

Where Will You Put Your Life?

Miss Rachael, let me start off with a question: For how long were you in catechism class with me? In all of those months, how many stories did I tell you? This morning, let me tell you one more very true and very important story. A long time ago there was a boy who had a problem. The problem was that his brothers were at war with the evil Philistines and they couldn't seem to win. They couldn't win because there was this giant of a man who would come out every day and say nasty words against them, the army and the LORD. And this was an even greater problem for this young man. This giant had no right. He had no right to make fun of the one, true God. So, let me ask you Rachael, where did David put his trust? Did he put his trust in his armor? Did he put it in being able to talk himself out of this situation? Did he put his life in the hands of the LORD. Do you remember what he said to Goliath? He said: *"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."* (1 Samuel 17:45 NIV)

Oh, but that's not the end of the story, is it? King Saul hated David. And so Saul tried again and again to kill him. And there was that time when David went into Saul's camp at night. Everyone was asleep. And he could have killed Saul right there and taken the kingdom that belonged to him. And the guy that was with him, Abishai, wanted him to do just that. He said: *"Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice."* (1 Samuel 26:8 NIV) But, what did David say in response? In whose hands did he place his own life? He said: *"As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed."* (1 Samuel 26:10-11 NIV)

And I could go on with this story, couldn't I, Rachael? I could go on to talk about Absalom's rebellion and all the trouble and sin and problems that David endured. But, I won't. Because here in these words we have enough to answer the question. To whom did David go whenever he was in danger, in trouble and in turmoil? He went to the LORD.

That brings us to this psalm this morning. You have chosen Psalm 31, the opening verses at your confirmation passage. And you have chosen well. David starts out this psalm this way: *"In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness."* (Psalms 31:1 NIV)

David had horrible, wretched problems throughout his life. And he turned to the LORD for refuge, for strength and for hope. But why? How did he know that the LORD was the right person to rescue him? How did he know that the LORD *would* rescue him? In this verse he says: *"deliver me in your righteousness."* (Psalms 31:1 NIV)

The reason for deliverance was the LORD's righteousness. Now Rachael, whenever we read a big word in the bible, we set aside the time to talk about that word. And so, here, right now, we do the same. What is the LORD's Righteousness?¹ The word David uses here means 'perfection' and 'holiness.' In these words David found a great treasure and a great comfort. He knew that the LORD would deliver him not because the LORD was perfect and holy, but because the LORD was the sort of God who didn't just possess holiness—he also *gave* his holiness. The LORD didn't just possess perfection, he *gave* perfection. He is saying and praying: "LORD, since you have taken away my sin and given to me your righteousness, then I know you will hear my prayer. Since you have taken away my sin and given to me your perfectness, deliver me from my sin and all my trouble."

Now here we are, Rachael, knee-deep into this sermon. And you might be asking yourself, what does this have to do with me? If David had problems in his life—deep problems because of his sin and the sin of others, do you think you will? If David put his trust in the LORD to deliver him, where will you put your trust?

This is a very important point to focus on. After this confirmation, when you sin and it hurts, where will you find the solution to that sin? After this confirmation day, when others sin against you and it hurts, where will you find the solution to that pain? Where will you go when your friends hurt you? Where you go when you don't know what lies beyond these high school years? Where will you go when your teachers or classmates insult you

¹בְּצִדְקָתְךָ פְּלִטָּי:

because you are a Christian? Where will you go when hurt people with your words and you have no one to blame but yourself?

Will find consolation in the number of your friends? Will you find consolation in the quality of your friends? Will you find consolation in the power of your volleyball serve? Or will you find consolation in the score on your last math test? NO. To all of these we say NO! No, on that day when your sin weighs you down with pain and guilt you will pray this prayer: *“deliver me in your righteousness.”* (Psalms 31:1 NIV) You will say: “O LORD, make your holiness *my* holiness. Make your perfection *my* perfection. Take away my sin and this pain.” And the LORD will hear you on that day and on every day you pray this way.

Now, Miss Rachael, there is one more topic to cover before we are done here. I don't know if your realized it, but this psalm is a *beautiful* and a very fitting passage for this day in a different way than you might have thought. In verse five, David says: *“Into your hands I commit my spirit”* (Psalms 31:5 NIV) Miss Rachael, who else spoke those words? Our Savior, Jesus spoke those words on the cross right before he died. Who else spoke those words? Stephen spoke those words right before they killed him with stones.²

Notice Rachael, this song isn't just a song of deliverance. It's a song of *death*. It is the song that Jesus spoke as he died. It's the song that Stephen sang when they killed him. And it has been the song that countless Christians have sung with their last breaths. And so, let me ask you Rachael, do you know when you will die? Now do you see what Confirmation all about? Catechism isn't a pointless tradition. It's not a fluffy, white cake or pretty dress. It's not getting God out of the way so that you can move onto more important activities like parties and volleyball. It's this enduring fact: Just as John Achzehn and Jack Brinker have gone to see the LORD face to face, you will too. And as the LORD calls you home, be it tonight or 50 years in the future, you can say: *“Into your hands I commit my spirit”* (Psalms 31:5 NIV) because he has delivered you with his very own righteousness, holiness and perfection. Jesus has taken your sins away and given to you his perfection.

So, my sister in Christ, continue. Continue to put your life, your very soul in his hands. For, your LORD who has given to you his righteousness will never drop your life or disappoint. Amen.

²“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “LORD Jesus, receive my spirit.”” (Acts 7:59 NIV)