

# Lead Me in Your Righteousness (Psalm 5)

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[ 0 : 00 ] But it is a joy to be back here worshipping with my home church. And so I'm thankful for that. Last week Evan gave a wonderful exposition of Psalm chapter 4.

! Absalom as their backdrop.

And we've already talked about that pretty extensively. So we're not going to go into that as much. But I do want to mention that James Hamilton, he notes as we look forward to Psalm 5, where we'll be today in our Summer in the Psalms series.

James Hamilton notes, he says, If Psalms 3 and 4 reflect that night crisis, Psalm 5 is David's prayer on the morning after those difficulties.

But it doesn't just tie into Psalm 3 and Psalm 4. If what we mentioned when we began our Summer in the Psalms series is accurate, it's true that Psalm 1 and 2 really stand as a gateway, as a doorway into the entire Psalter, that we must understand those in order to understand the remaining Psalms, and that the remaining Psalms, as James Montgomery Boyce notes, that are essentially exposition of these first two Psalms, then it really does tie in well to those as well.

[ 1 : 32 ] So we're continuing to build on everything that we've been going through up to this point. This is much of what we see in Psalm 5, is exposition of those first two Psalms.

The prayer of Psalm 5 is based squarely on the truths and promises of Psalms 1 and 2. David began, David being the blessed man of Psalm 1 and the anointed king of Psalm 2, ultimately pointing to the true and better David in Jesus, but praise these truths of Psalm 5.

In Psalm 5, David's prayer functions as a kind of personal reassurance that God will keep his word and do justice against the wicked. Now there are parts of this Psalm that we're about to read that are a little bit difficult, a lot of times are challenging for us to think about, because we like to think of God as a nice, tame God that we can wrap our minds around, that doesn't offend anyone, and then we get to passages like this, but it's important that we see God for who he is.

And so even through some of these difficult passages that we'll be tackling and working our way through this morning, it's important to see that God is at work, that God is in the midst of this.

And so with this in mind, I hope you'll turn with me to Psalm chapter 5 and listen to these words that we find starting in verse 1. It says, You hate all evildoers.

[ 3 : 30 ] You destroy those who speak lies. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man, but I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.

I will bow down towards your holy temple in the fear of you. Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness. Because of my enemies, make your way straight before me, for there is no truth in their mouth.

Their inmost self is destruction. Their throat is an open grave. They flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God. Let them fall by their own counsels.

Because of the abundance of their transgressions, cast them out. For they have rebelled against you. But let all who take refuge in you rejoice.

Let them ever sing for joy and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you. For you bless the righteous, O Lord, and you cover them with favor as with a shield.

[ 4 : 37 ] And so as we look at this passage this morning, as we take some time to dive through this beautiful psalm of David here, there's a few truths that I want us to keep in mind, that I want to draw our attention to this morning.

And the first is this, to begin with, I want us to see the importance of being dependent on God. Dependence on God is what we see that comes out of this.

Listen to what David is doing and when he is doing it. I want to read those first two verses again. I want you to listen and pick out what David is doing and when he is doing it.

He says, Give ear to my words, O Lord. Consider my groaning. Give attention to the sound of my cry. My King and my God, for to you do I pray.

And so what David is doing, he's praying. And what we're showing next is when he's praying. He says, O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice. In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

[ 5 : 42 ] You see, starting your day with the Lord shows and produces dependence on him. David is praying to God here in the morning. You can hear the desperation in his words.

He is begging God to listen to him and listen to his words. There's a sense of urgency in this prayer, showing David's desperation and his dependence on God.

And it says he's starting his day this way. Starting his day showing that he is dependent on God.

Now I know that we all have different times when we are most fully present with God and different times in which we can have a quiet time, have that time with God.

Some of you may not even fully wake up until 10 o'clock or after you've had a couple cups of coffee or a couple pots of coffee for some of you. But there's a time, there's an importance to this of starting your day when you wake up saying, God, I need you.

I need you now. I can't do this day without you. So David is starting his day with this dependence on God, where he is showing that he is in desperate need of God.

[ 6 : 53 ] One of the many wonderful benefits to prayer in our lives is it shows in a very real way our dependence on God, which sadly I think is one of the reasons that we don't pray as we should.

Because in our lives we aren't doing anything where we are forced to be dependent on God. We like to live comfortable, safe lives where we feel like we are the ones in control.

So let's only do things that we're comfortable with. Let's only do things that we know what the outcome is going to be before we even get started. Let's not rock the boat. Let's only do things that will keep us safe and happy.

And the truth is, this often is coming from a place of insecurity and anxiety. Because we want to control all aspects of our life. We want to control the outcome. We're not going to attempt anything that we could fail at because we want to rely on our own abilities and we want to control those situations.

The truth is that we are not in control. And the security that we are trying to build is a false sense of security. But in this controlled world that we are attempting to create, we are the ones who are in charge.

[ 8 : 09 ] And we are the ones that we depend on. And so if we were to pray in this world that we've created for ourselves, a lot of times what we'd be praying to is ourselves. Because we're the ones who want to be in control.

Often times this is how we live our lives. Like everything is depending on us. We work at our jobs this way. We invest in our marriages this way.

We raise our kids this way. And we often times do ministry in the church this way. But this is not how God intended. You see in John 15, Jesus reminds us in a very real way of our desperate need for him.

And so as David is coming to God right here in this desperate situation in his life where he's saying, God, I'm dependent on you. Jesus reminds us in John 15 that this is for all of us.

He says there, he says, abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

[ 9 : 13 ] I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me you can do very little.

Is that what it says? Apart from me you can do just a few little things. That's not what it says. It says apart from me you can do nothing.

And so what we are reminded of in a very powerful way in this psalm and in Jesus' teaching is our dependence on God. That we need him for everything.

Think about it like this. This past week I was on vacation and we rented a pontoon as a family and we drove the pontoon over to Shell Island in Panama City. Anybody ever been to Shell Island in Panama City?

Okay, several of you have been to Shell Island in Panama City. We went over there and we were looking on the island and actually saw very few shells. It's a little misleading. Not many shells on Shell Island.

[10:11] But we went over there and one of the things that Ressie found while we were there was this tiny little coconut. It was probably the size of a golf ball but sure enough it was a coconut and it looked just like a coconut but it was just really tall and really small and tiny there.

And so we brought it back with us and it was funny. She was showing everybody and we're like, I've never seen a coconut this small. But there wasn't really anything you could do with it. You couldn't crack it open to get some of the coconut meat out or anything like that because it was so small. Now imagine that we decided that, you know what, we'd really like a coconut. So let's put this coconut in the table right here and we're going to all gather around and we're going to start brainstorming ideas of how we can make this coconut grow in size and become bigger and become actually a coconut that we could use.

And we all start talking about different ways and different ideas of how we could do that. If you saw us in that situation, you'd probably be like, Brett, it's time to come home from vacation. This something down here is deeply wrong in your mind.

You need to leave this and come back to normal because we would all think that's crazy. Because that coconut can't grow anymore. Because it's disconnected from the source of life.

[11:32] It's disconnected from this tree. And so there's nothing that you could ever do to make this coconut grow. And on top of that, I really would love to have brought it back. In fact, I asked Ressie if she still had it.

She's like, no, I had to throw it away. It started stinking. It started rotting very quickly and smelling very badly. And so it was thrown away. Not only could it grow anymore, but it was dying. It was dead. It was rotting now. This is how it is many times in our life. When we try to do life and do ministry, when we're disconnected from the source of life.

When we try to do this on our own, when we try to live this life on our own, when we're disconnected from the source of life, it's like trying to make this coconut grow when it's already disconnected from the tree.

It's not going to happen. We must learn to be dependent on God. We must learn to be dependent on Him in all that we say and do. Looking to Him to give our marriages purpose.

[12:27] Trusting in Him with the raising of our kids. Focusing on God to completely, completely to give meaning and purpose to our lives. And being completely dependent on Him for everything in our lives.

And everything as a church, recognizing that we are dependent on Him. This is how David lived much of his life. As a shepherd, he was dependent on God for protection.

When the bear and lions would come, he was dependent on God for protection. As a boy standing before Goliath. And he really wasn't even standing because if you read that, he's running to Goliath. He's charging after Goliath. As in that situation, as a boy before a giant, he's dependent on God. There are times in David's life as king that he was dependent.

There were times when he wasn't. Because let's face it, so many times when things are going well for us, when we think we have everything figured out, it's those times where it's hardest to be dependent on God.

[13:27] Because all of a sudden, we start looking at ourselves and thinking we've got it all figured out. But it's important that we must see our dependence on God. I heard it said one time this way by a pastor.

He says, if dependence is the objective, then weakness is an advantage. Because in those moments of weakness, we're forced to be dependent on God. But now at this point in David's life, when he's on the run from Absalom, his son, he is forced to be dependent on God.

And this is what gives his life strength. To build this confidence in and dependence on God even more, what we get a glimpse of next is this. The character of God.

See the importance of being dependent on God. Now we see next the importance of seeing the character of God. This is the section that can sometimes be difficult to wrap our minds around. Many times we don't like to think about the wrath of God. We don't like a God that offends us. We don't like a God that's tame. We want a God that's tame. A God who is a slightly better version of ourselves.

[ 14 : 32 ] But the reality is this is not only not beneficial to us to see God this way. But it's a necessity for us to see God as he truly is.

Listen to this middle section as we read it again right here starting in verse 4. It says, for you are not a God who delights in wickedness. Evil may not dwell with you.

The boastful shall not stand before your eyes. You hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.

I will bow down towards your holy temple in the fear of you. Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies. Make your way straight before me.

For there is no truth in their mouth. Their inmost self is destruction. Their throat is an open grave. They flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God.

[ 15 : 33 ] Let them fall by their own counsels. Because of the abundance of their transgressions, cast them out. For they have rebelled against you.

Did you hear some of those attributes and characteristics of God as we read that passage? David says, he says, you're not a God who delights in wickedness. Evil may not dwell in you.

David's not teaching God something about God here. He's not saying, God, you're not somebody who likes wickedness. Remember, what David's doing is he's reminding himself of who God is.

He's reminding himself in the midst of this desperation of the character and attributes of God in some of his most difficult and trying times of his life. And this is what's giving his life power.

This is what's giving his life meaning here. This is what's giving him comfort. He is saying that wickedness that we see all around us is not characteristic of who you are.

[ 16 : 34 ] This is not something that you approve. In fact, David reminds himself that God hates evildoers. He is reminding himself that, in fact, these enemies of the faithful, if they were to succeed, it would contradict who God is and the character of what he has called him to.

So James Montgomery Boyce, he notes the connection between this psalm and the previous psalms. Here we see God's distaste and distress for the wicked, but we also see this is something that God has spoken about all through the psalms up to this point.

Up to this point, we see each of the preceding psalms has spoken of the wicked through different, though differently in each psalm. Psalm 1 considers the way of the wicked as opposed to the way of the righteous.

Psalm 2 traces the rebellion of the wicked against God, particularly that of the kings and the rulers of the earth. In Psalm 3, the psalmist has been attacked by wicked persons and asked God for protection from them.

In Psalm 4, the wicked have slandered the psalmist and he is asking God for vindications. In this psalm that we're studying today, in Psalm 5, what we're seeing is David refers to the wicked as those whose prayers the Lord will not hear and in whom he has no pleasure.

[ 17 : 53 ] David is distinguishing himself from those opposed to God. Again, David is reminding himself that God hears when his children call out. Later in the psalms, in Psalm 66, another psalmist makes mention of the importance of this and how he says, if I had cherished iniquity in my heart, if he had cherished sin in his heart, he says the Lord would not have listened.

And oftentimes, we take sin too lightly, probably because we don't fully understand the righteousness of God. Probably we take it too lightly because we don't understand the character of God.

Because if we did, we would not sin as much or as grievously as we do. But we live in a time where sin is often celebrated and rarely called out.

And there's a real danger in this. One of those dangers is that we no longer see our need for God's grace. Because you see, if we don't have a high view of sin, we're not going to have a high view of God's grace.

A low view of sin leads to a low view of grace because when we don't see our sin as something that separates us from God, then all of a sudden, we don't need something, we don't need to see Jesus as a savior because we don't need it to be saved from anything.

[ 19 : 09 ] And so, when we see sin for what it is, it leads to a high view of God's grace. But also, when we don't see it this way, there's no real repentance. The turning from sin to God.

Charles Spurgeon once said, he says, if I hate sin because of the punishment, I have not repented of sin, I merely regret that God is just.

You see, we must see the character of God in our lives. It's clear how God sees the wicked and the sin in this passage, but listen to the words of verse 7. It says, but I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.

Through your love, I will enter the house. And so, we see God's wrath, his justice here, but we also see God's love as we look at this. This, when I was reading through this, it kept reminding me of a song that a lot of times we'll sing.

In fact, one that the choir led us in just a few weeks ago. Our sins, they are many, but his mercy is more. This is the beauty of seeing God for who he is.

[ 20 : 16 ] We see our sin against a holy and perfect and righteous God, but we also clearly see the beauty of God's grace when we see it this way. Praise God that even in our sin, God has made a way for redemption that doesn't even compromise one of his characteristics or his attributes.

And where we can see this beautifully displayed is by looking to the cross. We can look at the cross and see the attributes of God on perfect display. God's love, of course, when we look to the cross. We can see God's love and the fact that he would send his son, his only son, to live in this world, to leave the glory of heaven, live a life that we couldn't live and die a death that he doesn't deserve, but a death that we deserve.

We can clearly see God's love, but we can also clearly see God's justice when we look at the cross. You see, God couldn't just look down and say, everybody's forgiven and make a blanket statement because he is perfect in his justice.

He's perfect in his justice, meaning there has to be a payment for this sin. So we look to the cross. We see God's love. We see his justice. We see his wrath completely poured out on his son, but we also see God's grace.

[ 21 : 32 ] We see God's mercy. We see God's righteousness on full and perfect display when we look to the cross. By looking at God's attributes and the character of God, we begin to see God more clearly for who he is.

This is part of what it means to magnify God, to make much of God, to magnify him. I was reading a book one time talking about the different ways that you can magnify something.

The author basically said there's two ways. He says you can either magnify something by taking something incredibly small and making it big, and you do this through a microscope or a magnifying glass.

And you use those to take something that's incredibly small and make it really big. But he said there's another way that you can magnify something, and he said that's with a telescope. You can take a telescope and look at something that's infinitely large and focus in on one part of it.

And by focusing in on one part, let's say a star that is light years and light years and light years and light years away, focusing on that star, and all of a sudden you realize how big this star is.

[ 22 : 44 ] And then all of a sudden by realizing how big this one star is, then it opens your eyes to seeing how big the universe is. how big everything is. And he says this is what it means to magnify God.

We start taking those attributes and those characteristics of who God is, and we get a little glimpse of that, and then all of a sudden it opens our eyes to the creator God who spoke everything into existence.

The one who speaks and worlds and galaxies are formed. The one who is our savior, who sent his son so that we could have a relationship restored with him.

We start looking at these things and we are reminded of God's omnipotence, that he's all-powerful over everything. We're reminded of his omniscience, that he knows everything.

We're reminded that he's omnipresent, that he's everywhere that we may go in this life. He is with us. We're reminded of his immutability, that God is never changing.

[ 23 : 41 ] And so as we get a glimpse of these things, and as we start focusing in on these things, we start magnifying and putting in perspective who God truly is.

And so this is what David is reminding himself of in this. He's reminding himself of the character and nature of who God is. He's showing that he's dependent on him.

He's reminding himself of the character of who God is. And then because of this, we have the privilege of experiencing the joy that can only come from God. The joy that can only come from God.

Listen to these last two verses. But let all who take refuge in you rejoice. Let them ever sing for joy and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.

For you bless the righteous. O Lord, you cover him with favor as with a shield. The perspective of those who are dependent on the Lord and make much of God is seen clearly in these verses.

[ 24 : 44 ] With God as our refuge, we can experience joy that could not otherwise be explained. Charles Spurgeon, who I love to read, and I think it's pretty obvious by now that if you don't know I like to read Charles Spurgeon, then you haven't been listening very much because I quote him quite often, but especially when it comes to the Psalms.

Especially in the Psalms, his words are so helpful and relevant for us today. Charles Spurgeon, he speaks of this joy here in four different ways. He says the joy that's being talked about that David has right here in the midst of this is universal.

He says the joy is universal to all who trust the Lord. Let all who take refuge in him rejoice. Let everyone who puts their trust and takes their refuge in God, makes God their safety and not anything in this world, let those who find God as their refuge, let them rejoice.

But he also says that he is constant. The joy is constant. Let them ever sing for joy. It's not something that's going to end. It's going to go on and on forever.

The joy that we get to experience as believers isn't something that's going to be taken away. It's constant. He says let them ever sing for joy.

[ 26 : 05 ] But also Spurgeon notes that this joy is manifested. It's actualized. The joy is not just theoretical, but it's actual. And it's displayed in many ways in the life of the believer.

In this passage in particular, this joy is manifested. It's made real through their singing, through David's singing. He says, I will sing for you. And so the joy that we experience as believers is not just in theory like, oh yeah, we should have joy.

But no, it's something that actually gets displayed in our lives as we experience this. And finally, he says this joy is logical. Our joy as believers is logical.

The joy we experience has an explanation. Spurgeon notes, he says, a man may be sad, though he cannot explain his sadness. Or he may be greatly glad, though he cannot set forth the reasons for his joy.

But the joy of a believer in God has a firm foundation. It's not the baseless fabric of a vision. The joy of faith burns like coals, and yet it can be calmly explained and justified.

[ 27 : 14 ] The joyful believer is no lunatic carried away by delusion. He has a because which to account for all of his joy.

And the because that we have as believers is Jesus Christ. Because of what he accomplished, we have a reason for joy.

There is a real lasting joy that comes from taking our refuge in God. Many times we see taking refuge in God as a temporal event in our lives until we get our lives figured out.

We think of God as kind of a band-aid that we'll put on when we're hurting. And while we're hurting, we'll put that on. And God's going to depend on him then. And we're going to have the joy during that difficult time.

But then once we get through it, then we'll rip that band-aid off and try to do it ourselves again. We think of God as an umbrella in a rainstorm. While it's raining, I'm going to hold him up here to cover me during this time.

[ 28 : 12 ] But we don't understand the beauty of taking that refuge in him no matter what we're going through in this life. And when we do understand that we experience joy like nothing else in this world.

This is what it means to give your life to Jesus. To let him be your refuge, period. Not a reset to fix your problems just so that you can fall back into them.

But as a constant source of refuge. In order for us to experience this joy, we must truly be dependent on Jesus. We look at our own sinful lives and let that point us to dependence.

Let it show us that left to us, we can never save ourselves. And we're completely dependent on God for salvation. But we're also to be dependent on him to live in this world.

To experience the joy that comes from serving God. We must continue to see our works not as a means of gaining something from God. But as a response to his love and his grace to us.

[ 29 : 20 ] One of my favorite authors, Jerry Bridges, he puts it this way. He says, all of us have a natural drift towards a performance-based relationship with God. We know that we are saved

through faith, not by works.

But we somehow get the idea that we bear blessings by our works. After throwing overboard our works as a means of salvation, we drag them back on board as a means of maintaining favor with God.

All of a sudden we start this vicious cycle all over again that where we have to do in order to gain. Let us continue in our dependence because that is where joy is found.

So is there any place in the Christian life for the practice of spiritual disciplines? For obedience to God and for sacrificial service to him? Of course there is. The more a person counts his loss, his own righteousness, and lays hold by faith of the righteousness of Christ, the more he'll be motivated to live and to work for God.

The more we are dependent on Jesus, the more joy we will experience and the more that we want to give our lives to him. Think of it this way. The same Christian activity can either be an expression of our own righteousness, where we think earns his favor with God, or it can be an expression of love and gratitude because we already have his favor through the righteousness of Christ.

[ 30 : 50 ] Righteous living is essential to the believer, but it comes from a relationship with Jesus and not as a means of getting or even keeping that relationship.

So as we close, I want to ask you a couple of questions this morning. To begin with, have you ever experienced salvation by depending on Jesus?

In other words, have you placed your faith and your trust in Jesus to save you from your sins? Not based on your works, but based on Christ's work on the cross. If not, then in just a moment when we have a time of invitation, I encourage you to come forward.

That's something I'd love to talk with you about. Would love to get that right today where you can know that you are dependent on God as the only one who will never fail you.

And so we'd love to have that conversation with you today, right now. But if not now, maybe as you're continuing to think about this, maybe God is continuing to work in your lives, give me a call, text me, stop by the office sometime this week.

[ 31 : 52 ] This is a conversation I would love to have with you. But if that's something you have already done, and you've placed your faith and your trust in him, then I want to ask you this question. If this is something you've already done, are you continuing to be dependent on him?

Are you saying, God, I need you every hour? I need you now. I need you in an hour from now. I need you today. I need you tomorrow. I need you forever. God, I need you.

Are you living that life where you're dependent on him? And a great way to show this and to cultivate this is by starting your day in prayer and reading God's word.

Because what you're doing in a very practical and real way is showing that you're dependent on him to move and to work and to sustain. As we see God as our constant refuge, as we constantly see God's attributes and his characteristics, as we magnify God by looking at who he is, it will produce joy like nothing else in this world.

Because he is a refuge. He is a strength. He is our hope that will never fail no matter what we are going through in this life. And so wherever God is speaking to you this morning, I want to encourage you to respond in a way that brings his name, honor, and glory.

[ 33 : 12 ] Father, thank you so very much for your word. Thank you for what it teaches us about you. Thank you for what we are reminded of as we read through your word that you are our source of strength.

God, help us to be dependent on you. Help us to live lives where we look to you and we attempt great things for you because we are dependent on you. Because if you're not working, then they're going to fail.

So Lord, help us to live lives that are dependent on you. And help us to do so by looking at who you are. Looking at your attributes. Looking at your characteristics. Reminding ourselves, not of something new, but of something we already know.

That you are the creator, God. That you are greater than anything in this world. And so Lord, let that be what gives us boldness. Let that be what gives our lives meaning and purpose and joy like nothing else can.

And so Lord, if there's somebody here today that's never placed their faith and their trust in you, then Lord, I pray that today they would go from death to life. And Lord, for us that have, I pray that you would use this passage, strengthen our lives, help us to point us to you as a source of

everything that we need in this life.

[ 34 : 26 ] And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to invite you to take your hymnal and turn to hymn number 104. Amazing grace. And if God is speaking to you this morning, won't you respond as we stand together and sing?

Amen. Amen.