

Psalm 13:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

Analysis

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Verse 5 marks the psalm's dramatic turning point. The fourfold "How long?" of complaint (v.1-2) and the urgent petition (v.3-4) suddenly yield to confident assertion. This is not gradual progression but abrupt shift characteristic of lament psalms—the "but" (va'ani, וְאַנְיִ) signals stark contrast between prevailing despair and erupting faith.

"But I" emphasizes personal choice despite contrary circumstances. Nothing in the external situation has changed—the enemy still threatens, the sorrow persists, God's face remains hidden from perception—yet David chooses trust. This "but" is the hinge on which the psalm turns from darkness to light, from complaint to confidence, from lament to praise.

"Have trusted" (batachti, בָּתַחְתִּ) uses the perfect tense, indicating completed action with ongoing results: "I have placed my trust and continue in that trust." Batach means to trust, rely upon, feel secure in. This is not future possibility ("I will trust") or present struggle ("I am trying to trust") but settled confidence: "I have trusted." The verb's perfect form suggests David is recalling a past decision to trust God that now resurfaces despite current darkness.

"In thy mercy" (bechasdekha, בְּחֶסֶדְךָ) grounds trust in God's covenant faithfulness. Chesed (חֶסֶד) is one of Hebrew's richest theological terms, often translated "lovingkindness," "steadfast love," "loyal love," "covenant faithfulness." It describes

God's unfailing commitment to His covenant people—love that persists despite unfaithfulness, love that keeps promises, love that never abandons. This is not sentimental affection but covenantal loyalty. Trust in God's chesed means confidence that His character guarantees His faithfulness regardless of present circumstances.

"My heart shall rejoice" (yagel libi, יָגֵל לִבִּי) shifts to future certainty. Yagel means to rejoice, exult, be glad—intense joyful response, not mere contentment. The imperfect tense indicates future action that is certain: "my heart will rejoice." The heart (lev), previously filled with daily sorrow (v.2), will be filled with joy. This transformation is not yet experienced but confidently anticipated based on trust in God's mercy.

"In thy salvation" (bishuatekha, בִּשְׁעָתֶךָ) specifies the cause of future joy. Yeshuah (ישועה) means salvation, deliverance, victory—God's saving intervention. Note the possessive: "THY salvation," not "my deliverance" or "the solution." Joy comes not merely from changed circumstances but from recognizing God as Savior. The focus shifts from the problem to the Problem-Solver, from what God gives to who God is.

Historical Context

The abrupt transition from lament to confidence characterizes many psalms (Psalms 6, 13, 22, 31, 69). Scholars debate whether this shift resulted from:

1. Divine word or oracle delivered by priest/prophet during worship, providing assurance that God heard the prayer
2. Internal spiritual transformation as the sufferer, through prayer itself, moved from despair to trust
3. Liturgical structure where lament was ritually followed by affirmation of faith regardless of circumstances.

All three possibilities find support in Scripture and may have coexisted in Israel's worship.

What's clear is that lament psalms typically don't end where they begin. They move toward trust and praise even when circumstances remain unchanged. This

models faith that transcends feelings—choosing trust despite contrary evidence.

The word *chesed* saturates the Psalter (appearing 127 times) and the entire Old Testament (245 times). It describes God's covenant loyalty to Israel, His unfailing love despite their unfaithfulness. Exodus 34:6-7, God's self-revelation to Moses, declares Yahweh as "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness [*chesed*] and truth." This becomes Israel's foundational confession, repeated throughout Scripture.

David's trust in God's *chesed* wasn't theoretical but based on experience. God had delivered him from Goliath, from Saul's spear, from multiple assassination attempts, from enemy armies. Yet in the present crisis, those past deliverances seemed distant, and God appeared hidden. Faith required choosing to trust past experience and revealed character over present perception.

For Christians, the ultimate expression of God's *chesed* is Christ—"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). The cross demonstrates covenant faithfulness that persists despite our unfaithfulness. Believers trust in God's mercy not hoping He might be merciful but knowing He has proven merciful through Christ.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What enables the dramatic shift from despair (v.1-2) to confidence (v.5)? Is this change based on circumstances or on chosen trust?
2. How does understanding *chesed* (covenant loyalty) as God's character rather than mere emotion strengthen faith during prolonged suffering?
3. What is the difference between 'my salvation' (focusing on deliverance) and 'thy salvation' (focusing on the Deliverer)?

4. How can believers cultivate the kind of trust that rejoices in advance of deliverance, confident that God will act?
5. What past experiences of God's faithfulness can you recall when present circumstances tempt you to doubt His care?

Interlinear Text

בַּיְשׁוּעָתְךָ תְּגַנְּבֵנִי
 בְּמִסְדָּבָרְךָ בְּתִחְתְּרִתִּי
 לְבָבִי תְּגַנְּבֵנִי
 בְּיִשְׁוּעָתְךָ תְּגַנְּבֵנִי

H589 in thy mercy H2617 H982 H1523 H3820 H3444

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 12:2 (Salvation): Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Jude 1:21 (Grace): Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Habakkuk 3:18 (Salvation): Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Psalms 52:8 (Faith): But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

Psalms 9:14 (Salvation): That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.

Psalms 33:18 (Grace): Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

Psalms 119:81 (Salvation): My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.

Psalms 32:10 (Faith): Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

Psalms 36:7 (Faith): How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

Psalms 147:11 (Grace): The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

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