

# A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE

*For those who have suffered abuse:  
A Psalm of Deliverance*

*A compilation of verses from the Psalms  
with notes by Revd Dr Miryam Clough*

# FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED ABUSE: A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE

## *Mō te tāngata pāhua: He waiata o te whakaora*

### *Te whakapōuritanga o te tāngata pāhua*

*(me whakahua tauutuutu, ā, me whakatā i waenganui)*

*(Ngā Waiata 77: 1-9; 22: 1-2)*

1 Ki te Atua tōku reo, e karanga nei ahau, \*  
ki te Atua tōku reo, a tērā e tahuri mai tōna taringa ki ahau.

2 I rapu ahau ki te Ariki i te rā o tōku pōuri: \*  
mārō tonu tōku ringa i te pō, kīhai anō i pēpeke;  
kīhai tōku wairua i pai kia whakamārietia.

3 E mahara ana ahau ki te Atua, ā, e pōuri ana: \*  
kei te whakaaroaro, ā, ngaro iho tōku wairua.

4 E puritia ana e koe ōku kanohi kia mataara tonu; \*  
he pōuri ahau, tē āhei te kōrero.

### *The despair of the abused*

*(said antiphonally, pausing at the mid-point of each verse)*

*(Psalms 77: 1-9; 22: 1-2)*

1 I cry aloud to God: \*  
aloud to God, that God may hear me.

2 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord: \*  
in the night my hand is stretched out without ceasing,  
my soul refuses to be comforted.

3 I think of God, and I groan: \*  
I ponder, and my spirit faints.

4 You keep my eyelids from closing: \*  
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

**Korihī (me kōrero tukutahi)**

*E tōku Atua, e tōku Atua, he aha koe i whakarere ai i ahau? \**

*he aha koe i matara atu ai ki te whakaora i ahau, i ngā kupu hoki o tāku hāmama?*

*E tōku Atua, e karanga nei ahau i te awatea, heoi kāhore koe e rongō, \*  
i te pō anō kāhore ahau e wahangū.*

5 Ka hoki ōku whakaaro ki ngā rā i mua  
i tōku tūkinotanga, \*  
ki ngā tau o tua iho.

6 E whakamahara ana ahau ki tāku  
waiata i te pō, \*  
e kōrerorero ana ki tōku ngākau, e  
rapurapu ana tōku wairua.

7 Tērā rānei, e te Ariki, e panga tonu  
ake ake, \*  
ā, heoi anō rānei āu manakohanga mai?

8 Kua kāhore rānei tāu mahi tohu mō  
ake tonu atu? \*  
Kua whati rānei tāu kupu ā ake ake?

9 Kua wareware rānei koe, e te Atua, ki  
te atawhai? \*  
Kua riri rānei koe, ā, tūtakina atu ana e  
koe tōu aroha?

**Refrain (unison)**

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken  
me? \**

*Why are you so far from helping me,  
from the words of my groaning?*

*O my God, I cry by day, but you do not  
answer; \*  
and by night, but find no rest.*

5 I consider the days of my innocence: \*  
and remember the years before my  
troubles.

6 I commune with my heart in the night: \*  
I meditate and search my spirit.

7 'Will you O Lord spurn me for ever: \*  
and never again be favourable?

8 Has your steadfast love ceased for  
ever? \*  
Are your promises at an end for all time?

9 Have you O God forgotten to be  
gracious? \*  
Have you in anger shut up your  
compassion?'

**Korihi (me kōrero tukutahi)**

*E tōku Atua, e tōku Atua, he aha koe i whakarere ai i ahau? \**

*he aha koe i matara atu ai ki te whakaora i ahau, i ngā kupu hoki o tāku hāmama?*

*E tōku Atua, e karanga nei ahau i te awatea, heoi kāhore koe e rongō, \*  
i te pō anō kāhore ahau e wahangū.*

**Refrain (unison)**

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? \**

*Why are you so far from helping me,  
from the words of my groaning?*

*O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; \*  
and by night, but find no rest.*

## *Te karanga mō te manatika*

(Ngā Waiata 35: 4-8; 18: 4-6a; 83:13-18)

10 Kia whakamā, kia numinumi,  
te hunga e whai ana kia whakamatea  
ahau: \*

Kia whakahokia ki muri, kia  
whakapōauautia  
te hunga e whakatakoto ana i te kino  
mōku.

11 Kia rite rātou ki te pāpapa e pūhia  
ana e te hau; \*  
kia āia haeretia e te anahera a Ihowā.

12 Kia pōuri tō rātou ara, kia  
pahekeheke: \*  
kia whāia rātou e te anahera a Ihowā.

13 Kāhore hoki he rawa i hunā ai e rātou  
te poka o tā rātou kupenga mōku, \*  
he mea kerī takekore kia mate ai ahau.

14 Kia rokohanga pōauautia ia e te  
ngaromanga; \*  
kia mau anō ko ia i tāna kupenga i huna  
ai:  
kia taka ia ki taua tino ngaromanga.

## *The cry for justice*

(Psalms 35: 4-8; 83:13-18; 18: 4-6a)

10 Let them be put to shame and  
dishonour who seek after my life; \*  
Let them be turned back and confounded  
who devise evil against me.

11 Let them be like chaff before the wind \*  
with the angel of the Lord driving them  
on.

12 Let their way be dark and slippery, \*  
with the angel of the Lord pursuing them.

13 For without cause they hid their net for  
me; \*  
without cause they dug a pit for my life.

14 Let ruin come on them unawares. \*  
And let the net that they hid ensnare  
them;  
let them fall in it—to their ruin.

### *Korihī*

I karapotia ahau e ngā whakawiringa a  
te mate, \*

ā, whakawehia ana ahau e ngā  
waipuke o te kino.

I karapotia ahau e ngā whakawiringa a  
te rēinga, \*

i haukotia e ngā māhanga a te mate.

I karanga ahau ki a Ihowā i tōku  
pāweratanga, \*

i hāmama ki tōku Atua:

15 E tōku Atua, meinga rātou kia rite ki  
te āwhiowhio puehu, \*  
ki te pāpapa e pūhia ana e te hau;

16 Kia rite ki te ahi e kai ana i te  
ngahere, \*  
ki te mura hoki e toro ai ngā maunga,

17 Kia pērā te whai o tāu āwhā  
i a rātou, \*  
tāu whakaohorere hoki i a rātou ki tāu  
paroro.

18 Whakakīia ō rātou kanohi ki te  
whakamā: \*  
kia rapu ai rātou ki tōu ingoa, e Ihowā.

19 Kia whakamā, kia ohorere rātou ake  
ake; \*  
Āe, kia numinumi rātou, kia ngaro hoki.

20 Kia mātau ai rātou, ko koe anake,  
ko Ihowā nei tōu ingoa; \*  
te Runga Rawa i te whenua katoa.

### *Refrain*

*The cords of death encompassed me; \*  
the torrents of perdition assailed me;*

*the cords of Sheol entangled me; \**

*the snares of death confronted me.*

*In my distress I called upon the Lord; \**

*to my God I cried for help.*

15 O my God, make them like whirling  
dust, \*  
like chaff before the wind.

16 As fire consumes the forest, \*  
as the flame sets the mountains ablaze,

17 so pursue them with your tempest \*  
and terrify them with your hurricane.

18 Fill their faces with shame, \*  
so that they may seek your name, O  
Lord.

19 Let them be put to shame and  
dismayed forever; \*  
let them perish in disgrace.

20 Let them know that you, whose name  
is the Lord, \*  
are the Most High over all the earth.

### **Korihi**

*I karapotia ahau e ngā whakawiringa a  
te mate, ā, whakawehia ana ahau e ngā  
waipuke o te kino.*

*I karapotia ahau e ngā whakawiringa a  
te rēinga, i haukotia e ngā māhanga a  
te mate.*

*I karanga ahau ki a Ihowā i tōku  
pāweratanga, i hāmama ki tōku Atua:*

### **Refrain**

*The cords of death encompassed me; \*  
the torrents of perdition assailed me;  
the cords of Sheol entangled me; \*  
the snares of death confronted me.  
In my distress I called upon the Lord; \*  
to my God I cried for help.*

## *Te kōrero whakaoranga*

(Ngā Waiata 18: 6b-25, Psalm 35: 9-10)

21 I whakarongo a Papatūānuku ki tōku  
reo i roto i tōna temepara, \*  
i tae anō tāku hāmama ki tōna aroaro,  
ki ōna taringa.

22 Nā, ka ngāueue te whenua, ka rū, \*  
wiri ana ngā pūtake o ngā maunga,  
ngāueue ana i tōna riri.

23 I kake he paowa i ōna pongaonga,  
ā, kai ana te kāpura o tōna māngai, \*  
ngiha noa ngā waro.

24 I whakapīngoretia e Ranginui ngā  
rangi, ā, heke iho ana, \*  
ā, i raro te pōuri mātotoru i ōna waewae.

25 I eke ia ki runga i te kerupa, ā, rere  
ana: \*  
āe, i rere omaki ia i runga i ngā parirau  
o te hau.

26 I meinga e ia te pōuri hei wāhi ngaro  
mōna; \*  
hei tēneti i tētahi taha ōna, i tētahi taha,  
ko te pōuritanga o ngā wai, ko ngā  
kapua mātotoru o te rangi.

27 I rere atu ōna kapua mātotoru i te  
wherikotanga o tōna aroaro: \*  
te whatu, me ngā waro kāpura.

## *The story of deliverance*

(Psalm 18: 6b-25, Psalm 35: 9-10)

21 From your temple you heard my voice, \*  
and my cry to you reached your ears.

22 Then the earth reeled and rocked; \*  
the foundations of the mountains  
trembled  
and quaked, because you were angry.

23 Smoke went up from your nostrils,  
and devouring fire from your mouth; \*  
glowing coals flamed forth from your  
presence.

24 You parted the heavens, and came  
down; \*  
thick darkness was under your feet.

25 Mounted on the Cherubim you flew; \*  
you came swiftly upon the wings of the  
wind.

26 You made darkness your covering  
around you, \*  
your canopy thick clouds dark with water.

27 Out of the brightness of your presence,  
through the clouds \*  
burst hailstones and coals of fire.

28 I puaki te reo o Papatūānuku: \*  
ā, i papā anō te whatitiri a Ranginui i  
ngā rangi,  
he whatu, he waro kāpura.

29 I kōkiritia e ia āna pere, ā, marara  
ana rātou: \*  
āe, i kōperea hoki e ia te tini uira, ā,  
whati ana rātou.

30 Kātahi ka kitea ngā takere o ngā  
wai,  
ā, ka takoto kau ngā pūtaka o te ao i  
tāu whakatūpehupehutanga, \*  
e lhowā, i te whengunga o te manawa o  
ōu pongaponga.

31 I tonu karere mai koe i runga, ka mau  
ki ahau; \*  
tōia ake ahau e koe i roto i ngā wai  
maha.

32 Nāu ahau i ora ai i tōku hoariri  
kaha, \*  
i te hunga e kino ana ki ahau;  
he kaha rawa hoki rātou i ahau.

33 I huakina tatatia ahau e rātou i te rā  
o tōku matenga; \*  
ko lhowā koe tōku whakawhirinakitanga.

34 I whakaputaina ahau e koe ki te wahi  
nui, i whakaorangia ahau e koe; \*  
He āhuareka nōu ki ahau.

28 The Lord thundered in the heavens, \*  
and the Most High uttered her voice.

29 She sent out her arrows, and  
scattered them; \*  
she flashed forth lightnings, and put  
them to flight.

30 Then the channels of the sea were  
revealed,  
and the foundations of the world were  
laid bare \*  
at your rebuke, O God,  
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

31 You reached down from on high, and  
took me; \*  
you drew me out of mighty waters.

32 You delivered me from my strong  
enemy, \*  
and from those who hated me;  
for they were too mighty for me.

33 They confronted me in the day of my  
calamity; \*  
but you, Lord were my support.

34 You brought me out into a broad  
place; \*  
you delivered me, because you delighted  
in me.

### **Korihī**

Ā, ka koa tōku wairua ki a Ihowā, \*  
ka hari ki tāu whakaoranga.  
Ka kī katoa ōku wheua, e Ihowā, ko wai  
te rite mōu, \*  
Mō te kaiwhakaora o te iti i te tangata  
e kaha ake ana i a koe,  
āe, o te iti, o te rawakore i tōu  
kaipāhua?

35 Rite tonu ki tāku mahi tika tā Ihowā  
utu ki ahau: \*  
rite tonu ki te mā o ōku ringa tāu i  
whakahoki ai ki ahau.

36 Mōku i pupuri i ngā ara o Ihowā, \*  
ā, kīhai i hē, i whakarere i tōku Atua.

37 Kei mua tonu hoki i ahau āu  
whakaritenga katoa, \*  
kīhai anō i whakamātaratia atu i ahau  
āu tikanga.

38 Tapatahi tonu hoki tōku whakaaro ki  
tōu aroaro, \*  
ā, i tiaki ahau i ahau kei kino.

39 Nā, ka hōmai e Ihowā he utu ki ahau,  
rite tonu ki tōku tika, \*  
ki te mā o ōku ringa i tōu aroaro.

### **Refrain**

Then my soul shall rejoice in the Lord, \*  
exulting in God's deliverance.

All my bones shall say, 'O Lord, who is  
like you?' \*

You deliver the poor from those too  
strong for them, the vulnerable from  
those who despoil them'.

35 You, my God, rewarded me according  
to my righteousness; \*  
according to the cleanness of my hands  
you recompensed me.

36 For I have kept your ways O Lord, \*  
and have not wickedly departed from my  
God.

37 For all your ordinances were before  
me, \*  
and your statutes I did not put away  
from me.

38 I am blameless before you, \*  
and I will keep myself from guilt.

39 Therefore you, O God, have  
recompensed me according to my  
righteousness, \*  
according to the cleanness of my hands  
in your sight.

### **Korihī**

Ā, ka koa tōku wairua ki a Ihowā, \*  
ka hari ki tāu whakaoranga.

Ka kī katoa ōku wheua, e Ihowā, ko wai  
te rite mōu, \*

Mō te kaiwhakaora o te iti i te  
tangata e kaha ake ana i a koe, āe, o te  
iti, o te rawakore i tōu kaipāhua?

**Korōria ki te Atua,**

**Te Kaihanga Kaha Rawa, te**

**Kaiwhakaora Tika, te Wairua Pono o te**  
**Atawhainga me te Aroha noa: \***

**Ko te ritenga ia i te tīmatanga, ā, tēnei**  
**anō ināianei, ā, ka mau tonu iho, ā, ake**  
**ake ake,**

**Āmine.**

### **Refrain**

Then my soul shall rejoice in the Lord, \*  
exulting in God's deliverance.

All my bones shall say, 'O Lord, who is  
like you?' \*

You deliver the poor from those  
too strong for them,

the vulnerable from those who  
despoil them'.

**Glory to God,**

**Mighty Creator, Just Redeemer, Faithful**  
**Spirit of Mercy and Grace: \***

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and**  
**shall be forever,**

**Amen.**

## NOTES

The Ministry of Justice New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) 2018-2019 revealed that almost 30% of New Zealand adults have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence at some point in their lives, with the prevalence of violence being three times as high for women than men, and disproportionately affecting Māori women. 94% of sexual assaults were not reported to the police. These figures are likely to be reflected in church congregations, and some abuse will have occurred in church-based settings. Family violence and sexual violence were rare in Māori society before colonisation (Pihama et al. 2016, 7).

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care has highlighted the church's historical attempts to conceal abuse perpetrated by clergy and church leaders, or by others in its care facilities and schools. The shame and stigma attached to abuse means that victims rarely speak out, and therefore may not access practical or pastoral support. The ongoing silence in the church surrounding sexual and other forms of abuse does nothing more than to allow it to continue. The church's reluctance to engage in meaningful, honest, and unbiased conversations about sexuality and power facilitate both abuse and the marginalisation of those who have experienced it.

The Psalms articulate human responses to a range of experiences and reflect the breadth and depth of human emotion. They express praise and wonder for God and creation, joy and elation in times of wellness or success, and grief and anger in times of suffering and tribulation. This makes them an ideal pastoral and prayer resource for those who have experienced abuse.

The psalmists were not afraid to shout out their praise and gratitude, to give utterance to their profound despair, to forcefully vent their anger. They did not mince their words. Sadly, the church has favoured the suppression of painful truths and difficult emotions, instead advocating forgiveness and reconciliation in ways that are not always healthy and which often benefit abusers and harm victims.

A New Zealand Prayer Book / He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa (2020, 195) has omitted some of the more direct and challenging verses of the Psalms as unsuitable for use in corporate worship, further constraining the expression of anger and rage so powerfully expressed in imagery and metaphor by the psalmists. When emotions are suppressed, they can only fester and become more harmful. If we are permitted and enabled to express them in safe ways, they can be transformed and healing can take place.

This *Psalm of Deliverance* is a compilation of verses from several psalms, including some of those verses omitted from Aotearoa New Zealand's prayer book. I have chosen verses that express the desolation and isolation of an individual who has been abused, and who may feel they have been utterly forsaken by God and all that is good. Verses that describe, metaphorically, the wrong that has been done. Verses that reflect the legitimate anger of the abused that fuels the desire for justice and calls for shame to be rightly located with abusers. Verses that demonstrate that God listens and acts powerfully. Verses that empower victims in their struggle, that release them from their shame, that help them to move from abandonment and isolation to redemption and love: God's love for them and their own self-love.

If used congregationally, the psalm may be recited antiphonally (alternating verses) with each 'side' of the congregation pausing momentarily at the mid-point of each verse as indicated by \*. The refrains and the doxology (the 'Gloria') are to be said by the congregation in unison, also observing a pause or breath at the mid-point. Alternatively, the psalm could take the form of a dramatic reading, with a different reader taking each section and the congregation joining in the refrain.

The reo Māori translation is from *Te Paipera Tapu (Ngā Ringa Hāpai i te Paipera Tapu ki Aotearoa, 2012)*. The reo Pākehā translation used is primarily that of the NRSV, with some changes made in accordance with either ANZPB / HKMoA or The Daily Office SSF. In a few cases I have made my own amendments in line with the intention of this resource, e.g. substituting 'days of my innocence' for 'days of old' in v. 5 - 'ki ngā rā i mua i tōku tūkinotanga' ('the days before I was violated') in reo Māori, and 'vulnerable' for 'weak' in the final refrain in the reo Pākehā version.

I have retained the Hebrew 'Sheol', understood in the Hebrew Bible as the place of darkness to which the dead go, in the second refrain due to its resonance with Te Rēinga, the place of ngā wairua mate (the departed spirits) in te ao Māori.

I have aimed to ensure that most of the language is gender-neutral, with the exception of verses 28 and 29 in the reo Pākehā version, where I have used feminine pronouns for God to highlight, in the context of the overwhelming masculine bias in the church's language for the divine, that God may equally be experienced and named as female. I retain 'Lord' in its gender-neutral sense of one who has power and authority over others, although I particularly like the symmetry in verse 28 where 'the Lord' and 'the Most High' could be understood as masculine and feminine principles of equal power and agency, in line with the Hebrew concept of the divine Shekinah - the feminine principle in the deity and consort of Yahweh. To this end, and to give the psalm more resonance with te ao Māori, I have included Papatūānuku and Ranginui in verses 21, 24, and 28 in the reo Māori text, aligning them with their respective spheres of action and influence. I have used 3rd person pronouns in verses 21-29 to reflect this. In incorporating Atua Māori/the primordial parents, I am drawing on the precedent set in He Waiata Whakamoemiti in the 476 Hakari Tapu (HKMoA 2020, 477).

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## REFERENCES

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