

The Valleys and Mountains

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 June 2023

Preacher: Jim Masters

- [0 : 0 0] Please take your Bibles and go to the book of Psalms.
- The songs, the psalms. The psalms are songs. Psalm 25. Psalm 25. Psalm 25. Psalm 25.
- You're coming away. Psalm 25. Taking a break from books. We went through John's Gospel, as you know.
- Started looking through the book of Zephaniah. It's kind of the next book to, it's our destiny, so to speak. But for now, for the time being, I'm just gonna spend some time in the book of the Psalms.
- Excuse me, this has been, hopefully it's been so uplifting to you. As we looked at Psalms, I was here last week with Josh. It was wonderful. Man, it was really good.
- [1 : 1 1] Really appreciated Josh preaching through Psalm 13 last week. And that was, I mean, he told me that, it was back in April, I think, I contacted, golly. Because I was thinking about doing Psalm 14, Psalm 15.
- He's like, well, I was gonna do Psalm 13. I'm like, oh, cool. Yeah, do Psalm 13. And then I'll do 14, 15 earlier. Then you can do Psalm 13 later. So it was great how God planned that.
- He does things like that, right? So Psalm 25 this morning. Psalm 25 of David. To you, O Yahweh, I lift up my soul.
- O my God, in you I trust. Do not let me be ashamed. Do not let my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none of those who wait for you will be ashamed.
- Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed. Make me know your ways, O Yahweh. Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me.
- [2 : 1 1] If you're the God of my salvation, for you I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, your compassion and your covenant love, your loving kindness.
- They've been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions. According to your covenant love, remember me because of the sake of your goodness, O Yahweh.
- Good and upright is Yahweh. Therefore, he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice and he teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast covenant love and truth to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.
- For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity for it is great. Who is the man who fears Yahweh? He will instruct him in the way he should choose.
- His soul will abide in goodness and his descendants will inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him and he will make them know his covenant.
- [3 : 2 0] My eyes are continually toward the Lord for he will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me for I'm lonely and afflicted.
- The troubles of my heart are enlarged. Bring me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins.

Look upon my enemies for there are many and they hate me with violent hatred. Guard my soul and deliver me. Do not let me be ashamed for I take refuge in you.

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me for I wait for you. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. Friedrich Nolan, a believer, was fleeing for his life from his enemies during a time of religious persecution in North Africa.

Pursued by them over hill and valley with no place to hide, Nolan fell exhausted into a wayside cave expecting his enemies to find him soon. Away to his death, he saw a spider weaving a web.

[4 : 41] Within minutes, the spider had woven a beautiful web across the mouth of the cave. The pursuers arrived and wondered if Nolan was hiding there, but on seeing the unbroken spider web, they concluded it was impossible for him to have entered the cave without disturbing the web.

So his pursuers went on. And Nolan's life was spared. Having escaped, he wrote these words, quote, Where God is, a spider's web is like a wall.

Where God is not, a wall is like a spider's web. God is our rescuer and our deliverer as or when we face the valleys and mountains of life.

That's how we respond to these valleys. That's how we respond to the mountains. David was experiencing this.

There's no context to this. When he was experiencing this, if he was king, if he was not king, if he was running from Saul, running from his own son Absalom, we don't know.

[6 : 03] But this song, this psalm of David, will show us specifically how to respond, I have here, how to respond to the valley and mountains.

Or valleys, I should say, mountains. How to respond to the valleys and mountains. Dr. Stephen Lawson says this, most believers have a tendency to be self-sufficient and to rely on their own strength when pursuing the Christian life.

So let's recognize our human inadequacies and our frailties and rest in God's infinite strength. And this is what the psalm does.

It directs us to God, to the God of Israel. The valleys and mountains. This psalm is a calm, confident prayer from David for help against his enemies and for God's instructing, leading, and pardoning grace.

We desperately need the guiding light of God's word. You see David speaking about, initially, the leading of God's truth for him.

[7 : 31] some interesting points about this psalm. Each line begins with the letter of the Hebrew alphabet. But yet, there's two letters that are missing.

And it's believed that David did this on purpose to reflect the way trouble breaks the pattern of life. Trials break the pattern. You're living life and you, things just all of a sudden go that way.

It's why two letters are missing to reflect that. Also, another aspect of the psalm, it has a chiasmic structure.

Chiasm is, in the Hebrew poetry, of this line, at the beginning and this line to end, they correspond. And then this line and this line corresponds and this line and this line corresponds and then there's usually something that's emphasized in the middle.

Interesting with the psalm, verses one through seven and 16 through 22 parallel each other. Speaking about God's protection, you'll see similarities as we go through it today, this morning, similarities in the points.

[8 : 45] And then you have verses eight through 15, here's our pleas for God's direction and really a trusting in God and a trusting in His provision. So it's kind of the emphasis of the psalm is verses eight through 15.

And then you'll see in this final section, verses 16 through 22, these like short little popcorn prayers that requests that David gives. And Josh talked about this, they're kind of like commands but yet a confidence of crying out to God, God, do this, God, do this, I'm trusting in you, do this, a plea for God.

So having said that, how should we respond to the valleys and mountains of life? Response number one, there's three. Response number one, plea from the valley of trial.

Plea to God from the valley of trial. And the first plea you have here is, Yahweh, protect me.

Yahweh, protect me. Plea from the valley of trial. First, protect me, O God. Verses one through three.

[10 : 05] To you, O Yahweh, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust to let my enemies be ashamed and let my enemies, not let me be ashamed and not let my enemies exult over me.

He's affirming his faith in God alone. All his desires, his prayers are lifted up to God alone.

His hope is fixed on God alone. Only God can protect me. God alone granted David that which truly satisfied his need and the need was God himself.

You'll see him talk about this later. Yahweh, protect me. We must trust, excuse me, fix our hope on God, not allowing anything to distract our minds.

We must yield to God, calling out to Him. It's only you, God, who can protect me. Only you. He says in verse 2, in you I trust and distress.

[11 : 13] He trusted in God. He had confidence in God. Expressing it through this prayer. Don't let my enemies exult over me. Don't let me be ashamed.

Enemies who would love to gloat over his downfall. But David asked for God to have pity on him so he would not be exposed to their ridicule.

God, protect me. You see this being emphasized. Look at verse 3. Indeed, none of those who wait for you will be ashamed. Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed.

David affirmed the fact that those who trust in the Lord would not be ashamed. You see this word wait in the Psalms a lot. Most of the time, not all the time, but most of the time, we see the word wait or waiting in the Psalms.

It doesn't mean waiting like waiting for the bus to come type thing or waiting for your ride to come or waiting for your order from Fry's to come and it's not here yet and I'm getting really mad so I'm gonna call them. No, that's not the type of waiting you're talking about.

[12 : 22] Waiting most of the time in the Psalms means trust. You're trusting in God. It's another word that the psalmists use, psalmists plural use, to describe trusting in God.

So those who wait, those who trust, will not be ashamed. You'll never be abandoned by God. You'll never be abandoned by God.

David was confident of that. Yet those who deal treacherously without cause, they'll be ashamed, he says. Shame comes to those who are vainly treacherous who do not wait upon Yahweh, who go against His servants.

We cry out to God pleading for Him to protect us from enemies. Yahweh, protect me. A second part to this, Yahweh, guide me. You're pleading from the valley of trial.

Yahweh, protect me. Yahweh, guide me. I need your guidance. Verse 4 and 5. Make me know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me.

- [13 : 30] Make me, teach me, lead me. And first of all, the ways of the Lord, the paths of the Lord denote His word. And God gives us a right understanding of His word.
- Keep me in firm persuasion of your promises. Don't let me turn to the, don't let me turn to the left or to the right. Keep me on the path of your word.
- When you're under attack, when you're facing adversity, we can be given to sudden and irregular emotions, feelings of impatience, anger, bitterness, revenge, or some other sinful impulse.
- It's at those times when we must wholly rely upon God's providence and His word. It's true. That's why we must seek to know God's ways and walk in His paths.
- Right conduct requires God's truth and a readiness to learn and to obey it. And notice the reason for fixating upon God's word, He says, the next part of verse 5, 4, you're the God of my salvation for you I wait all the day.
- [14 : 57] God, through His word, brings life, salvation. I wait all the day. He fixated His dependence upon Yahweh alone and nothing else.
- God will always help so let us wait unwaveringly for Him. Trust, trust. Yahweh, protect me.
- Yahweh, guide me. And a third plea, remember, pleading from the valley of trial, protect me, guide me. A third aspect, Yahweh, remember me.
- Wait, did God forget? Does God forget us? No, no, of course not. But it just seems like He's in a position where I don't see what's happening, what's going on.
- I don't see this. My circumstances are telling me otherwise. So remember me. Notice He says it three times.
- [16 : 03] Remember, Yahweh, your compassion. Verse 7, do not remember. According to your loving kindness, remember. me. Three times. To remember, or means to contemplate or to recollect.
- Bring to your memory. Not that God forgets. He called God to act upon His past promises to His servant.
- Execute your promises. remember your compassion. Remember your compassion and your chesed. And it's the plural to denote the richness.
- God's grace. So David here appealed to God's mercy and love manifested faithfully in the past culminating ultimately in the future at the cross.
- God cannot not, I like the double negative, God cannot not have compassion and steadfast love. It's part of His nature. It's part of who He is.
- [17 : 10] He clings to the covenant love of God revealed first with Moses in Exodus 34.
- The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate, gracious God slow to anger and abounding in covenant steadfast faithful love and you see that run throughout the Old Testament culminating ultimately at the cross where Christ died for us.
- God showed He displayed the greatness of His love in Jesus. Remember me. And notice He says, verse 7, don't remember the sins of my youth.
- The very thing that obstructs our relationship with the living God just like a wall is our sin. There must be forgiveness in order to have intimacy with the Holy God and that's why He says the next part according to your covenant love remember me.
- He asks God again to remember Him according to His faithful steadfast covenant keeping love. Notice the last part of verse 7, because of your goodness, because of your goodness, O Lord, O Yahweh.
- [18 : 30] God God God decides to show us favor.

God decides to show us favor to display His glorious grace because we cry out to Him, remember me. We cry out to Him, guide me, protect me, and He loves that.

because we're expressing our dependence upon Him alone and He won't run away from you, He'll run to you. He runs away from those who are prideful and think that they're good and fine and nothing's wrong.

He runs towards those who say, I need you, I depend upon you alone. God runs to that. He doesn't run away from that. You plea from the valley of trial, Yahweh protect me, Yahweh guide me, Yahweh remember me.

And now notice a second aspect. Now we stand, we're pleading, now we stand, excuse me, we stand on the mountain of trust.

[19 : 46] Stand on the mountain of trust. And I've been saying the mountains of life, I don't necessarily mean the mountain highs of life when everything's peachy keen.

The mountains David spoke about are the mountains of trust. Trust in the person and provision of God. That's the mountain.

The mountain of trust of God's person and in God's provision. So, stand on the mountain of trust, I trust in your person.

Here's, again, this is the emphasis. What's emphasized here, verses 8-15, this is what's emphasized from the text, from the psalm. 8-15, notice, I stand, excuse me, I trust in your person.

I'm standing on the mountain of trust, I trust in your person. Verse 8, good and upright is the Lord. Only God is good.

[20 : 49] Only God is upright in all His ways. And which is so good because when you're in a valley of trial, when you're in a valley of trouble, what do you start questioning?

The goodness of God and the uprightness of God, right? And He says, no, no, no, no, no, no, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to trust in who you are.

You are good. You are upright. I'm going to do that. I'm going to trust you. And notice the contrast.

Therefore, He instructs sinners in the way He leads the humble in justice. He teaches the humble His way. Sinners who see their need of Him, as Jesus says, they believe they're poor in spirits, Matthew chapter 5.

A humility which only comes from God Himself. She or He humbles the heart and God subdues it, God changes it. The Lord loves those who show themselves to be teachable, who are eager to learn, because He says, therefore He instructs sinners in the way so they're coming.

[22 : 13] He teaches, excuse me, He leads the humble in justice. He teaches the humble His way. God instructs us as to how He guides us.

He comes down to us to teach us His way, which leads to life. One who loves Yahweh will humble himself with a teachable spirit.

I'm trusting in you, because I know you're good. I know you're upright. I'm humbling myself before you. verse 10.

Notice again, the person of Yahweh. All the paths of Yahweh are steadfast love and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

What do you begin to question? What do we begin to question when we face trial? What do we begin to question when we face despair, troubles, and distresses?

[23 : 14] The love of God and the truth of God, don't we? That's when we begin to question that. No, no, David says, no, I'm resolving here.

Those who are truly humbled in heart and placed their dependence upon and confidence in God, they will experience His care for them and His provision for their needs. love and truth are proofs of the certainty of His promises.

You can trust God and His character. You can trust God and His character. We can trust in who He is.

All the paths of the Lord are loving kindness and truth to those who keep His covenant, who keep His testimonies, His word. I don't see this.

I'm keeping His word. It's there. You not see it now, but it's there. And David is relinquishing this foolishness.

[24 : 19] No, no, I'm not going to question the person of God. I'm going to trust in this person. Even in the midst of the circumstances in which I find myself. Interesting, this is the first time in the Psalms where the word covenant is used.

it's a legal obligation represented by an agreement depicting a promise based on God's faithfulness. And notice what David says here, verse 11, for your namesake, because your name, O Lord, pardon my iniquity for it is great.

He saw, David saw how desperately he fell short of keeping the law, keeping the covenant, keeping the testimonies. Don't you feel how far short you fall? You fall so short of that, don't you feel that way?

Don't you know that to be true? We are, we do, it's so true, so apply, David says, your character on my life, I'm confident, my confidence does not rest upon my works of righteousness, but upon the very grace of God, which is found only at the cross, for your namesake, because of God's name, the free remission of his sins is based upon God's free grace according to God's own good pleasure.

As enormous as our sins are, the free sovereign grace of God is even greater. As ginormous as our sins are, God's grace is greater.

[25 : 56] God loves to display himself, he loves to display his grace. The only hope of our pardon is God's merciful, loving, compassionate character.

If it were not for his love for us, every other attribute of God would destroy us. our only hope is God's merciful, loving, compassionate character.

This is what David does. This is why, now you can see why this is the focus. I'm going to trust in the very person, very character of God. I'm going to do that, even though it doesn't seem like that in this valley of trial, this valley of trouble.

This is my resolution. I trust in your person. Notice the second aspect, as he stands on a mountain of trust, I trust in your provision.

You will provide, verse 12 through 15. He fixates his mind on the nature and character of God, so he derives new strength and bold courage.

[27 : 12] He's saying, okay, God, you're going to provide, I know you will. Maybe not when I want it, but I know you'll provide. Notice how it begins, verse 12. Who is the one who fears the Lord?

Fear, revere the Lord. Have an awe-inspiring focus on God. What blessings come to us when we fear or give reverence or have an awe-inspiring focus on God?

What are the blessings that come? The provisions that come? What comes to us? David's going to list them out. One, two, three, four, five.

Five of them. Here are the blessings that come when you put your hope in the Lord. Here are the blessings that come when you trust in his character. He's going to provide this.

Blessing number one. Instruction in God's way, the next part of verse 12. He will instruct him in the way he should choose. When God changes the heart, a person comes to a place where they submit themselves to God and his word with reverence, when they submit themselves to him in fear, God will instruct you in the decisions that you make.

[28 : 40] Instruction in God's way, God will direct you from his word. That's the blessing that comes when you fear him. Another, second one, personal fulfillment.

Look at verse 13, the first part. His soul will abide in goodness. Some have prosperity, actually goodness is a better translation. Goodness, goodness of God, right?

Spiritual blessing to those who truly serve the Lord. God is the one who ultimately fulfills and satisfies. You're satisfied with his goodness. That personal fulfillment and the goodness of God.

Third, family security, next part of verse 13. And his descendants will inherit the land. Seed will inherit the land. There may be physical blessings in this present life when you're trusting the Lord and fearing him, but there are definitely physical blessings in the life to come.

You will inherit the kingdom to come. You may not have that now, but you definitely have the promise you'll receive it later. God gives that promise. Instruction in God's way.

[29 : 47] Personal fulfillment. Family security. Notice a fourth one. Fellowship with the Lord. The first part of verse 14. New American Christianity says the secret of the Lord is for those who fear him.

You translate counsel, or I think ESV has the friendship. That's a better translation. The friendship of the Lord. God opens the minds of his people so that he may from his truth speak with them to the ones who fear him.

He speaks from his word and we have friendship, fellowship with God. So he instructs you. There's fulfilling you in his goodness.

The hope of security. Fellowship with the Lord. And then the next one, a deep covenant relationship, the next part of verse 14.

And he will make them know his covenant. Know his ways of his word. Understand it deeply because this covenant is a real, genuine relationship with the true, living, awesome, personal God.

[31 : 00] He's the blessing to come. Now you see why this is the focus of the psalm. You have valley here, you have a valley here, and here's the mountain of trust.

I'm trusting your character, I'm trusting your provision. I'm resolving to do this, no matter what my circumstances tell me. And then he closes it off, verse 15.

My eyes are continually toward Yahweh, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. He desperately desire to keep his thoughts fixed on God. Calvin says this, if your eyes are constantly directed toward God, then you are in a continual state of prayer, which will show itself in complete humility, teachability, and ability to understand the deep things of God.

And he'll eventually bring deliverance. Notice he says the next part of verse 15, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. Literally, bring my feet out.

out of the net that his enemies had placed. In due time, in due time, God will vindicate his people. Why?

[32 : 12] He always vindicates his people, just like he vindicated his son. If the father vindicated his son, who went to the cross, and would look like failure, and destruction, was victory, and success at the cross, and God was so pleased, he brought him back to life, and vindicated his son, he will vindicate you.

He will vindicate his people. In due time, God will vindicate his people. So here again, you have this valley, you're fleeing from the valley of trial, and you're standing on the mountain of trust, trusting the character of God, trusting his provision.

And then notice, remember, this part of the psalm, the beginning, and this part of the psalm, the end, they correspond with each other. So now we're going to go to this part, which leads to the third way to respond, plea from the valley of trouble, 16 to 22, and you see these, 16 to 19, these short little prayer requests, where he's asking God, first, God turned to me, 16 to 19, turn to me and be gracious to me, for I'm lonely and afflicted, the troubles of my heart are large, bring me out of distresses, look upon my affliction and my trouble, forgive all my sins, look upon my enemies for their many, they hate me without, with violent hatred, these short requests, David's giving, pain, because he reflects back upon this valley of trial, of trouble, he's bringing all his complaints and makes his supplication of

God, asking for him to show his unmerited favor, bring me out of the trouble and distresses that have enlarged, verse 18, look upon my affliction and my trouble, as we face affliction we should be ready to examine our hearts, making sure we seek reconciliation with God in every possible way through the powerful cross of Christ, and then verse 19, look upon my enemies for their many, they hate me with violent hatred, that's why he feels lonely and afflicted, he's feeling the weight of this and feeling that God is gone, he asked God to set himself against his enemies because they hated David with a violent hatred, God turned to me, and then notice another request he brings in this plea, God preserve me, preserve me, verse 20 and 21, guard my soul, keep my soul, preserve my soul, and deliver me or snatch me away, notice he says, for I take refuge in you, you're my refuge, you're my strength, he desperately cried out to

God, and Calvin, quote, we must ask God to increase our hope in him when it is small, awaken it when it is dormant, confirm it when it is wavering, strengthen it when it is weak, and raise it up when it is overthrown, cry out to God, he wants to hear, and by the way, it's not raging against God or impugning his character, it's expressing our deepest dependence on him, God save me, God turn to me, God preserve me, look at verse 21, let integrity and uprightness preserve me for I wait for you, subdue in me, in other words, all my sinful passions that could raise up because of my enemies, David desired to exercise purity and self-control over his mind, over his mouth, over his actions, that's why he says, let integrity and uprightness preserve me, remember he said God is good,

[36 : 23] God is upright, so let me reflect that too, it's hard when there's sin there, it's hard when enemies come against you, for I wait for you, he trusted God alone to be his protection and bring it back on his enemies, he wasn't going to put his wrong response on his enemies, so like David, we wait for or trust in God to act, so we're pleading again from the valley of trouble, God turn to me, God preserve me, we're waiting for you, we're trusting you to act, and then notice how he ends this song, God turn to me, God preserve me, God redeem us, that's just not me, it's us, he goes to the wider lens, he's thinking not just merely individually, he's thinking corporately, we should not forget the needs of all of God's people, that God needs to redeem us, redeem Israel, oh God, out of all his troubles, out of all his bondages, out of his distresses, we need God to redeem us, to ransom us from this,

God redeem us, and that's what he does for us at the cross of Christ, we've been redeemed by the death and blood of Christ, and if you're here, you don't know Christ, you need to be redeemed, you need to be ransomed of your sins, come to Jesus, he'll save you, he came, he died for sinners, he rose from the dead, repent and trust Christ, he will save you, so amid the valleys, valleys and the trials, love, stand on the mountain of trust, the truth of the gospel gives us great hope, or as I said at the beginning, God is our rescue and our deliverer as we face the valleys and mountains of life, protect me, guide me, remember me, I'm gonna trust in your person, I'm gonna trust in your provision, God turn to me, God preserve me,

God redeem us, listen to this prayer, I have this prayer written out, listen to how somebody put it in a prayer, God teach us to trust you, even though our enemies surround us, allow us to see your ways, oh Lord, teach us your paths and guide us in your truth, for the sake of your name, for your glory, forgive our iniquities and turn to us in mercy that you alone can demonstrate, we revere you and admit that you are the only refuge from our sins and from those who seek to destroy us, we confide in you alone for our rescue because you alone are gracious, and let's pray, you alone are gracious, oh God, and we will celebrate your grace, we will examine our hearts, we'll bring those hearts to you, and we will express such thanks that you've forgiven us of all our sins, renewing, remembering and renewing our commitment to you through the Lord's supper this morning, your body given, oh Jesus, your life, your blood that was shed, and so we pray as we face trials and trouble, distress, and heartache, oh Father, we will trust in you and your character, we will trust in your provision, you will provide that for us according to your goodness,

I encourage you to take this time, be a few moments of silence, you can examine your heart, heart, you can reflect back from the psalm, these truths, examine your heart, you know you're a sinner, and yet cling to the cross of Christ, cling to Jesus and the cross, we will celebrate that we together as God's people find forgiveness, and we've been reconciled to God, wow, it's a good thing he does not hold our sins against us, he will not bring up past sins, he will not do that, he's reconciled with us, you can celebrate that, and even if you're here, you're not a member of this church, if you come from a church of like faith and practice, partake of this with us, you may, if you don't know Christ, it's not for you, let it be a testimony to you, this is what it means to be a Christian, we follow

Jesus, and we display that grace to each other, as his people, so take a few moments to reflect upon the truth of the gospel, please do that now, and we followers on how are them to veramente lime, because it becomes something they were jap in themj who just fr Ö adelante orsticks Es F