

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 (MSG)

If you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That's to prevent anyone from confusing God's incomparable power with us. As it is, there's not much chance of that. You know for yourselves that we're not much to look at. We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we're not demoralized; we're not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we've been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken. What they did to Jesus, they do to us—trial and torture, mockery and murder; what Jesus did among them, he does in us—he lives! Our lives are at constant risk for Jesus' sake, which makes Jesus' life all the more evident in us. While we're going through the worst, you're getting in on the best!

Psalm 31:1, 5-14 (MSG)

A David Psalm

I run to you, God; I run for dear life. Don't let me down! I've put my life in your hands. You won't drop me, you'll never let me down. I hate all this silly religion, but you, God, I trust. I'm leaping and singing in the circle of your love; you saw my pain, you disarmed my tormentors, You didn't leave me in their clutches but gave me room to breathe. Be kind to me, God—I'm in deep, deep trouble again. I've cried my eyes out; I feel hollow inside. My life leaks away, groan by groan; my years fade out in sighs. My troubles have worn me out, turned my bones to powder. To my enemies I'm a monster; I'm ridiculed by the neighbors. My friends are horrified; they cross the street to avoid me. They want to blot me from memory, forget me like a corpse in a grave, discard me like a broken dish in the trash. The street-talk gossip has me "criminally insane"! Behind locked doors they plot how to ruin me for good. Desperate, I throw myself on you: you are my God! Hour by hour I place my days in your hand,