste of victory gave David a swollen head. The Bible says that Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census. You may be wondering, what is wrong with taking a census? Here is what's wrong.

For a moment, David thought that he was the product of his own hands. The king entertained the idea that everything he had accomplished was the result of his expertise as a military leader. Pride was driving David away from the hands of God. Therefore, David decided to take a census in the land of Israel. In his mind, victories had been accomplished not by the Mighty hand of God, but by a numerous army.

So, after taking the census, God spoke to David through the prophet. Here is what happened.

<sup>9</sup> *The Lord said to Gad, David's seer,* <sup>10</sup> *"Go and tell David, 'This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.'"*

<sup>11</sup> *So Gad went to David and said to him, "This is what the Lord says: 'Take your choice: <sup>12</sup> three years of famine, three months of being swept away<sup>[a]</sup> before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the Lord—days of plague in the land, with the angel of the Lord ravaging every part of Israel.' Now then, decide how I should answer the one who sent me."*

<sup>13</sup> *David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. **Let me fall into the hands of the Lord,** for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into human hands." **1 Chronicles 21***

Here is a beautiful principle I believe we should learn. We need to make God's amazing hands our landing field at all times. When we are afraid, when we are sick, when we face our own death, when we are dealing with our stubbornness and destructive pride, even insecurities, we need to pray, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

We need to throw ourselves into the hands of God. Regardless of our circumstances we need to say, "I commit myself to you, O God. In my living and in my dying, in the good times and in the bad, whatever I am and have, I place in your hands, O God, for your safekeeping [and transformation]."<sup>1</sup> Our final place to stand needs to be God's loving and merciful hands.

I want to commit my life into the hands of the Lord. Yes, I want the blessings of reassurance, rest, and peace that come from knowing that God holds me with strong hands. However, I commit my life to the care of God not because I only want protection. I also want to feel God's hands prompting, leading and guiding me. I want God's hand to mold me in Christ's image.

I invite you to make David's prayer your own. Regardless of your level of trust, I invite you to say, "Lord, I put my whole life in your hands." Faith is like a muscle; it will get stronger as you work it out. So, keep practicing your faith! Continue coming to God even when the only thing you have to offer is pain, confusions, and frustrations. As you put your whole self in God's hands, things will change and you will be transformed.

Remember, there is no better place to be than God's amazing hands.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.