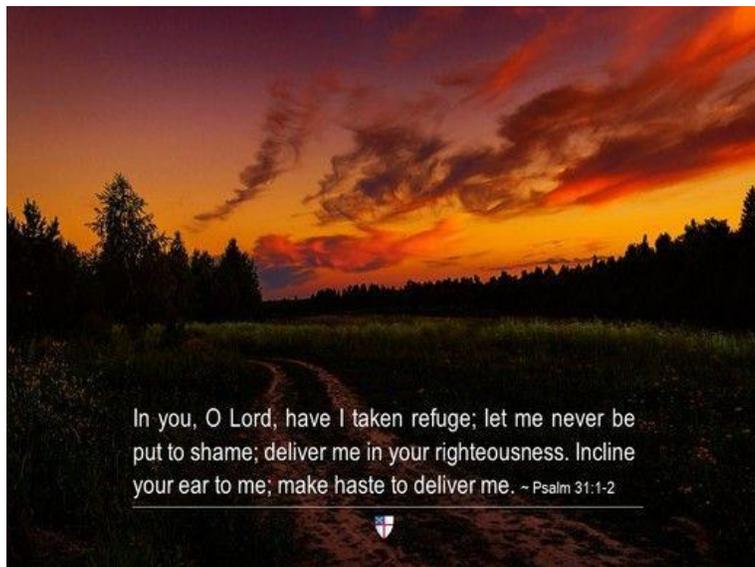


Lakewood Congregational Church  
May 10, 2020  
Breathing in Psalm 31



<sup>1</sup> *In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.*

<sup>2</sup> *Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.*

<sup>3</sup> *You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me,*

<sup>4</sup> *take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.*

<sup>5</sup> *Into your hand I commit my spirit;*

*you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.*

<sup>15</sup> *My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.*

<sup>16</sup> *Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.* Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

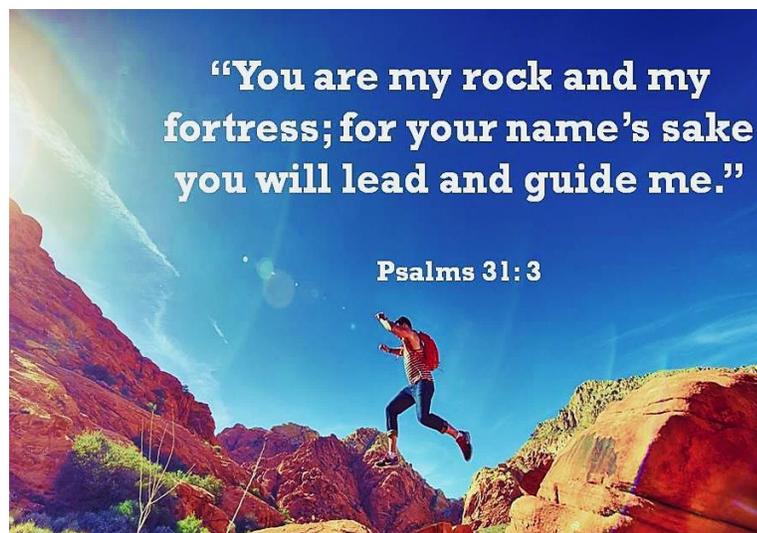
♥ **Refuge** is a noun used to define a place where people or animals can be away from danger or trouble. It may be indoors or outdoors, but whoever lives or visits there is safe physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

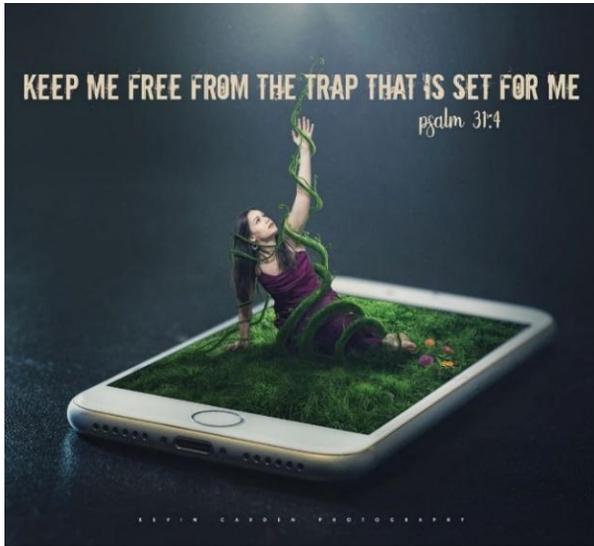
King David wrote Psalm 31. This is how he used the word, *refuge*:

*In you, O LORD, I seek **refuge**.*

*Be a rock of **refuge** for me, a strong fortress to save me.*

*Take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my **refuge**.*





Ponder *refuge* – the word, the place, the feelings.

- How do you describe a place of refuge? Remember to include feeling words.
  - Where have you sought refuge and later realized that it was a net entangling you or a trap?
  - Where have you found genuine refuge?
  - Is your faith a refuge? If so, how? If not, what do you need for faith to be refuge?
  - How are refuge and sabbath similar and different?
- Is there a way you could make this stay-at-home and gradual reopening period, a time of refuge, a time to move toward God?



Psalm 31

*Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.  
Psalms 31:5 (NRSV)*

*My times are in your hand;  
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.  
Let your face shine upon your servant;  
save me in your steadfast love. Psalms 31:15-16 (NRSV)*

♥ This week, upon waking and before bedtime say: *Into your hand I commit my spirit.* Please say this verse every morning and before bedtime this week. Make it a screen saver. Live with this prayer and become aware of how that prayer affects you.

- How will you choose to live as a redeemed child of God? Which actions, what mindset, what kind of heart incarnates God in a person who needs and accepts redemption?

- What *times* do you place in Yahweh's hands? Only the challenging times? Your every breath?
- Write a prayer of thanks for your times in God's hands.
- ♥ Individually or as a family create a psalter. A psalter is a collection of illustrated psalms, often with an added prayer or notes detailing why that psalm was chosen. The psalm may be as text or as a song. Psalters were popular from the Middle Ages through the Baroque period. They are gaining traction during this stay-at-home period. Consider beginning with Psalm 23, 31, 121, and 150.



- You may create this online or using your favorite art materials.
- Write or type and print the psalm. Choose the entire psalm or the parts you find meaningful.
- Leave space to decorate the edges, add pictures, drawings or photographs. If you prefer, Google images has many illustrated verses.
- Add a note explaining why a psalm was chosen, add music or a news article or pair it with something happening in your life.
- Date the page. Leave space for more pages.

This is a book that you may continue throughout your life. There are psalms for every joyous and sad occasion, and for praise and thanksgiving. What if the events in your life were accompanied by a psalm? What kind of legacy is that for yourself and for your family?

- ♥ A Mighty Fortress is Our God, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4EoLm3\\_luM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4EoLm3_luM)  
A virtual choir with 176 singers from 34 countries. This hymn was written by Martin Luther, words and music in 1529. Ruth Duck edited the words, making the hymn more gender-neutral in 1990. This hymn is based on Psalm 46, but I think it accompanies Psalm 31 well.

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing, our present help amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. For still our ancient foe, doth seek to work us woe, with craft and power great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth without an equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, but there is one who takes our side, the one of God's own choosing. You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he with might pow'r to save, victorious o'er the grave, Christ will prevail triumphant.*

*And though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear for God has willed the truth to triumph through us The powers of darkness grim, we tremble not for them; their rage we can endure, for lo, their doom is sure; one little word shall fell them.*

*God's word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth. The Spirit and the gifts are ours, through Christ, who with us sideth. Let good and kindred go, this mortal life also. The body they may kill, God's thruth abideth still, God's reign endures forever.*

- ♥ Today is also Mother's Day. Write a letter or create a song or photo collage for your mother or the person who mothered you. If she is alive, then consider sharing it with her. If you are estranged or your mother is deceased, then still consider this activity.
- Begin with thanks for your life.
- List a few positive affirmations on how her life impacted your life. Be specific. This is more than a sweet sentiment; it's an honest affirmation grounded in her impact within your life.
- Offer forgiveness for her less than stellar moments. Even on Mother's Day, we can acknowledge that mothers are human and not perfect. And, some mothers have difficulty with nurturing and loving. Forgiveness is not forgetting. It's a weight loss process for your soul which allows you to gain wholeness in so many ways.
- Repeat this activity on Father's Day, June 21, for your dad.

Images:

**Psalm 31:1-2:** <https://i.pinimg.com/236x/0b/0a/28/0b0a284e7493ac977b64a071b645e497--psalm--righteousness.jpg>

**Psalm 31:3:** <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C4tT7vDVcAAziEe.jpg>

**Psalm 31:4**

[https://66.media.tumblr.com/75b1bf3d6c8b7ef817fc83a01242f831/tumblr\\_p8dgs0Kmgw1tnipq6o1\\_1280.jpg](https://66.media.tumblr.com/75b1bf3d6c8b7ef817fc83a01242f831/tumblr_p8dgs0Kmgw1tnipq6o1_1280.jpg)

**Psalm 31:5, 15-16:**

<https://slideplayer.com/slide/15835608/88/images/21/Into+your+hand+I+commit+my+spirit%3B+you+have+redeemed+me%2C+O+Lord%2C+faithful+God.+Psalms+31%3A5+%28NRSV%29.jpg>

**King David playing the harp**, German manuscript, 1260

<https://media.freelibrary.org/assets/digital/items/mca1860072/images/large.jpg>