

Psalm 25

*Prayer for Protection, Guidance and Pardon.
A Psalm of David.*

- ¹ To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
² O my God, in You I trust,
Do not let me be ashamed;
Do not let my enemies exult over me.
- ³ Indeed, none of those who wait for You will be ashamed;
Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed.
- ⁴ Make me know Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.
- ⁵ Lead me in Your truth
And teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
For You I wait all the day.
- ⁶ Remember, O LORD, Your compassion and Your lovingkindnesses,
For they have been from of old.
- ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
According to Your lovingkindness remember me,
For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.
- ⁸ Good and upright is the LORD;
Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.
- ⁹ He leads the humble in justice,
And He teaches the humble His way.
- ¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth
To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.
- ¹¹ For Your name's sake, O LORD,
Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.
- ¹² Who is the man who fears the LORD?
He will instruct him in the way he should choose.
- ¹³ His soul will abide in prosperity,
And his descendants will inherit the land.
- ¹⁴ The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him,
And He will make them know His covenant.
- ¹⁵ My eyes are continually toward the LORD,
For He will pluck my feet out of the net.
- ¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me,
For I am lonely and afflicted.
- ¹⁷ The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
Bring me out of my distresses.
- ¹⁸ Look upon my affliction and my trouble,
And forgive all my sins.
- ¹⁹ Look upon my enemies, for they are many,
And they hate me with violent hatred.
- ²⁰ Guard my soul and deliver me;
Do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You.
- ²¹ Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,
For I wait for You.
- ²² Redeem Israel, O God,
Out of all his troubles.

David the Psalmist: This Psalm is ascribed to David, the poet, singer, and king.

v.2: *David's Enemies, Pre-Enthronement:* Saul and his supporters hunted David, to kill him. They chased David into the wilderness, where David slowly gathered those who supported him and trusted God and believed that he would one day ascend the throne.

v.5c, 20b: "For You I wait." The Hebrew word for "wait" (*qavah*) means to tie together by twisting, or entwine, or wrap tightly. Waiting upon God is not something passive, but involves entwining our hearts with God, His story, and His special covenant relationship with His people.

v.6: compassion and lovingkindness are qualities God says He is (Ex.34:6 – 7), in a statement which became a creed for Israel.

Historical and Cultural Background

- *Hebrew Biblical Poetry*: These poets rhyme *concepts* more than *sounds*, where the rhyming goes from a general thought to a more specific one. That makes it nice for those of us who have to work from the English translation. Here's an example of a rhymed concept in v.2. Consider what the poet is saying by pairing these two lines:

Do not let me be ashamed;
Do not let my enemies exult over me.

- *An Acrostic Poem*: Each verse of this Psalm begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This Psalm is meant to be memorized.
- *David's Trust in God's Promise*: David knew that God defended the human leaders He appointed, and also was faithful to fulfill promises He made.
 - *God Defended Human Leaders He Appointed*: In Numbers 12, Aaron and Miriam criticized Moses unjustly, and God defended Moses. In Numbers 16, Korah led a faction in wholesale rebellion, and God used the earth to swallow them up.
 - *God Fulfilled His Promises*: In Genesis 1, God said, "Let there be light," and then, there was light. Then in Genesis 12, God made promises to His people, and called them to trust Him. For example, God promised Abraham and Sarah He would give them a son despite them being dead in a reproductive sense. In 1 Samuel 16, God through the prophet Samuel anointed David to be king. That was God's promise; David is trusting God to fulfill His word.

Discussion Questions

1. What's the structure of the Psalm?
 - a. David starts and ends with his own requests.
 - i. The first section (v.1 – 7) is David's cry for help
 - ii. The second section (v.8 – 11) is about God's character and love
 - iii. The third section (v.12 – 14) is about the godly person who fears the Lord, in the third person
 - iv. The fourth section (v.15 – 22) is a personal plea
2. Refresh on context: What seems to be David's situation?
 - a. People are taking out their anger with God onto David, because God has anointed David to be king. People either wanted Saul to be king because he was their guy. Or, people wanted to be their own king, like in the Book of Judges, 'Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.'
 - b. Ultimately, Jesus also went through a pre-enthronement period where he was anointed to be king (Mt.3:13 – 17) but was hunted by the people in power.
 - c. And ultimately, this might be our situation, too, at times. Who are your "enemies" in a broad sense?
 - i. People who don't want Jesus to have followers, whether it's your family members or colleagues, etc. When we say, "Jesus is Lord," sometimes people don't like it.
 - ii. It might be that other people are jealous or malicious. Sometimes, we are just mistreated for reasons other than faith in Jesus.
 - iii. It might be that other people don't know how anxious or hurt we are because of something else, or something they don't intend. So when we feel treated insensitively, we might feel like we have accidental enemies.
 - iv. The internal voices or the demonic might be enemies. You might be struggling with a harsh critic, critical of yourself or others. Or a voice of despair. It could be psychological or spiritual.
3. In earlier Psalms, David looked at his enemies and cried out, "God deliver me!" In this Psalm, David cries out, "God teach me!" Why is that?
 - a. First of all, where does David ask God to teach him? In v.3 – 5 and v.8 – 10 and v.12.
 - b. David recognizes that he has sinned against God, too (v.7, 11, 18b). What are the "sins of my youth"? What are "my transgressions"? We don't know at this early stage in his life. But David is aware of things that make him question himself, and how he is coming before God.
 - c. David also wants "integrity and uprightness" to characterize him, because of his relationship with God (v.21).
 - d. What happens when you ask God for help, maybe even special help, but you also realize that you are a sinner like everyone else? (pause, gather thoughts) A few possibilities for how you might pray and think that one through. But ultimately, one of the most important prayers would have to be, "God, teach me Your ways!" Because it's not that you become any more deserving of making a claim on God, or demanding a reward. It's that you participate in the covenant relationship that God establishes for people. God always relates to us through a covenant. Today, God's covenant is focused on and around Jesus. And you come to desire God and what God wants for you, and what God wants of you.
4. David also believes that God expresses His lovingkindness and forgiveness not by "letting him be" or even by "venting His anger somewhere else," but *by instructing, leading, and teaching him*. This is so important to understanding who God is, in v.8 – 11.
 - a. Look at v.8 – 9, and consider the poetic parallel from one line to the next.

⁸ Good and upright is the LORD; therefore

He instructs sinners in the way.

⁹ He leads the humble in justice,

And He teaches the humble His way.

- i. Why isn't this saying, "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He punishes sinners, now and in eternity"?
- ii. The assumption in the Psalm is that "sinners" are "the humble." It might be a different story if the sinners being spoken about were arrogant, too.

- iii. Jesus is the truest version of the human as God intended, because Jesus removed the corruption of sin out from his human nature, which means he was able to go back to tree of life. And he can share himself with us by his Spirit.
6. So David makes some personal commitments in v.15 – 22.
- a. David sees that he has to grow. He is not static. He is still in progress with God. So is everyone else.
 - b. David expects to have “integrity and uprightness” in himself (v.21). At least with regards to being persecuted by King Saul and others. But eventually extending to all things.
 - c. How is learning related to “waiting”?
 - i. Waiting is not automatically learning. But true learning is true waiting. Building “integrity and uprightness” in ourselves in response to God’s character – which is, in reality, taking in more of God’s own character – is true waiting.
 - ii. Note the note above, that the Hebrew word for “wait” (*qavah*) means to tie together by twisting, or entwine, or wrap tightly. Waiting upon God is not something passive, but involves entwining our hearts with God, His story, and His special covenant relationship with His people.
 - iii. God has said that He will restore a true humanity to the true garden in Revelation 21 – 22, because Jesus bears the mantle of the fiery sword that once guarded the way back to the garden, in Genesis 3:24. Jesus is the fiery one with the sword of his teaching (Rev.1:12 – 18). So we who learn from Jesus will not be ashamed.