

The Uplifted Soul

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It was well over 20 years ago when I had a personally memorable time with a pastor in his study when I was going through some very difficult trials that I did not know how to make heads or tails out of. I was quite discouraged and heavy-hearted and I was looking to this well known pastor, not anyone that you would know or his name you would know, for some encouragement and for some help and expecting him to be able to give me some guidance. After we talked and I had unburdened my heart for a while he said, "Well, here's your problem, you need to trust God. That's your problem, isn't it?" And I just looked at him. I didn't think that was a very helpful comment and so he sharpened his voice and he raised his voice and he said, "Isn't it? You need to trust God." Well, that conversation didn't go much further and it really didn't result in anything other than something that I refer to from time to time from the pulpit to say this is not how we deal with people and this is not how we help people. I don't think it's very helpful to simply tell people that you need to trust God if you stop there and leave it at that because that gives us no idea of exactly what that means. It doesn't define the terms. It doesn't help us understand what it means. Everybody knows, you all know as Christians that you're supposed to trust God. That's not news. That's not new information and to communicate that to somebody that's in the midst of sorrow doesn't really do too much to help them. You see, it's one thing to know that we are supposed to trust God, it's another thing entirely to have an idea of what that means. "How do I trust God?" It's one thing to know that we are supposed to trust God, it's another thing to show maturity when we are afflicted with troubles; when we have enemies that do us wrong; or when we stumble into sin and disobedience. What does it mean to trust God at times like that and how do we manifest that and what can we get our hands around, what can we get our minds around in something that actually helps us become better Christians and to actually trust God as opposed to simply giving someone a bare command without giving them the means to fulfill that command.

Well, what we're going to find tonight is that in Psalm 25, we get a mature way forward in dealing with that question and getting an idea of what it means to trust God and I'm delighted that you're here tonight because I'm very confident that the breadth of this Psalm is going to be a help and an encouragement to you. I am absolutely confident that God's word is going to minister to you in specific ways tonight because what we have in Psalm 25 is a very broad, it's a multifaceted song of David showing a real trust in God and it's multifaceted like a rainbow is multifaceted. There is one rainbow but there are

multiple colors in the rainbow that give it the luster and the beauty that it has. So when you think of a rainbow, you think of one rainbow but if you think about it again you say, "Well, there are what 7 colors in a rainbow," and each color contributes to the overall picture of what it is. Psalm 25 is like that. Psalm 25 displays 7 ways to trust God and we're going to walk through them one by one and I know that you're going to find something in this that speaks deeply to your heart here this evening and so I'm glad that you're here.

One of the first things that stands out to you as you take any closer look at Psalm 25 is how deeply personal it is. Unlike some of the Psalms that we have looked at recently, this is a personal Psalm. David uses the first-person singular pronoun 36 times in these 22 verses and he is baring his heart and he's calling his own heart to faith and he is expressing a personal communication with God in what he says here and he calls on the name of Yahweh 10 times by my count. That is the most holy name of God; it's the name that indicates that he is the covenant keeping God. Stated differently, he's the God who keeps his promises to his people. So in the depth of this personal expression of trial and trust, David is calling upon the name which most speaks to the faithfulness of God. It's like he has entered into a private room with God, entered into his private prayer closet and you find in this Psalm the words of a man who knows God deeply. You find the words of a man who knows how to lay hold of the character of God in the midst of his trials and have that shape his response to encourage him, to strengthen him, to give him the boldness to go forward despite the many difficulties and afflictions that he's going through.

I'm wondering if any one of you can relate to that, multiplied afflictions, as you sit here tonight and the discouragements that come with that? Well, Psalm 25 is like going to a drinking fountain when you're very thirsty. This is a wonderful, wonderful Psalm and I've said it repeatedly, there is very little that I've ever done in a pulpit that has so blessed my heart and has so impressed the glory of God upon my soul as going sequentially through the Psalms like we're doing here week by week on Tuesday so I'm just, again, delighted that you share in that with the rest of us.

Psalm 25 is a beautifully written Psalm. It follows an acrostic pattern in the Hebrew. It's generally speaking without going into the minor exceptions, the 22 verses of this Psalm start with each successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet and so David is not only expressing trust, he's expressing trust in a skillful poetic way, maybe in a way that was designed to help the memory. Maybe in a way that is saying, "Here is trust from A-Z," in a comprehensive fashion. Something like that but it's a Psalm written not only with spiritual skill but with poetic skill as well.

What he's doing here is he's laying hold of God's character in the grind of life. In Psalm 1, we saw a Psalm that spoke about the right path, the path that the righteous man takes and the path that a wicked man takes and it states it very briefly and in a summary fashion there in Psalm 1. It doesn't go into a lot of detail. Well, what you see and one of the things that this is a long step into spiritual maturity when you understand this and embrace it: the right path of walking with God is sometimes difficult. It's often difficult.

It's a path that is marked with some failure. It's a path that is marked with difficulty and heartache and sometimes with very profound grief. It's a path that is lined with confession of sin and all of that simply to say that the right path is sometimes a hard path to walk and if you find yourself tonight walking a hard path and you're saying, "This spiritual life is more difficult than I ever imagined," well, Psalm 25 is for you.

David was walking a difficult path as he penned Psalm 25 and we find in the Psalms the antidote, a fresh drink of water, that cures us and cleanses us, as it were, from a false view of spiritual life that suggests that Christians should always be on a spiritual high and if you're not spiritually exhilarated 24/7, there is something wrong with you. That's not a true reflection of spiritual life at all. It's contrary to Scripture and it's contrary to experience and those of you that have walked with Christ for any length of time know that to be true but the problem is that when somebody has that ingrained in their mind, they are unteachable, they are arrogant and all they do is speak down to you and it's not possible to appeal and to have them consider it from a different point of view and it can be very discouraging if you're dealing with people like that when you yourself are heavy hearted. Well, praise God that we find in Psalm 25 that which gives voice to the difficulties of life.

I'm going to phrase these points, these 7 points as prayers of one thing or another simply to have a systematic device to help us see the different aspects of it. So that's what we're going to do here this evening and beloved, you're going to feel like you have looked in a mirror tonight. You're going to feel like you've looked in something that is reflecting your own soul back to you as we go through Psalm 25 tonight and it encourages us to realize that the right path is not always easy and if your life has been difficult in recent days, it's going to encourage you to find that you're walking in the footsteps of David who prefigured the footsteps of Christ himself when he was here on earth. So let's take a quick look at these Psalms, to this Psalm. I said Psalms because I'm committed to trying to handle each Psalm in a single message and that creates a little bit of tension because I want to stop and dig into everything but I think it's important and I think there's value in seeing the overall message of each Psalm in a single message rather than dragging it out over many weeks which would be easy to do.

First of all, what are we going to see here this evening? First of all, you're going to see that trusting God involves a prayer of protection or a prayer for protection. When you are trusting God, you are counting on him to shield you and guide you and guard you and protect you as you go through life. There is a conscious dependence upon him that the things that affect you and the things that matter to your heart are things that God is going to care for over time. That is one aspect of trusting him. And the first verse of Psalm 25 is like a summary theme for the rest of the Psalm. Look at verse 1 with me here. David says,

1 To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

Stated simply: David here is giving us a view, giving us an overview, and then he works it out in details. He says, "Lord, I lift up my soul to you. My soul with everything, all of

my desires, all of my affections, all of my priorities. God, I hand it over to you for safekeeping. I give it to you to care for and to watch over."

Now, what exactly does it mean to lift up his soul to the Lord? You know, if you've heard the chorus that's based on these verses, "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." I know that you're already giving thanks that I'm not actually going to sing it without some kind of accompaniment. That wouldn't be good. But you're familiar with that chorus, "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee." Well, that's a nice chorus but, again, you sing these Old Testament scriptural choruses and they are wonderful as far as they go but they don't interpret the meaning of the Scriptures for you. What we want to do is say, "Well, what did David mean when he said, 'I lift up my soul to the Lord?'" Well, it has the idea, this phrase has the sense of, "I flee for protection to Yahweh." Or, "I seek refuge in the Lord." There is this idea of coming underneath his care, underneath his protection in the sense that I lift up my soul to the Lord, yet he is expressing an earnest trust; a confident appeal that says, "I am going to put my trust in the Lord."

David is saying, "I lift up my soul. I flee for protection." He's consciously placing himself under the care of Yahweh, consciously placing himself under the care of Yahweh in the totality of life. And what he's doing as he goes on in verses 2 and 3 is saying that he wants God to prove that his trust in Yahweh is not in vain. Look at verses 2 and 3 here where he says,

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.

Somehow, we don't know really the exact setting of this Psalm, but somehow David was under the oppression of human opponents who had strength and power and were threatening his well-being and rather than collapsing in fear in human opposition, he takes the posture of one who is going to put his confidence in Yahweh. He takes the trouble to express his trust in the Lord. He says there in verse 3, look at it again with me, he says, "none of those who wait for You will be ashamed." This idea of waiting has the sense that, "I am expectantly looking to you to take care of me." He says, "I will wait on you." In other words, "I will accept and trust your timing and wisdom in this period of my life."

What does it mean to trust God? It means that you are conscious of placing yourself under his protection. You are conscious of accepting the outworking of his providence and his timing even if for a time it seems difficult and you do it with a sense that, "I am not squandering my spiritual opportunity here as I do this. God will show in time that my trust and confidence in him was well-placed." That's an idea of what it means to trust in God. There is this sense of seeking him for his protection.

Are you facing human opposition? Are there people who are threatening your well-being? Are there those who have perhaps power and authority over you who are prepared

to use it to hurt you? Here is your Psalm. Here is the call. Here is the example by which you go and say, "Lord, in the midst of this oppression, I come to you and I lift my soul up to you, by which I mean I am taking refuge in you. I will find the contentment of my heart as I remember your faithfulness and as I trust in it and as I wait on you to display it to me." There may be times, speaking from scriptural testimony and speaking from personal experience, there may be times where you are waiting for years for the Lord to display the fact that he will vindicate his faithfulness and that your trust in him will not be in vain and you wonder from month to month and from year to year, "Where is my deliverance in this?" Well, beloved, come back to this. Come back to verse 3 here and remind yourself again and again, "No, those who wait on him will never be ashamed." They will not be disappointed. The one who believes in him will not be ashamed; will not be found to have squandered the affections and the priorities and the resting of his heart.

Are you waiting on the Lord? Are you trusting in him like that to protect you in the midst of what you're facing? David has given you a great pattern in this prayer for protection in the first 3 verses and yet he goes further and this is just so multifaceted in what it means to trust. You'll find, secondly, in this Psalm that he also offers a prayer for guidance. A prayer for guidance. He displays his trust in God by asking God to direct him as he moves forward in life. Look at verses 4 and 5 here. He says,

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.

The ways and paths that he describes here, these are metaphors for simply the direction and the unfolding of God's will for his life. He's saying, "God, I am looking to you and I ask you to direct me and to order my steps so that I am walking in your ways, my life is following the path that you have laid out for me." And he says in essence, he says, "God, as I look to an uncertain future and as I consider the decisions that I have to make that are of consequence for the rest of my life, I am asking you to lead me." He is trusting God for God's sovereign power to order his circumstances, first of all. He is trusting God's care for him to be actively involved, to be as the theologians say, to manifest his eminence in his situation, his presence to be with him, and God's ability to order things so that David walks in the steps that God would have him to go. This is part of trusting God. He says, "You are the God of my salvation," and watch this, as he's looking to the future contemplating the steps that he's going to take, the spirit of what he is saying here is, "God, I am dependent upon you. I am trusting you. I need you to help me. God, it's my desire to walk in the steps that you would have me to go but I lack the wisdom to know what that looks like. I lack the ability to make that happen. I am weak. I am ignorant and I humble myself before you and I ask you to powerfully do that which I cannot achieve on my own."

One of the things that I find again and again as we're going through these Psalms is that the Psalms portray a godly man and a spirit that is so contrary to what is often portrayed even in the so-called evangelical church. Pastors who are very self-assured and very slick and very cool like they are the ones that are in control and they know where they're going

and do it this way and everything is packaged, that's so contrary to what you see being laid out for us in the humble prayers of a king. The humble prayers of a man of God. David is asking to know the ways of God because he is expressing the fact, it presupposes that he's not sure. That he's not self-confident in this and that he values the opportunity. He values the importance of walking in the steps that God would have him to go in and he's enough of a man to say, "Lord, I'm not sure. I need your help. Lead me in what lies ahead." He is asking God for guidance.

Well, that's enough there to pull us up short, isn't it? To make us stop and ask ourselves some questions. Do we know something, do you know something about that kind of humble spirit that says, "Lord, I'm not really sure"? And to care enough to ask and to humble yourself and to take the time, "God, show me, lead me, direct my steps so that I would walk in the way that you would have me to go." You see, this is a manifestation of trust, of laying life out, the life ahead before God and saying, "Lord, lead me. Help me. Show me." And as you think about it, just the fact that David takes the time to articulate it like this. You know, as you read Psalm 25, you're not reading the words of a man who is in a hurry on his knees. He is walking through this. He is talking through it. He is committing his way to the Lord in a conscious, deliberate way that shows the fact that this matters to his heart and is an expression of the trust that he wants to walk in. He prays for guidance as well as for protection. You see the different hues, the different colors, the different texture to trust in what he is expressing here. I love this Psalm.

Well, there's of third way that he manifests his trust as he walks through this Psalm. He offers a prayer for pardon. He asks God to forgive him of his sin and he is expressing still further dependence as he walks through these next couple of verses. The dependence of this Psalm, the trust, the humility, the laying out of his heart and not presuming on God or arrogantly simply demanding what he wants but coming with a sense of self examination. Again, the humility of this is rich.

He says in verses 6 and 7. He says,

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.

One of the aspects of David's trust in God, of his humility, of his transparency before the Lord is that he does not whitewash his sin. He is transparent before the Lord in the fact that he has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And notice this, beloved, here's where you see the dynamic of trust being expressed in these words of confession. David here is confessing his sin and asking for mercy – watch this – in the context of depending upon the revealed character of God. He does not confess his sin as one who is simply entitled to it by his very existence as if God owed him forgiveness. He's expressing something much different. He appeals to God to remember to act on, to be motivated by his own character.

Look at it there in verse 6 with me again. "Remember, O LORD," what? "Your compassion and Your lovingkindnesses." The plural speaking to an abundance of what God has in his soul, in his attributes of mercy and grace. He's saying, "God, remember what you're like as I appeal to you in the confession of my sin. I appeal to you. I ask you to remember the broad breadth of your grace. The deep mercies that abide in your eternal character. And God, on that basis I ask you to show kindness to me. They have been from of old. Lord, you have always been like this. You have always been a gracious and merciful God and so I appeal to who you are with what I am about to say." God had promised to keep his people as his own not because they were deserving and God keeps you, not because you deserve it, God keeps you and enables you to persevere in the faith because this is his character. He is full of loyal love and compassion and mercy on his wandering children like you and me. So it's from his own love and character that he forgives us and that's what we appeal to. That's what we ask him to remember as we appeal and ask for forgiveness.

Look at what he says in verse 7. This is very, very rich. He says, "Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions." There seems to be a bit of a past and a present aspect to his confession there, the sins of my youth or my current transgressions. "Don't remember them, Lord." In other words, "Lord, don't deal with me, don't treat me according to what my sins deserve. Act in relationship to me separate from my sin." He says and notice how he separates his sins from himself, as it were. He says, "Don't remember my sins but remember me. Remember my broken soul before you. Remember me, the one that you set your love upon and look upon me and deal with me separately and apart from the sins that I have committed." He separates himself. He disowns that sin and we keep coming back to that again and again, don't we, in our teaching as we go through these things month after month, week after week? There is this rejection of self. "God, this is who I was and I reject that. I separate myself from that. I stand apart from it and I ask you in mercy to deal with me as I stand here alone before you, not according to what my sins deserve."

For you and me on this side 3,000 years after David wrote this, 2,000 years after the cross, when you were confessing sin and you should be confessing sin on a regular basis. Charles Spurgeon said, "I don't believe that a Christian ever stops repenting for I fear that he never stops sinning." So there is this ongoing dimension to our sins. When you confess your sins, you should ever tie your confession to a conscious remembrance of the cross of Christ and remember that the basis upon which you can appeal to God and ask him to forgive you now here in 2015 is the fact that 2,000 years ago a Savior interceded for you and shed his blood on the cross in order to continually wash you from your sins. So it's not simply a matter of saying, "O God, forgive me for this or that." It's, "God, I ask you to cleanse me once more because I am appealing to the ever availing power of the blood of Christ to cleanse me from sin." 1 John 1:7 says, "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Well, for those of you that have particularly tender consciences and God bless you for being like that, that's a gift from God to have a tender conscience and it seems like you

are repeatedly confessing sin, well, let that just draw you a little bit closer each time to the cross and to develop an ever deepening gratitude for the fact that God on his initiative has taken what was necessary to cleanse you from that sin out of his mercy, out of his goodness, at the price of the precious life and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's on that basis that you can come to him again and say, "Lord, cleanse me once more." And beloved, you never outgrow your need for the cross. You have never outgrown, we will never outgrow our gratitude for the cross, our need for the cross, our dependence and our trust in the saving mercy that Christ manifested there. You don't come to the cross and then move on to better things. You are centered on that as you are confessing your sins because it is that basis upon which your forgiveness is secured.

We depend upon the cross to be the satisfaction for our sins and, beloved, it is always right and appropriate and fitting for you to call the cross to mind as you're confessing your sin to the Lord. David had not seen the cross when this was written so he's appealing to the character of God, his compassion and his mercies, according to his loyal love, for your goodness sake, O Lord, he appeals to all of that. Well, we have all of that as a basis upon which we appeal to God and then we have what all of that character led to in its climax at Calvary. So you see, what this does for you, beloved, as you're confessing your sin, as you're remembering the cross like that, is that it is ever bringing you closer. "Bring me back to the cross, back to Calvary. Lead me to Calvary," as we sometimes sing at our communion services. It comes back there and you are humbled and dependent upon it all over again and when that is repeatedly rehearsed in your mind in humble dependent prayer before the Lord, it deepens your trust because you find in the cross an ever flowing fountain, an ever sufficient would be a better way, an ever sufficient source of cleansing and a forgiveness of that sin that you have committed. When you stand up after confessing sin like that, when you stand up and walk away, you can leave it there. You don't have to carry the guilt and the burden of that with you as you move on because it has been settled there and here's the thing, beloved: it's that you leave it there because you are trusting. You are depending. You are confident in the fact that Calvary really was sufficient to wash away even your most recent sin and you move forward without having to carry the burden of the guilt and shame of that as you move on. Why? Because God has taken care of it. He has dealt with it and now he is not going to deal with you according to your sin but according to his goodness and mercy. Blessed be his name.

So one of the ways that we trust God is by our prayers for pardon, our prayers for confession, protection, guidance, pardon. Do you see how deeply David is trusting? How rich and varied is his confidence in the Lord as he prays? "God, protect me. God, guide me. God, forgive me." We're not even halfway through the Psalm yet.

Well, as you go into verse 8, you enter into a change of mood in the Psalm and you see another kind of, we might say, a positive aspect of his trust. You see fourthly here, you see a prayer of praise. A prayer of praise. The mood changes for the next 7 verses. David here beginning in verse 8 for a time is going to turn his attention away from himself and simply extol and magnify the character of God and this is a statement of trust. This is a statement of believing God to be who he has said that he is and honoring him accordingly

and there is an element of trust in that what God has said about himself is true and you pray and you acknowledge that and you pray accordingly.

Look at verses 8 and 9 with me.

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.

There in verses 8 and 9, he's saying that God's character is just. It is righteous. It is morally pure. He always does what is right. He never does what is wrong. And from that position of excellence, God is able to teach us the proper way to think and the proper way to live. From the position of his goodness and uprightness, he is able with perfection to instruct sinners in the way that they should go.

So as you and I contemplate the character of God, we realize that we have a trustworthy source, a trustworthy heavenly Father that we can go to and rely upon and to trust him. You know, there are those who would teach you that doubt is a virtue and that to question God is a good thing as if it were a spirit of freethinking. Doubt is not a virtue, beloved, and if you find yourself wrapped up in doubt here this evening, what you need to do is not feed your doubt and justify them and certainly to proclaim them to other believers. What you need to do is you need to come back to the character of God so that the power of Scripture and the power of the character of God would start to soften your doubt and drive it out rather than cultivate it. Why would you want to live in doubt? That doesn't make any sense. That's totally irrational. It suggests that God cannot be believed for what he has revealed himself to be. Doubt is a statement of distrust that says, "You may have said this but I'm not so sure." Well, who appointed any man or woman or child to be the one who sits in judgment of God's revealed character and casts doubt upon it? Oh, that's just routed straight back to the words of the devil in Genesis 3. That's where the spirit of that comes from. Nothing noble, that's simply echoing with the devil, "Has God really said such and such?" We welcome those who are teachable in their doubt because we can help you from God's word. We welcome those who say, "I'm doubting and I need help." We can help that. What we're addressing here at this particular moment is that those who would justify themselves and be self-righteous in their doubt, that is sin to be repented of, not something to be congratulated. Why? Because it's fundamental to the character of God, that's why.

Verse 8, look at it, "Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice." He is good. He is upright. He is just. What is there to doubt? What is there to question in that? What, your circumstances aren't to your liking and will contradict the revealed word of God because our circumstances are less than what we had hoped for in times gone by? Would you really ascend to the chair of judge and call God to give an account to you like that? Would you sit in a courtroom of your own heart and say, "I think I will sit in judgment of God now"? Beloved, that's a complete reversal of the order of the universe. That's not what we do. In your struggles, in your doubts, in your discouragements, in your failures, you come and you humbly trust

God and you affirm things like David did saying, "Lord, you're good. You're upright. You instruct sinners in the way." And when you humble yourself like that, you will be on the receiving end of God's faithful leading.

Now, notice this. It just kind of builds on what I just said. In the next 2 verses, verses 10 and 11, David acknowledges that you and I must actively pursue holiness if we want to live in that realm of God's loyal love. Look at verses 10 and 11 where he says,

10 All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth [to whom?] To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. 11 For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

He says, "God shows himself faithful to those who are keeping, who are walking in his ways." Well, when you consciously depart from the ways of God into sin and rebellion and disobedience, on what basis do you have any claim on the lovingkindness of God when you are actively rebelling against him? We're not passive in this. We actively seek him. We actively pursue him. We actively trust him and it's on a life like that that God displays his loyal love to us. And in the midst of this trust and for some of you I know that what is about to come from verse 11 is going to be a great encouragement to you, notice, beloved, that David says, he says, "Pardon my iniquity for it is great. My sin is deep and profound, O God." There is something significant for you to see here in your own struggle with sin, beloved. David, let there be no doubt, David is a man writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. David, writing as the king of Israel. David, writing as a man after God's own heart. Writing as a man like that in the midst of that noble life, he was conscious of sin. He felt sin keenly.

Beloved, as you grow spiritually, you are going to feel the weight of sin. As you advance in holiness, as you go closer into the light, as it were, you are going to find that there is more darkness exposed in your life than you recognized before. That is not a sign that you are not a Christian. That is a sign of the sanctifying influence of the holiness of God on your life. Awareness of sin is not a reason for you to doubt your salvation or to fall into despair. Awareness of sin is a mark of spiritual life. When you feel your sin, that's a mark that you are alive. It is those who are physically alive that feel the impact of pain in their body. So let me encourage you with this, encourage and exhort you at the same time for some of you: stop collapsing into such heavy introspection when you feel the weight of sin on your life. Of course you're a sinner, why do you think Christ died? If it was not a heavy, significant matter, then Christ was really wasting his time at the cross. It took the eternal Son of God shedding his eternally valuable blood, his infinitely valuable blood to redeem you from sin. Let's not kid ourselves in here, we are all vile, guilty sinners apart from Christ and when you start to recognize that, then rather than collapsing into this deep inward looking, look outward to the cross and say, "Oh, praise be to the Lord Jesus Christ that he offered himself for such a sinner as me! I love him because of the greatness of the depths of his mercy!"

You see, beloved, here's what you do and for some of you I know this is really important for you to hear: when you are seeing sin, some of you, you're just collapsing into that

inward, morbid, woe is me and all of that. I understand that but what you need to do, the point here is to grow in trust and the point of that kind of deep conviction when you have a tender heart like that, what you need to do is let that conviction teach you to turn to God's grace. To turn to the cross of Christ with an ever broader and deepening appreciation that he died for a sinner like you. And then remembering that Psalm 25 is a Psalm of trust, and then with that consciousness of the cross, beloved, you trust him to keep his promise to forgive you. You walk in a confidence that, "My Savior is sufficient even for my sin," and don't reject the joy and the peace and serenity that the cross is meant to bring to your soul. It's not a virtue to magnify your sin over the shed blood of Jesus Christ. That's not a virtue. That's not something to be proud of. No, instead we magnify the glory of Christ, the sufficiency of Christ, that when he said, "It is finished," he meant that your sin was paid in full and you rest in that. Perhaps some of you have never trusted him like that. You have never decisively repented of sin and completely given yourself over to Christ and trusted him and received him as your all sufficient Savior without whom you would be eternally lost. Let this word from David where he said, "For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity for it is great," let that be your prayer of salvation tonight. "God, I am a sinner in need of pardon for your name's sake. I give myself over henceforth and forever more to be a vessel for you to display your glory. I'm done with myself. I'm done with my sin. I repent and turn to receive Christ." Have you done that? It's time if you haven't. Every one of you whether you're 12 or 4 or 80. It's time for you to turn to Christ. Today is the day of salvation.

Now, watch this, I love this Psalm. I love all the Psalms. I love the 125 that we have yet to go. Notice the beautiful balance to David's trust as he continues on here. We have seen a prayer of protection, a prayer for guidance, a prayer for pardon, a prayer of praise that included a confession of sin. David goes on, fifthly, and offers a prayer of fear. A prayer of fear. Here's what I want you to see, beloved, before I read these next few verses to set the stage for it. When you talk about a sufficient Savior, a complete trust in him to wash away all of your sin and to move forward with joy and confidence, there is always that spiritual temptation toward presumption, toward carelessness as a result; teachers who would turn the grace of God into licentiousness and, "If God has forgiven me, then I'm going to sin all the more. If God likes to forgive sin, well, let me sin it up so that he can get what he likes." That's deplorable and the theology that has encouraged people in that that has come from Dallas Seminary over the past decades is deplorable. God's grace does not make the converted man casual in his approach to God.

David offers a prayer of fear. Look at verses 12 through 14. He says,

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.

Notice, beloved, how the word "fear" brackets these 3 verses. Verse 12, "Who is the man who fears the LORD? The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him." Fear is the context of these 3 verses and here in Truth Community Church from this pulpit, we have

talked often about the fear of the Lord in recent months and we really couldn't talk about it enough because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is the foundation of everything else. But just to remind you that for the believer, the fear of God is the wholehearted life of humble worship you render in response to his saving mercy to you. The fear of God can be summarized as loving obedience. There is this sense of a responsiveness to the holiness of God that willingly conforms life to his word and that seeks him rather than a casual response that so many are condition to, "Well, I prayed a prayer and now I can live life anyway that I want." There is nothing for people like that in this Psalm. It's the man who fears the Lord that God will instruct. It's the man who fears the Lord whose soul will abide in prosperity and in the context of the people of Israel, will inherit the land. The secret of the Lord, the riches of communion with God is reserved for those who fear him.

What I want you to see here tonight from these 3 verses is simply this in light of everything that we've said: David is not irreverent as he trusts God. Trusting God did not turn him into a comedian. It didn't turn him into a spiritual clown and huckster trying to make people laugh. No, quite to the contrary, David here is honoring God with humble love and worship while he rejoices in forgiveness; while he confidently asks God for pardon of his sin and moves on trusting that God has granted that, it doesn't turn him into someone who goes right back to where he came from. Rather, there is this ongoing humility and fear and humble response where the totality of his being is responding to the totality of the character of God. God's mercy did not loosen the reins on him to sin still more, God's mercy was that which drew him closer to God, wanting evermore to be ever more compliant, trusting, obedient, righteous in his walk. So while he's manifesting and displaying for us the character of God in this, he is manifesting a fear that is appropriate.

Now, sixthly, David manifests his trust with a prayer for deliverance. A prayer for deliverance. In the closing section of this Psalm, David now pours out his heavy heart and, you know, even in that, there is something for you to see and to learn in your walk with God, in your prayers before God. David here, what we're going to see is we're going to see a man with much weighing on his mind, laying it out openly and transparently. But notice that he has done this only after he has first offered a prayer for protection, for guidance, for pardon. A prayer of praise. A prayer of fear. There is a fuller nature to it. He doesn't just go to God and spew it all out without regard to the character of God, the presence of the one in whose presence he is, there is a sequence to it. And yet he does pour out his heart and, beloved, what I want you to see is that it should be very encouraging for you in your discouragement to watch a man of God like David pour out his heart and express the weight of his discouragement honestly to God.

Look at verse 15. He frames it with another trust; he introduces this section with a another statement of trust. He says,

15 My eyes are continually toward the LORD, For He will pluck my feet out of the net.

It's as though he were in a trap and he can't get himself out of it and he says, "But I'm looking to the Lord because he will deliver me from this snare that I find myself in at this current time in life." So David affirms his trust but he also declares his trouble.

Look at verses 16 through 18. He says,

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.

Do you see how descriptive this is? Those of you that have been mourning of a very real and legitimate loss for a period of time, do you see how you can identify with this? Do you see David expressing that which you maybe haven't had the capacity to express in your own words? David here is giving voice to the burdens of your heart. "I'm lonely. I'm afflicted. The troubles of my heart, God, are just so big. Look on my affliction. Look on my trouble. Look on my distress." And yet as he's laying it out honestly, it's in the context of a request for God to act, "Turn to me. Be gracious to me. Bring me out. Look upon my affliction. Forgive all my sins."

I remember times in the not so distant past before I was out here before the Lord graciously brought me to this wonderful place of Cincinnati and to know all of you, I remember times heavy in heart, just overwhelmed with a sense of need and just praying out, "God, you have got to help me!" Does that express what's in your heart today? Do you have that kind of weight there? Well, understand that God receives those kinds of urgent prayers from his trusting, humble people that are trusting him. To say, "God, you've got to help me! God, bring me out!" That's not a statement of distrust, that's a statement of profound confidence that the God to whom you speak is your God who will care enough to act and the urgency of it is expressing a depth of confidence that he will hear and act. The Christian life wouldn't amount to much, there wouldn't be much richness to it, there wouldn't be much of a testimony to hear if somehow collectively and individually we didn't have something like that to say, you know, "I cried out to the Lord in my distress and do you know what he did in time? He answered me more abundantly than I could have ever asked or thought." Don't be afraid to cry out like that. Here is your pattern. "God, I'm lonely. I'm afflicted. Bring me out. Help me in this time." And understand that this isn't a self-absorbed prayer that he's making here, it's a God-focused prayer. "God, I'm in this trouble, yes, but I'm asking you to turn to me." He's looking outside of himself saying, "God, turn. Help. Bless." He's dependently looking to God in this deep valley. He verbalizes his trust and then he asks God to help them. Beloved, look deeply at these verses and understand something really profound and important and when I trill my "R" you know it matters. It's r-r-r-really important. Trust is not the absence of inner turmoil. Trust is the presence of conscience dependence on God.

Look at verses 19 through 21.

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.

These verses remind us that sometimes the troubles, the distresses, are human and external in nature. Enemies in human form. Beloved, surely the church of Jesus Christ needs this element of trust that David expresses and needs it urgently today. You would think from reading social media and commentary by so-called Christians and even Christian leaders that hostile political leaders and foreign enemies were in charge of our future. You would think from the panic and the distress in their voice over politics, for crying out loud, that human men were in charge of the universe. Shame on us when that's the portrait of Christ that we give to the world. When we're so preoccupied with politics that that's what is predominately coming out of our mouths. So much anxiety. So much resentment. "Look what's happening to me. Oh, what's going to happen in the future?" Oh, give me a break! At what point do we get serious about trusting God like Scripture teaches us? Like David has expressed for us here in Psalm 25? Where we say, "Lord, look on my enemies and help me. Lord, they are many. They hate me. But Lord, I turn away from my focus on them and I ask you to guard me, deliver me, help me, preserve me. Don't let me be ashamed. Don't let life unfold in a way that it shows at the end that my trust in you was misplaced, O God. Guard me and help me and in that manner display your glory and your fidelity to those who put their trust in you."

Beloved, of course there is hostility in the world to us. Of course the government is turning on us. Of course. Of course. Of course. Of course. Haven't we read our Bibles? Scripture explicitly tells us that the world will hate us, 1 John 3:13. So why do we act like it's breaking news when we start to see particular manifestations of it and act like everything is collapsing around us? Mercy. God have mercy on us for being so spiritually malnourished when there is a banquet in his word to teach us to trust him. Their resistance is just an occasion for you to trust God as you walk your Pilgrim pathway. That's it. This is just a context that God has graciously given to us to display the trust and confidence of which he is preeminently worthy and to manifest by our trusting attitudes that he is great and there is something other than this world worth living for.

As the Psalm closes, we come to the seventh aspect of David's trust. He expands his vision in verse 22 and offers a prayer of intercession. A prayer of intercession. Despite all of the personal references, the 36 first person personal pronouns and all of that, David manifests and shows forth a generous heart. In a sweeping declaration of intercession for all the people of God, he says there in verse 22, what he has prayed for himself, he prays for God's people. Look at verse 22,

22 Redeem Israel, O God, Out of all his troubles.

"Out of all of the physical issues, the spiritual issues, everything that could possibly trouble your people, O God, I ask you to bring them out of all of it." A comprehensive statement of sympathetic prayer for others. That's trust. Charles Spurgeon said, "Jesus is the Redeemer from trouble as well as sin. He is a complete Redeemer and from every evil

he will rescue every saint. Redemption by blood is finished, O God, send us redemption by power."

Let's pray together.

O God, grant us redemption from every sin and trial of this life until we safely enter into your heavenly kingdom. Amen.

For more information about our ministry and our location and service times, please visit us at truthcommunitychurch.com.