

## Scripture reading: Psalm 25

According to Spurgeon: in Psalm 25 "*we see the very heart of the man after God's own heart*". It shows us David's heart but even more importantly I believe that it shows us the heart of our Father in heaven *toward his children*, his redeemed ones. Tonight let us take a look at just one verse from this important Psalm. The fourteenth verse reads:

**The secret of the LORD is for those who fear him,  
and he will make them know his covenant.**

Three questions arise from this verse:

**First. What is the secret of the LORD?**

Why is it called a secret? If it is not for everyone, then who is excluded? The answer from our text is clear: those who do not fear him are not included in the intimate knowledge and guidance of God. And apart from God's saving grace, we are excluded ourselves from what David here calls a secret.

*But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised. (1 Co. 2.14)*

What is the secret that David spoke of? A secret is something that is shared in close confidence with a dear friend or a trusted servant. David feared the LORD rightly. And God in his grace opened up to David his everlasting covenant and revealed knowledge of God's plan of redemption: the Anointed One who would come to be the Savior of Israel and take away the sins of the world: Jesus Christ.

It was Jesus who later said to his disciples,

*“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”*

*The secret of the LORD is for those who fear him.*

But notice also that it does not say that the secret of the LORD is for those who are *wise enough* or *smart enough*. This kind of holy and reverential fear is entirely a gift of God's grace: that we might see our place rightly in his kingdom. We are but unworthy servants who have done nothing more than what was expected of us. We were not wise enough to fear God on our own. We were not smart enough to fear God as he ought to be feared. The eyes of our understanding were by nature darkened even to the fact that He is the LORD of glory.

*What is man that you are mindful of him? and the son of man that you visit him?(Ps. 8:4)*

To be given a confidence. To be trusted with a secret is to be in close fellowship. God does not allow his enemies to draw near into the chambers of his deepest thoughts. He does not hold his enemies as the apple of his eye or write them on the palms of his hands or carry them close to his bosom like a little lamb. Those whom God hates are removed from the blessings of his manifest presence. They shall one day dwell in the blackness of darkness forever where there is great heat but no light, weeping and gnashing of teeth, and chains reserving them for the judgment. ***But not so God's friends! Not so God's friends!*** God's friends are favored with sharing in the love and affection of their Father in heaven. They know his heart. They delight to do his will. And he reveals to them his secret:

Jesus said,

*"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose (or manifest) Myself to him."*

The apostle Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit of God as he wrote to the church in Ephesus of these truths that David calls a secret. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would be sent by the Father in his name and that "he will teach you all things, and guide you into all truth" (Jn 14:26; 16:13) Paul shares with us the very heart of God when he prays that:

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ep. 1:18-23)*

*The secret of the LORD is for those who fear him.*

### **A second question. What does it mean to fear the LORD?**

Notice that it does not read, "The secret of the LORD is for *everyone*". He will never show a person an intimate saving knowledge of his covenant who *does not* fear the LORD. Fear is required that we might know the living God rightly. But the kind of fear that David speaks of here is not of the man who fears in hopelessness that he will be condemned for his sin. Here is

David trembling at God's word. But he has confidently gone to the LORD to ask for pardon for the sins of his youth. He has been drawn to God by the promise of mercy, crying out,

***"For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity; for it is great."***

God's mercy, revealed to David, ***leads him to repentance*** and to his saving faith in the Savior who is to come. David's *confidence* in the LORD leads him to *fear* that he might ever offend this loving One who has taught him in the way of his own choosing: the way of salvation. David has been taught to have an awe and reverence for God. The LORD gave him a hatred for his sin and transgression and a recognition that it is God alone who can pluck his feet out of the net – the trap - of his own rebellion.

He does not say that the secret of the LORD is for those who *secretly love their sin*. David confesses the sins of his youth, his transgressions against the light of truth, his great iniquity, and the net that has snared his feet. David calls his sins his greatest enemies in this psalm. Thus David could say "*The secret of the LORD is for those who fear him*". David said, "*If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear. (Ps. 66:18) I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. (Ps. 32:5)*

Fear is required that we might know the secret of the LORD. But it does not say that fearing God is our own work that earns us favor with God. ***Salvation is of the LORD***, here in this text. ***He will make them*** to know his covenant. We cannot even ***know*** how to be saved from sin - unless God by his Holy Spirit should *teach* us by his law that we are transgressors and that according to promise he provided a Savior.

the Law was our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. (Ga. 3:24) and *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* (2 Co. 5:21)

He will **make** them to **know**. This is not an intellectual knowledge. This is not gained from a seminary class or even studying the attributes of God, as helpful as that is. This is not just a transfer of information. **He will** make them who fear him to **know** his covenant. He will **make** you to **know** the blessings of the promises of our great salvation in Christ. He will **make** you to **know** the gospel warnings which should provoke us even further to godly fear:

*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never **knew** you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'* (Mt. 2:21-23)

Brothers and sisters, if God has granted that you do now fear the LORD, **remember** that has not always been so with you or I. There was a time in my youth like David when I rushed **headlong** into sin and never stopped to consider the God who made me. It is a mercy from the LORD that you or I even now might truly tremble at his word, for fear of displeasing him. We have been shown grace upon grace. **Should we not fear him? Should we not fear him?** But do we? If only it read "the secret of the LORD is for those who love him". Or "the secret of the LORD is for those who believe in him". We must love and believe, but how little I have feared him at times – it should make you think that I do not either fully believe in his sovereignty or that I truly

love his holy name. Would you agree that this is true for you as well? That you have believed in him less and loved him less than he deserves because you have feared him so little?

**But** - are we justified freely by his grace in the name of his only begotten Son? Has his own Son borne our sins in his own body on the tree *for us*? Has he torn the veil of separation before his most holy presence? Are we bought at a price and that with the precious blood of Christ? Are we written on the palms of his hands and kept as the apple of his eye? Then brothers and sisters we are brought so *near* to God – *all by grace alone!*

Should we not seek to *cultivate* this fear of the LORD? Those who fear the LORD possess the what David calls the secret of God. He makes them to know his covenant: His promise of salvation. His saving grace. His mercy to you and I who are wholly undeserving.

*Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (He. 7:25)*

Do you not hunger and thirst for a deeper knowledge of the secret that David knew? **Seek to cultivate the fear of the LORD.** If you lack the fear of the LORD, consider exercising your thoughts in this way: Read and meditate and pray over all of the first and second chapters of Proverbs. *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Pr. 1:7)* Consider the Scriptures where the fear of God follows true conversion to Christ. Look at how many times that the fear of the LORD is mentioned at the same time as *rejoicing*. See how many times the fear of him is connected to precious promises. Time fails us to go to these passages tonight but they are worth searching out. Without the fear of the LORD,

you will never know God in covenant relationship. If you love him at all, seek to cultivate a holy fear.

### **The third and final question: What does it mean to know his covenant?**

#### **What does it mean to know his covenant?**

One has said that "*God treats his justified ones with intimacy and endearment*" To know God's covenant is to know Jesus Christ. Isaiah 49:8 tells us that God ***gave him for a covenant to the people***. Jesus is the *embodiment* of this covenant that is all of grace. David offers us this as a promise: ***The secret of the LORD is for those who fear him and he will make them know his covenant***. May this be our prayer like David prayed when he cried out to the LORD in his distress:

*LORD, I fear your name, draw near to me. Save me from my sins and cleanse me and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make the bones which you have crushed to rejoice in your salvation. Let me know the blessings of your covenant people. They are not ashamed. They have a deep sense of pardon from sin. They have an active expectation of heaven. They have the witness of the Holy Spirit. They may have struggles in their spiritual lives, but they live in the reality of God in every moment. Upon you alone, LORD, do their eyes look and on you alone do they wait all the day.*

There once was a surgeon in Belfast who had a custom, that before performing any operation, to say to the patient: 'Take a good look at the wound, and then fix your eyes on me, and don't take them off till I get through the operation' Think about this advice - before the days of anesthetic!

A patient might be awake for major surgery. Spurgeon spoke of this as a perfect illustration

***"Sinner, take a good look at the wound tonight, and then fix your eyes on Christ, and don't take them off. It is better to look at the remedy than at the wound."***

May God grant that our eyes would be like David's, fixed upon the LORD. We who by faith have a share in the New Covenant, let us each one continue look to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the only remedy for sin. If you are unsure or if you are still a stranger to the covenant I have this word of hope: He who said "*Look to me all the ends of the earth and be saved*" says the same to each one here tonight. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. *Jesus Christ came to save sinners.* If you are a sinner tonight then you are the very kind that Jesus came to save. And *all who come to him he will in no wise cast out. **And they shall know the secret of the LORD and he will make them to know his covenant.***

The LORD is good and just; the way He'll sinners show;  
 The meek in judgment He will guide and make His path to know.  
 All pathways of the LORD are truth and mercy sure,  
 To such as keep His covenant and testimonies pure.  
 Now for Thine own name's sake, O LORD, I Thee entreat  
 To pardon my iniquity, for it is very great.  
 Who fears the LORD is taught the way to understand;  
 His soul shall ever dwell at ease, his seed possess the land.  
**The secret of the LORD shall all who fear Him know;  
 The knowledge of His covenant He unto them will show.**  
 My eyes upon the LORD continually are set;  
 For He it is that shall bring forth my feet out of the net.

Amen.