

Why should we trust God

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[0 : 00] Well, please turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 25. There's a psalm which begins with a very simple statement of trust and faith in the Lord.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul, O my God, in you I trust. And right away the psalmist is determined to fix his mind and his heart upon the Lord.

It is a psalm that's written in a particular way in the original language because I'm told that each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Now, of course, you can't bring that out in the English version and we probably lose a little bit because of that. But because it's written in that kind of way, it's perhaps not so easily logical as some of the other psalms.

And the subject matter kind of jumps around and you think you've dealt with one bit and suddenly it pops up again later on in the psalm. But at least just taking on board that it has the complete Hebrew alphabet at the beginning of each verse.

[1 : 19] It gives us a sense of completion. That when we trust in God, everything is his. When our faith is in God, the beginning to the end, everything about our lives is under that and in control of that.

It's never a mistake to step. It is a mistake to step outside of God's trust. Because what God has for us from beginning to end is always the best and is always right.

The psalmist, as I've said, begins with a statement that he is going to trust in God. And I think the psalm gives us the reasons why he finds it beneficial to trust in God.

And so we're going to ask ourselves that question this evening. Why should we trust God? What's good about trusting God?

What reasons can we find in this psalm to encourage us to put our faith and our trust in God? And of course, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2 : 34] I think if we pull together the thoughts that are scattered throughout the psalm, we'll find three main answers to that particular question.

Why should we trust God? I would suggest the first answer that David would give us is that God deals with our enemies.

God defeats our enemies, you see. There it is in verse 2. Let not my enemies exalt over me. It's kind of repeated away down there in verse 19.

Consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me. There was David very, very much aware of enemies in his life.

I think every one of us here that knows and loves the Lord Jesus Christ would certainly have found that the moment we did, by God's grace, put our faith and trust in the Saviour, we were aware of enemies.

[3 : 36] Perhaps not so aware of them before that day. But from that day, very, very much aware that there are enemies out there who would seek to destroy us and destroy the faith that God has given us.

From the very beginning of time, the Bible makes it clear there's an enemy of the souls of men and women. His name is, of course, Satan. And the focus of his whole life and ministry, if we can call it that, is to destroy.

To destroy God's people. To destroy God's word. To destroy the church of God. To destroy the word of God. To destroy the morality of God.

He is out there to destroy. That's all he ever wants to do. Who is to destroy because he knows in his heart of hearts that he himself is already destroyed.

And he just wants to take everybody and everything with him into destruction and into death. And so here is David, in his experience with God, aware of enemies.

[4 : 44] And we know from his own life, he spent a great deal of time running from enemies or engaging with enemies. Here he is then crying out for God's help to deal with the enemies of his life and of his soul.

Satan doesn't, of course, work alone. He has a huge army of demonic forces that he employs in his work.

He offers powers of wealth and power to people. Using human beings. Seeking to destroy everything he possibly can.

In the high church we've just completed on Sunday night and evening study in the book of Esther. And there we saw the enemy of God. Working for the destruction of God's people.

But at the same time, wonderfully, we saw how God turned the tables on the enemy. The gallows built to hang Mordecai 75 feet high over the city ended up hanging Haman, the arch enemy of God and his people.

[6 : 01] Satan was dealt with on the cross. The work that Jesus came to do was finished in that sense on the cross.

When Jesus rose from the dead, he proclaimed the victory of the cross. We put our trust in this God.

Because he is a God who deals with our enemies. He has already done so. Someone said, If there were no enemies, there would be no battles.

If no battles, no victory. If no victory, no crown. Corrie ten Boom said, The first step on the way to victory is to recognize your enemy.

Someone else said, The triumphant Christian does not fight for victory. He celebrates victory. Already won.

[7 : 09] The victorious life is Christ's business. Not ours. We trust God because he defeats our enemies. We trust God because in defeating our enemies, he sets us free.

Now there's just a wee hint of that in the psalm. And we find it there in verse 15. My eyes are ever towards the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

Here's the God then who sets us free. Part of God's plan in dealing with our enemy is to rescue us from his grasp.

Satan sets many a net to catch us. Many an unsuspecting person has fallen into his clutches. Because of the blindness of the very nature of our sin, we find ourselves entrapped by it, grabbed by it, crushed by it from time to time.

Temptations never far away. And sometimes it's so easy to feel entangled by it. But when we trust in the God who defeats the enemies, we find a God who defeats the enemies.

[8 : 50] We find a God who sets us free. A God who lifts us out of the net.

In the story of Alice in Wonderland, there's a little bit when Alice is running about and she sees something unusual. She sees a lock running about here and there and looking quite confused.

And eventually she says to the lock, What's the lock? What's the matter? What's wrong? What do you want? And the lock says, I'm looking for something to unlock me.

How many people need unlocked? They need unlocked from their sin, don't they? They need unlocked from their addiction. They need unlocked from a way of life that's not nice.

They need unlocked. They need set free. Charles Wesley, in one of his great hymns, said this, Long my imprisoned spirit lay, Fast bound in sin and nature's night.

[10 : 01] Dine eye diffused a quickening ray. I walk, the dungeon flamed with light. Chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

The God who deals with the enemy sets us free from the net the enemy has cast upon us.

And when he sets us free, he is the God who gives us integrity. We find that there in verse 21. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

You see, when God sets us free from bad things, he doesn't leave that part of us empty. That would be foolish. Jesus told a parable about that, didn't he?

About a man with a demon inside him. And when the demon was cast out, because nothing was put into the empty place, the demon came back with some of his friends and filled that place.

[11 : 08] And he was even worse than he was in the first instance. When God sets us free from sin and from the enemy, he puts things in its place.

And one of the things he puts is integrity and uprightness. Turns us round. He gives us new values.

Changes our priorities. He gives us new attitudes. We've got new things we want. Our desires are different.

And these things are there in our lives and in our hearts. Why should we trust in God? Why should we trust in Jesus? Because he deals with our enemies.

Why should we trust in God? Why should we trust in Jesus? Because he deals with our sin. Now obviously that's very closely linked in with the first point we've been thinking of.

[12 : 17] The main enemy, the main weapon rather, that the enemy uses to beat us with and exalt over us is our sin. And so one of the great things that God does for us is to deal with our sin.

To strip Satan off that weapon. Now notice some of the aspects that David highlights for us as he seeks here to deal as God deals with our sin.

First thing he would say in this respect is that God deals with our shame. You'll notice that in verse 3. Indeed none who wait for you shall be put to shame.

In verse 11 For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt for it is great. In verse 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged.

Bring me out of my distresses, he says. Verse 18 Consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins.

[13 : 24] And verse 20 O guard my soul and deliver me. Let me not be put to shame. For I take refuge in you. Here's the God who deals with our shame.

One of the effects of sin in the human heart is of course to deaden the conscience. It deadens the spirit and the soul of men and women.

There are a huge number of sins today that are no longer thought of as sins. And there is no shame attached to it, it seems, because sin deadens that aspect of things.

I still remember a few years ago visiting an old lovely Christian lady in our congregation and when we walked out to the gate afterwards the neighbour came out.

She was a woman in her early 60s and I'd met her somewhere down the line and so when I'd finished talking to her member I turned down and said and how are you today?

[14 : 30] She said Oh I'm fine but my partner's not well. And I'm standing there saying but I'm the minister. This is Lewis.

You're over 60. And you've no shame. Sin deadens our shame.

It kills it and that's happening throughout our country and throughout our community. But when the spirit of God begins to work in somebody's heart shame resurrects because sin is seen for what it is and all the filthiness of it begins to be exposed.

And David as he sinned from time to time expresses that shame amazingly in some of his psalms not least in Psalm 51 of course.

But what does he discover? He discovers that in God in Jesus there is one who deals with the shame who takes the shame the guilt the affliction the trouble notice the different words takes it away.

[15 : 56] And when we have been brought through that experience of conviction of sin he leads us by his grace into the experience of freedom from it.

God deals with our shame. He washes us clean. Way back in the early 19th century there was a Hungarian man called Semmelweis who was a doctor and he discovered that a great many ladies died in childbirth and he deduced that the reason for their deaths was that very often doctors moved from having done post-mortems and dead bodies straight into the maternity wards without washing and he began to make connections began to wash his own hands and saw a remarkable drop in the number of child and mother deaths and he tried to persuade the doctors and the nurses that you need to wash your hands before you go into the maternity wards but they didn't listen.

We've always done it. This is how we've always done it. We've never washed our hands before. Why should we begin now? And they refused to do anything about it.

He eventually died insane and his wash bowls were left unused. Jesus said unless I wash you you have no part in me.

we have to be washed. We have to have the filth removed. We have to have it taken away from us.

[17 : 55] And that's what's done by the Lord Jesus. God deals with our sin. God remembers his mercy.

There it is in verse 6. Remember your mercy O Lord and your steadfast love for they have been of old. Goes without saying that if our sin problem is ever going to be dealt with it will only be dealt with by mercy.

It will only be dealt with by grace. David knew that. We see it again and again in his Psalms. There's nothing in us that can lever forgiveness from the hands of God.

Plenty think they can. An ounce of religion a gram of morality a farthing of charity and they think they can win their forgiveness.

But it can't be won. It can only be received. It can only be given by a merciful God.

[19 : 09] Why should we trust in God? Because he is a merciful God. And there's no other grounds on which our sin can be forgiven.

And so God forgives our sin. It pops up in verse 7. It pops up in verse 11. It pops up in verse 18.

It pops up in verse 20. And David uses different words. It's pardon in verse 11. It's forgive in verse 19.

It's redeem in verse 20. And at the same time in verse 7 he asks God to no longer remember his sins.

forgiveness. And so very cleverly he slips in the idea that forgiveness is possible because a price has been paid, redemption, blood has been shed.

[20 : 10] And because of that sin can be forgiven and forgotten and pardoned and wiped out. But more than that it can also be forgotten.

And so he slips that in. Forget my sin God. Don't remember my sin anymore. Put it away. Remember me.

But don't remember my sin. the God whose forgiveness is so complete that God doesn't remember it.

That's why we need to trust in this God who deals with our sin. And in dealing with our sin he deals with our fear.

There's no doubt that throughout the psalm as David suffers under the attack of the enemy and as the enemy puts up all David's sin before his mind there is a sense of fear.

[21 : 12] David talks of afflictions in verses 16 and 18. He talks of distresses in verse 18. He talks of the violent hatred of the enemy in verse 19.

But while these fears hover around his head there's one overwhelming fear that can deal with all these fears.

He talks here of the fear of God. There it is in verses 12 and in verse 14.

Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. God deals with our fears.

fear in God means friendship with God. Someone said this, fear imprisons, faith liberates, fear paralyzes, faith empowers, fear disheartens, faith encourages, fear sickens, faith heals, fear makes useless, faith makes serviceable.

[22 : 33] And most of all, fear puts hopelessness at the heart of life, while faith rejoices in God. Someone else said the remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else.

Whereas if you don't fear God, you fear everything else. God deals with our fears and leaves us just to fear God.

There is a lovely little story, the little boy that was terrified in the midst of a thunderstorm and cried out to his mum and dad. His mum and dad came rushing to you, you'll be fine, God's here with you, you'll be fine, and they left him and went back to their bed.

But the thunder and lightning kept, another boy cried out again, I'd really like somebody with skin on to be here. The thing is, we actually do have a God with skin on because he became flesh and dwelt amongst us and because he came into this world to be with us.

He can deal with all our fears others because he knows them and understands them. That's the second reason we need to trust in God tonight.

[24 : 07] Now the third reason I would put before you from this psalm is that we need to trust in God because God deals with our future. One thing is plain and that is despite all the crippling harassment of the enemy in David's life that throughout this psalm he never loses hope.

The devil has not removed the hope of a good life, a worthwhile future from the heart of David.

And again and again he puts his faith in a future, in God's ways, in God's way of doing things and he trusts in the God who knows the future.

And so note, God shows us the way to go. It's his prayer throughout the psalm. Make me to know your ways, he says in verse four, teach me your paths, lead me in your truth and teach me for you are the God of salvation.

Good and upright is the Lord, therefore he instructs sinners in the way, he says. He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way, he says.

[25 : 28] All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

God shows us the way to go. God is the God who deals with the future. God is the God who's a step ahead of us. Someone said, didn't they, when we are saved, we are saved to serve.

Jesus constantly cried out to people, come and follow me. At no point is there ever a picture of folks just sitting there doing nothing.

Always there is the cry into service, the cry into a future, the cry into following, the cry into doing what God wants us to do.

There is the cry to go the way that God wants us to go. There is the cry throughout the psalm of David to find that way, to find the future, to find the plan, and to get himself going on that way with God.

[26 : 41] Someone said, to know the will of God is the greatest knowledge, but to do the will of God is the greatest achievement. A famous Christian called A.T. Pearson said, this is how he prayed every day, to go as I'm led, to go when I'm led, to go where I'm led.

God shows us the way to go, that's why we need to trust him. We need to trust him because God's ways are the best.

Did you notice that rich verse 13? His soul shall abide in well-being and his offspring shall inherit the land.

God's ways are best. We need to find him, we need to go there. God promises us peace of mind, he promises us inheritance here in this earth.

He's talking about meaning and fulfillment and purpose and life. Now that's the future that he wants us to enjoy.

[27 : 53] God's ways are best. I've had three major calls in my life and I've struggled in each case with these calls.

The first call was to go and be minister in the remotest part of Scotland and Kinloverbie and Durnus away up there in the far northwest of Scotland and we struggled so much with that call because it seemed so remote and so far away but we submitted to the call and went there and found it was the best for us at that time in our lives.

We were subsequently called as you know to go to South Korea halfway round the world with three little children. God it's too far, it's too much, it's too hard, we said but we went and found it to be the best for God gave us so much wonderful things to do and to learn.

Then of course came the call to Stornoway. Stornoway, God. Lewis had said in Canberra, at least in Canberra, I can get in my car and go anywhere but if I ever went to Lewis I'd be stuck.

No, Lewis, God, please. And we came and it's been the best and the last year's been the best of the best because God's ways are the best.

[29 : 31] Because the God who knows the future and shows us the way to go and knows what's best for us has only blessing in mind for his people.

Oh my God, in you I trust. Let me not be put to shame. Let not mine enemies exult over me.

It's plain that the future which God has in mind for those who've been saved by his grace is a future of fellowship and of relationship and of friendship.

The most precious blessing God gives us is himself. Many times in the psalm does it tell us I'm waiting God, I'm waiting for you.

You're my God, you I want. It's fellowship with you that is the deepest and richest and most blessed thing.

[30 : 40] He talks of steadfast love, he talks of covenants, he talks of friendship here in this psalm. It's all to do with knowing, being, walking, living, loving, God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's the future. That's what he has for each of us. A walk with him where we can say as David says there in verse two, oh my God, my God, my friend, my saviour, my forgiver, my God.

why should we trust in God? Because he deals with our enemies, he deals with our sin, and he deals with our future if we trust him.

Amen. Amen.