

# My times are in Thy hand (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Buss, Charles (1913-1997)

[ 0 : 0 0 ] as the Lord may be pleased to help me I'll direct your attention to words in the psalm which we read Psalm 31 and we read verses 14 to 16 Psalm 31 verses 14 to 16 but I trusted in thee O Lord I said thou art my God my times are in thy hand deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from them that persecute me make thy face to shine upon thy servant save me for thy mercy's sake Psalm 31 verses 14 to 16 how often as we maybe help to read the psalms the psalms of David we have somewhat of an insight to the spiritual life of the psalmist and the exercise of his soul as he was brought through changing scenes as God led him on in his way and what a blessing it has been to many of God's dear people as they've been able to meditate upon some of the things that the psalmist refers to with regard to his own experience and what a great mercy dear friends if sometimes you feel somewhat of a spiritual union to the psalmist in his expressions his desires yea in his confessions the word of God reminds us that those that are joined to the Lord are one spirit and surely to know something of this in the true sense of the word is a great mercy and if perhaps sometimes you've known what it is to enter a little into the psalmist experience and go with what he has been able to declare as it were is there not some measure of encouragement to be realized in this because it could be indeed said that the ungodly are not so and indeed it has to be said too that those who are merely dead professors in religion the things that the psalmist refers to would be really a strange language in the experience of it because such a well satisfied with a mere empty profession a name to live and yet dead but what a mercy dear friends if sometimes you are the subject of some sole exercise as before God and that exercise is similar to what the psalmist himself was the subject of in his day and we have to remember too that religion which is the Holy Spirit will be the same today as it was in the psalmist day that we live in modern days when we come to consider the things pertaining to real religion the things of God the things of eternity and the condition of man by nature there's been no change in this man is still sinner before a holy God and that religion which is wrought in the heart of the Holy Spirit will be just the same as it was in the psalmist day although there are differences and degrees of experience yet the word of God tells us they shall be all taught of God and I do hope

as I try and bring this word before you this morning it might be perhaps helpful to one or another as we try to consider may the Lord help us to do so and one can only do so in a very simple way but seeking the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit how good it is when the Lord is pleased to unfold his truth and indeed to apply his word to the heart indeed that is what we need isn't it we do become somewhat acquainted with God's word especially some portions of it some portions more than others but that is not enough is it that is not sufficient we need the Lord to apply his word with divine power to our hearts in the first place we notice the psalmist acknowledges his trust that God given faith which the Lord had been pleased to implant in his heart enabling him to put his trust in the Lord and no doubt in this psalm the dear psalmist as he penned the psalm was was being brought through very difficult circumstances there's that to show to us he knew what it was to be in deep trouble he knew what it was to have enemies and yet at the same time he was made conscious at times of the gracious aid of the

Lord granting to him that help which he need and that deliverance and also he was enabled to call upon his God for that deliverance and so in the first place in this 14th verse the psalmist acknowledges this doesn't he but he says but I trust in thee oh Lord what a good point to be brought to he was the dear psalmist in the midst of difficulties and trials temptations and persecutions and yet in the face of all this this was his strength his stay faith in God that precious God-given faith whereby he was enabled to trust in the Lord and we'd remember too that it was as faith was in grace brought in gracious exercise that he was enabled so to do not always was there faith an exercise you only have to come toward the end of the psalm and he acknowledges this he says for I said in my haste

I'm cut off before thine eyes one of those hasty conclusions when there was not faith in gracious exercise he was the subject of that faith which God had given but not always was it an exercise there were times when he was left to his own thoughts his own considerations and as in sometimes and more than once he acknowledges this that he said things in his haste there was not a prayerful consideration of the matter but he came to some hasty conclusion and in this psalm he says in my haste he felt he was cut off from before God's eyes but that was his fear but in our text we find that the dear psalmist was enabled to put his trust in the Lord that faith was in gracious exercise under trial under trial the dear man he felt to be alone he said

I'm forgotten as a dead man and then he'd heard the slander of many there were those who took counsel to and devised to take away his life he was in the light of these things that he found an anchorage that which the Lord had been pleased to graciously be to him so that whatever the trial was whatever the affliction or the temptation there was this blessed anchorage faith in God and that faith which would issue in a sweet hope in God that hope which the apostle speaks of in one of the epistles an anchor of the soul what a mercy dear friends if you and I know something of that anchorage especially in times of trial but I trusted in thee

[ 8 : 59 ] O Lord and then you will notice that this issued in a measure of assurance and confidence I said thou art my God it may well be as we consider this clause of the text you have to as it were pause and consider can I join with the psalmist in this he expresses some measure of assurance of an interest in God as his God and now this of course is something that an exercised soul desires to enter into to realise that God he who is the living God the only true living God is his or her God well it was as the dear psalmist was enabled to trust in God and as the Lord was pleased to exercise faith in his heart there were times when this was made very real to him it was not an empty statement thou art my God remember how it was with dear Thomas many years after when the Lord

Jesus Christ rose from the dead and Thomas found it a difficulty to believe and he was held fast by many doubts and fears and how the Lord Jesus Christ in his great mercy dealt with Thomas case didn't he and when the disciples were gathered together on the second occasion the first Thomas not with them but on the second occasion when the Lord Jesus Christ manifested himself to them it is good to notice how the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with Thomas case didn't he oh the dear Lord Jesus Christ knew all about Thomas doubts and fears and how the Lord was pleased to especially and particularly reveal himself and speak to Thomas in that way and it brought

Thomas to that most desirable place my Lord and my God oh sure it is something most desirable isn't it for the Lord to grant that gracious assurance that humble confidence in him not a presumptuous confidence but a confidence of faith and that which the Lord is pleased to bring about in the hearts of his dear people maybe perhaps you can look back some of you to some time when you were brought into times of trouble and in difficulty and yet you were helped to do what the psalmist did to trust in the Lord and when the Lord is pleased in his mercy to appear to his needy waiting people this will be the issue ultimately thou art my God so the psalmist there in this 14th verse expresses his confidence in the

Lord and an exercise of faith which the Lord is pleased to exercise in his heart enabling him in the midst of these trying circumstances to put his trust in the Lord but then there's this particular word in the 15th verse a clause which is well known to most of us where he states this truth he says my times are in thy hand surely when the dear man was enabled to realise the truth of this it must have been a source of comfort to him to think that all that concerned him and that is what is meant really by my times in God's hand in the hand of the almighty God it must have been a source of comfort to him and now while the psalmist could say this personally this is a blessed truth concerning all

God's dear people and whether there is a sweet realisation of the truth of it or no the truth stands and it is the truth concerning every one of God's dear people that is of course in this particular sense of the word before us or under God's control even the wicked but there is that particularly special way in which the Lord is pleased to deal with those who are objects of his everlasting love you were singing the hymn just now weren't you and in that last verse what does the hymn writer remind us of the appointed time rolls on apace not to propose but called by grace to change the heart renew the will and turn the feet to Zion's hill that appointed time now what a mercy dear friends if that is true concerning you and me well the psalmist then is speaking about these times times his times and

[ 14 : 51 ] God's hand the hand of God now in the scriptures the Lord has revealed himself hasn't he and something of his majesty and holiness his great mercy his everlasting love and things concerning his dealing for this dear people and one way in which this is discovered to us through the word of God is the hand of God we read about God's eye his heart his thoughts here in the text his hand thy hand this indicates does it not the gracious dealings of God it is a word to come down to our our finite understanding as it were God is a spirit and yet in these ways the Lord has been pleased to reveal himself in his word and here with respect to his dealings with his dear people the hand of God you read of those in the word of

God various characters and there were those who acknowledged God's hand as a psalmist does here we think of Nehemiah that godly man who was raised up to restore Jerusalem and the ruins and he speaks about the hand of God being upon him for good the dear man realised that he was being supported and helped along and he acknowledges God's hand how can we speak of the hand of God God is great he's altogether beyond our poor finite minds to comprehend and yet dear friends a great mercy if we're not total strangers to the being of God the hand of God I think the psalmist in the psalm here speaks about

God's strong hand indicating his almighty power and if you turn to the 40th chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah you read there the majesty and the omnipotence of God and there is that expression he holds the waters in the hollow of his hand it is an expression to show to us something of the greatness of the hand of God he holds all things in his hand and yet in that special particular way and that gracious way and that condescending way the hand of God is upon his dear people the high hand you see there's something here which as I said should be a source of comfort to God's dear often faint-hearted and yet trusting people the hand of God you see it's an omnipotent hand isn't it it is indeed that almighty hand and therefore seeing that the times of his people are in

God's hand what safety there is there no real harm can come to these because they're in the hand of God a hand which saves a hand which protects a hand which provides you remember the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of this great truth doesn't he as he alone could do and you read in John's gospel people where the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking himself concerning what he is as that good shepherd to his dear people and his people his sheep his flock and he declares this doesn't he I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand no man is able to pluck them out of my hand no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand for here is the safety of all his dear she and if through

God's great mercy you've been blessed with a grain of faith to trust in him for your salvation alone in him then it means you're in this hand the hand of God has been upon you the Lord has dealt with you and that is a tremendous mercy isn't it it may be sometimes in your desires and your exercise of soul there's that question which does arise have I an interest in God's gracious dealings does he condescend to deal with me well the dear psalmist had some indications of this didn't he and it enabled him to feel something of the comfort of it that this was a truth that his times were in God's hand under his divine control and though he knew much of the tribulation of the path with regard to the enemies of truth and the troubles he came into yet there was this great mercy he was in the hand of God in that place of safety and

[ 21 : 02 ] God's hand to control his life to supply his need to deliver him in his troubles and to bring him safely to that promised end an eye hand you see it is such an almighty hand isn't it and whatever enemies may be permitted to do and God in his wisdom has seen fit sometimes to permit enemies to do much and sometimes this is and proves to be a part of the tribulatory path that God's people have to walk in because the enemies of God will be their enemies but they're limited they're limited to what they can do they certainly cannot pluck these out of the hand of almighty God and his merciful and gracious hand or the hand of

God how can we speak of it it is indeed a very gracious hand God condescends you see he who holds the universe in his hand and it's an amazing truth isn't it he condescends to deal with his dear people and that for their good and for the glory of his name they're in his hand yes none can pluck them out of his hand and so the psalmist says my times are in thy hand yes the almighty ever gracious all the wise hand of God but then there were the times weren't there the psalmist times no doubt the dear man could look back couldn't he over the pathway look back to his early days yes the times of his youth and there is evidence that in his early days the

Lord was pleased to deal with him and even in his very humble occupation in life in caring for the father's sheep he knew something of the secret of what it was to put his trust in the Lord how he could speak of how he wasn't able to deliver the sheep from the paw the lion and the bear and there's evidence there that the dear young youth knew what it was to put his trust in the Lord to his time and where this is so it means that there's a time when the Lord began to graciously and powerfully and effectually work yes that time which the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of to Nicodemus you must be born again you read the ecclesiastes a time to be born and while it is very true that with regard to our natural birth that time was in

God's hand hymn writer says parents native place and time all appointed were by him and then there's that time with regard to God's dear people the new birth yes the dear saviour said to Nicodemus you must be born again that time comes in the experience of all God's dear people not all can trace it not exactly when it took place many cannot but there are those evidences you see that it is so you see when a little baby is born it cannot express itself can it but there it is it's a newborn babe it is alive and now with regard to spiritual birth it is a great mystery but so vital so essential and it has been a concern of many of God's dear people as to whether it is true concerning them that there has been that time because they cannot trace it out clearly some can but many cannot but you see there are the evidences of it yes to be observed and good it is when the

Lord may be pleased to enable you perhaps to trace a little of his gracious hand in that you're no longer dead in trespasses and sins but be made alive quickened by his spirit and really in our text before us we have those evidences of divine life the fact that the dear man put his trust in the Lord that there was faith in his heart the ungodly are not so no the dead professor has not is not in possession of living faith but God does implant faith yes in newborn souls and while they are made to know something of what it is to realise their state before God as a poor needy guilty sinner he blesses them with faith faith to look to Jesus faith to trust in him evidence then of the new birth at that time and is appointed by God man has no hand in this does he it's everything to show to us that salvation is of grace and of grace alone and you remember the hymn writer who has a hymn on this precious truth my times are in thy hand he speaks of

[ 27 : 09 ] God's sovereign hand doesn't he he says sovereign ruler of the skies ever gracious ever wise all my times are in thy hand all events at thy command God is sovereign in this and think of the mercy of it that a sovereign lord should condescend yes to deal with you a poor needy sinner yes and quicken you by his grace and through his blessed spirit so that you are no longer dead in trespasses and sins but there is life although sometimes it may be that life seems to be but a spark yet remember it is a life that can never be destroyed Satan will attack it every one of these whose times are in God's hand in his gracious hand will know something of the attacks of Satan and our text reminds us of this but what a blessing what a mercy to have some real well grounded evidence that the

Lord has quickened you into life you're no longer in a state of spiritual deadness and for there to be those living desires which the Lord alone can satisfy my times are in thy hand then you see with regard to the psalmist all what changes he did pass through changing scenes and every true child of God journeying on the pathway here below will pass through changing scenes but nothing can overturn this blessed truth whatever the scenes may be because they're all controlled by him who holds his dear people in his hand and the things they pass through must ultimately work for good the apostle Paul could make that very clear statement couldn't he he says we know that all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are called according to his purpose they work for good these times should there be times of trial and the

Lord has appointed these times for his dear people there are the trials of the way and there's a purpose in it there are times of affliction and some of you have known what it is very much to pass through these times but what a mercy to remember that they're in God's hand under his divine control he who makes no mistake and he who ever deals with his dear people for their eternal good and ultimately indeed for the glory of his great name and maybe sometimes there are the dark times there are no the people of God are describing the scriptures as children of light and that is a blessed truth a description of God's dear people because they're no longer in the darkness of death but although they're the children of light it does not mean that the path is always a path of sunshine no there are the dark times yes there are the day times but there are night times also and sometimes those times may seem long times yes when there seems to be so much darkness you cannot see your signs and sometimes in these dark times it proves to be that there are times of temptation it would seem the enemy would seek to take advantage that you're in a dark time and he comes with his fierce temptations yes to cast a gloom over everything but that is one of the devil's designs but what a mercy dear friends this truth stands be they times of darkness they're in

God's hand and the darkness and the light are both a light to him although you may not be able to see your way God's eye is upon you yes his hand is with you you're in his hand yes these dark times and then it may be and this has been so with many of the Lord's dear people it was to David it must have been some times with him that the way was mysterious the way was mysterious the dear man was called to pass to some very deep troubles although some of them really were in a sense self-procured troubles he had to reap what he sowed but there they were they were times of trouble and the Lord has seen fit that his dear people shall pass through these times yes times of trouble but these are controlled by God yes controlled by God the word of God speaks about the path of tribulation and it is under

God's control the word to one of the churches in Revelation tribulation ten days you see an appointed time my times are in my hand now I may not exactly describe the time that you may feel to be passing through now but this is the truth of the matter in God's hand every poor sinner who by God's grace has been taught to put his trust in the Lord knowing he cannot trust himself he cannot trust anything else but he has to trust in God's salvation that poor sinner is in God's gracious hand my times are in thy hand but then you notice that this blessed and precious truth was greatly sanctified to the dear psalmist so that we do not find his adopting as it were a fatalistic attitude in this my times are in thy hand no but rather with the dear psalmist it was conducive to this an exercise before

[ 34 : 23 ] God because the verse follows with this petition this dear man whose times were in God's hand we find he was a praying man and he prays that the Lord would undertake for him in the midst of these times he said deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from them that persecute me oh the dear man knew what it was to pass through these times but it led him to prayer and dear friends it is a great mercy if at times in your own experience there are those things that cause you to seek unto God for deliverance for help for mercy for forgiveness and can it not be observed in this way that the Lord deals with his people to this end to bring them to himself to bring them to his mercy seat and we're made to realise our own hearts we realise how we do need the

Lord to deal with us in this way he has to bring us to prayer to bring us to the throne of grace oh there are times with us aren't there when we're in a low state spiritually yes and prayer may even be a burdening task maybe just a dead formality at times but what a mercy when the Lord is pleased to deal with you remember your times are at hand and to deal with you to bring you to prayer to cause you to to see his face and it may be in this way sometimes the Lord may lay some special burden upon your spirit but it is to this end that you may cast that burden upon the Lord and how it can work for good as you may have been able to realise his sustained supporting grace it gives evidence doesn't it that the

Lord is dealing with you and while troubles come to all mankind it is the result of sin but in those particularly special ways the Lord is pleased at times to sanctify the troubles of his dear people to bring them to his feet to cause them to seek his face well it was so with the psalmist wasn't it he said deliver me he prays for deliverance he realised there was there were enemies there were those who did persecute him then we may not have enemies like David did but there's that one great enemy and he's always the enemy of God's dear people and if you're through God's great mercy amongst his God's favoured people then you'll have to realise that Satan is your enemy and there are those persecutions those temptations you need deliverance deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from them that persecute me the world is a persecuting world isn't it and although through

God's great mercy we are not called upon to live in such days as our forefathers who were persecuted in a very sad and very cruel way yet there's still the spirit of the world it's the same it's enmity to God and those who are those who belong to the Lord those whose times are in God's hand they'll have to realise that the world is not their friend no but rather their enemy for what a mercy dear friends if God is your friend and so the psalmist prays then for deliverance and what a fitting petition that is isn't it oh how many times it may be you've had to look to the Lord that he would deliver you yes deliver you from this sinful world deliver you from the spirit of it deliver you in times of temptation and deliver you from your own deceitful heart deliverance and then he prays in this way make thy face to shine upon thy servant

I mentioned briefly just now the times of darkness oh how this at times may give an edge to this prayer make thy face to shine upon thy servant it may well be there's something about this petition that finds a place in your heart yes to seek that blessing of the Lord is a part of that blessing which was commanded to be pronounced upon Israel of old by Aaron and here the dear psalmist is a supplement before the Lord in the light of that blessing praying for it make thy face to shine upon thy servant the light of his countenance to realize the Lord smile is it not something you have longed to experience dear friends perhaps in the midst of difficulties or afflictions or to realize the

[ 40 : 10 ] Lord smile which is worth more than all the comforts of this life or even the good wishes of friends around you the Lord smile the light of his countenance there's a question in one of the early psalms who will show us any good then it runs like this Lord lift thou up the light of thy counsel upon us oh to realize the Lord smile yes unworthy you may feel to be to think that the Lord should smile upon you you feel you deserve his crown and yet you long for his smile make thy face to shine upon thy servant save me for thy mercy sake I like this word here here is the ground you see of a poor sinner's hope the mercy of God and the dear man could but plead in this way save me for thy mercy sake he couldn't plead before the

Lord save me for what I am and what I promise to be no but save a poor sinner depend alone upon thy mercy that great mercy that free mercy that flows from heaven yea that mercy that flows to the Lord Jesus Christ make thy face to shine upon thy servant and save me for thy mercy sake and the wonderful truth is this dear friends that God who is the God of his dear people is the God of mercy is that not your hope that he's a God of mercy you see it was the ground of the publican's plea wasn't it he couldn't stand along the side of the Pharisee with all his religion no he had to come as a poor guilty sinner depends alone upon the mercy of God and pray that the God would of prayer isn't it yes the mercy of

God and the promise of God his own word to plead his own word and he who has declared himself to be a merciful and gracious God to his needy people oh there is ground to plead here poor sinner save me for thy mercy his sake and I thought as I was looking at this psalm what a beautiful ending it has and it is as though the dear psalmist was helped to give this word of counsel as it were to God's dear people under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit especially when perhaps there are discouraging times he says this be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart all ye that hope in the Lord Amen