A picture containing text, grass, outdoor

Description automatically generated**Grain**

“The utterance of the conjunction (but) is a recognition that I am penultimate, that I am not the goal and mission of existence, that my life is situated in a mystery and a gift and a summons that is beyond me and my dismay that I am not left to my own resources.”

­–Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann

**Field**

1In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.

2Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

3You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name’s sake lead me and guide me,

4take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge. 5Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God...**9**Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. **10**For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2031&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-14342b)and my bones waste away. **11**I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2031&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-14343c)] to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. **12**I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. **13**For I hear the whispering of many—terror all around!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. **14**But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” **15**My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. 16Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. Psalm 31:1-16

**Thoughts**

About two year ago, a chief Ukrainian Rabbi invited Christians to join Jews in praying Psalm 31 as war broke out around them. How could people have hope in the face of a powerful military nation launching a war against them? Walter Brueggemann might say that they understood the “but” that followed the Psalmist’s cries. “13 For I hear the whispering of many—terror all around!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. 14 But I trust in you, O LORD.” The conjunction, “but” makes the difference.

The displaced Psalmist was speaking to others who were disempowered. Dr. Joel LeMon says that Psalm 31 was written by refugees to refugees. “The Psalm gives voice to those who yearn for a place of safety and protection.”

Psalm 31 is for contemporary refugees and those at risk of becoming refugees. It is a psalm for people whose bodies fail and whose mental health is challenged. It is a psalm for advocates who are frustrated by movements backwards; it is for all of us.

As faith-based advocates we do not deny our complaints, nor do we perpetually end with them. Especially during this Easter season, let us continue to celebrate the concrete hope that allows us to end our cries with “but...” Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy