

For Your Name's Sake, O Lord

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[0 : 00] Amen. Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of Psalms. And we are today in Psalm chapter 25.! Open a copy of God's Word.

Open and read along with me as I read. Let's stand when you found it in honor of the reading of God's Word. Psalm chapter 25. David says, To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust. Let me not be put to shame. Let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame.

They shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me.

For you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long. Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

[1 : 26] Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions, according to your steadfast love. Remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord.

Therefore, he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.

My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged.

[2 : 30] Bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me.

O guard my soul and deliver me. Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all of his troubles. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

Lord, we praise you for this psalm of confidence, for this prayer of trust and dependence on you.

We pray, Lord, as we read it, that you would shape in our hearts, trust and dependence on you.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. That you may be seated. Everyone knows what it's like to face trouble, but not everyone knows where to turn when we face trouble.

[3 : 37] In fact, I think that you would agree, most people tend to respond in one of four ways. I wonder if you could place yourself in any of these four responses. One way that people tend to respond when trouble comes, when storms arise, when they face trials, when life gets hard, they respond by looking to a different day.

Maybe it was yesterday. All my troubles seemed so far away. Maybe it's a day sometime in the future. Maybe things will get better. This too shall pass.

They just kind of hunker down. If they are a ship in a storm, then their ship has no rudder. The storm blows. The wind blows. They just kind of float and hope that eventually someday the storm will pass and they will wind up on a beach somewhere.

That's one response. Another response, another way people tend to respond to trial is with distraction. Maybe this is you. They're going through some sort of hard time, and so instead of dealing with it, they distract themselves in some way.

Maybe they turn to some sort of vice. Maybe they distract themselves with alcohol or pornography or food or television or entertainment.

[4 : 47] They do whatever it takes just to take their mind off of the situation. They're in the storm, but they don't want to look up at the storm, and so they just duck down. Maybe they start polishing the boat instead.

Or a third way, people tend to respond. Some of you are wired this way is that you respond with determination. Things get hard around you, and so you say, I'm just going to get through this. I'm going to try harder. I'm going to push harder. I'm going to push my way through. They see the storm coming, and so they just row and row and row and row harder and harder and harder until eventually what happens?

They wear out. Or still another way. People tend to respond. A trial is in defeat. A trial comes. The affliction hits. Everything gets hard, and they say, this is just how things are for me. I can never catch a break. I always get the short end of the stick.

[5 : 47] They respond with this sense of defeat. They see the storm coming, and they just toss their oars into the water, and they give up. I wonder which one of these sounds like you.

David, here in Psalm chapter 25, he shows often afflicted people like us a better way to respond in times of trial. In the midst of affliction, David responds in dependence upon the Lord.

This psalm is an expression of deep-rooted dependence that is based on the character and the covenant of the Lord.

Here's the big idea for us this morning from Psalm 25. God's people can depend on the Lord because of his character and his covenant.

I'll say that again. That's our main message this morning. If you get this, then I'm satisfied. God's people can depend on the Lord because of his character and his covenant.

[6 : 51] So let's take a look this morning. We'll see it in two parts this morning. First, we see the cry of the afflicted. And second, we'll see the character and the covenant of God. First, we see here the cry of the afflicted.

Psalm 25 is an interesting psalm to study. It's very intentionally arranged. It's really creative the way that David composed it. It's actually, it's an acrostic poem.

In the Hebrew, each line begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It's almost a complete acrostic except it's missing just a couple of letters for some unknown reason, unbeknownst to me. But it's also composed in such a way that it has the main idea right in the middle and it's sort of like a sandwich. Both the beginning and the end of the psalm, we have David crying out to the Lord and his affliction.

But right there in the middle is the why. And that's the main idea. That's the main point. He cries out because of the covenant and the character of the Lord.

[7 : 52] And so we're gonna take those two parts, but it's gonna be a little bit different because we're gonna do the beginning and the end together with the cry of the afflicted. And then we'll focus in on the character and covenant of God.

Why is David crying out to the Lord? He does this a lot, doesn't he? All through the Psalms, David is crying out to the Lord. Let's look and see why.

For one, it seems clear he's crying out for physical protection. David has enemies, doesn't he? We see that in verse two. He cries out, let me not be put to shame.

Let not my enemies exalt over me. And again, in verse 19 at the end, he says, consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me.

David has enemies. And maybe you know what it's like to have enemies. Maybe people at work really don't like you too much. Homeowners associations make your lives miserable.

[8 : 54] Well, here in the month of June, maybe in pride month, you have enemies that hate you because of your refusal to participate in things that are going on around you. Christians throughout the world and in more dangerous places than where we live here, who live in oppressive and dangerous places, they face enemies who want them dead.

It's dangerous for them to do what we're doing right now. We all need physical provision and protection. And so here, David cries out for this protection. Lord, help me from my enemies.

But it's not only physical protection he wants. He also cries out for comfort. David has real emotional needs here as well, doesn't he?

David is in emotional distress. He's in turmoil. Verses 2 and 3, he's worried about being put to shame. He doesn't want his enemies to exalt over him and gloat over him.

In verse 16, it says he's lonely. He's afflicted. The troubles of his heart are enlarged. He cries out, bring me out of my distress.

[10:02] And I know you've felt like this before. How many of us have felt lonely and afflicted? You've probably felt this weighed down heart that David feels here.

This is normal experience here on this side of the fall. We live in a world that's weighed down by the effects of sin in the world. We feel often emotional distress.

We feel often lonely and afflicted. And we all need, sometimes more than others, we all need comfort, relief, rest, encouragement.

David takes these emotional experiences, these emotional needs to the Lord as well, independence. Lord, help me. But not only that, a third reason he cries out. Here in verses 4 through 6, David cries out for guidance.

David cries out for direction from the Lord. Look there to verse 4. He says, Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

[11:08] Lead me in your truth and teach me. For you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long. It seems like David needs some direction here, doesn't he?

He is not sure what to do. He's not sure where to go. He's in this situation and he doesn't really know how to proceed. And I'd be willing to bet, again, that each one of us has faced this before. Sometimes we need direction. And we wrestle with this. How do we know what God wants from us? Now, I want to just camp out here for a minute because this is important.

For one thing, if you want to know the paths of the Lord, if you want to know the will of the Lord, if you want to know the ways of the Lord, you must open up your Bible and come to the Word of the Lord in a posture of humble dependence, saying, Lord, teach me.

Lord, help me to understand. Lord, by the power of your Spirit, would you illuminate your Word for me so that I can walk in your ways and understand your paths and trust what you've written in your Word.

[12:23] We believe that the Word of the Lord is sufficient for all faith and practice, for all life and godliness. This is how the Lord speaks to us.

This is how the Lord guides His people. Some people are just sitting around waiting for God to speak to them and to guide them and tell them what to do, but their Bibles are somewhere on a shelf collecting dust.

That is not how this works. We seek the will of the Lord with an open Bible. The Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

It is sufficient. And yet, here's our problem, it is not exhaustive, is it? The Word of God is sufficient, and yet, it is not exhaustive.

You will not find anywhere in your Bible telling you who you should date, what college you should go to, what job you should apply for, what shirt you should wear to church this morning, and what you should cook for dinner tonight.

[13:28] We seek the will of the Lord in all things, right? And we want to follow the ways of the Lord in all ways, in all things, and yet, the Word does not specifically address particular instances, particular specific decisions that we all have to make every single day.

So what do we do? We do as David does here. We pray, God, would you lead me? God, would you show me the next step?

God, would you teach me? I don't know what to do, so I pray that you would make it clear.

Ultimately, this is a prayer for wisdom. James tells us, God is pleased to give wisdom to those who ask.

And what is wisdom? Wisdom is being so shaped by the Word of God that you are able to go live it out in your day-to-day situations. You know by the grace of God, by the power of His Spirit at work in you, how to take what is clear in His Word and apply it to what is often unclear in your life.

That's what wisdom is. Church, we need to pray daily for wisdom and direction and guidance from the Lord. I'll give you an example.

[14:49] Four years ago, I did not know where all in all South Carolina was on a map. I couldn't tell you where it was, but now, here I am.

Right? How did that happen? I knew that God had spoken clearly, several clear truths in His Word. He has promised to build His church.

He has promised to use the preaching of His Word to do it. He has promised to spread His glory to the ends of the earth, even to all in all South Carolina. I knew that as a Christian, I was called to be a part of this work in some way.

Those are the clear truths, right? That's what God has said in His Word. What's less clear over here is, how am I in particular called to be a part of that?

How does this clear truth play itself out in my life? That requires wisdom. I had this desire in me, bubbling desire to pastor, a desire to preach, a desire specifically to replant a church.

[15:58] And where does that come from? I believe that came from the Lord. But that desire doesn't necessarily mean that it's God's will. And our desires, our intuitions, our feelings are not authoritative.

God's Word is authoritative. I had this desire, and so what do I do? I call others around me. Others who have the Spirit of God in them as well.

Others who are also seeking the wisdom of the Lord, and they speak into the situation, and they affirm those desires. That still doesn't mean, I know what I'm doing, where I'm going, but we pray, and we ask, Lord, would you guide?

Lord, would you direct? Lord, would you show us your paths, open up the right doors, open up the right conversations, and then we took a step forward.

As the time seemed right, we opened the door to have conversations. God never once spoke outside of His Word to say, yes, this is it. God never once spoke clearly, audibly, to say, no, don't go there, no, don't go there.

[17:06] God never once spoke to me, once during the entire process, and yet, through the counsel of others, through providential opportunities that He put in front of us, through the shaping and changing of my own desires, through the Word of God, and the wisdom of God, He guided our steps, brought us here.

Friend, if you are seeking the will of the Lord for some particular issue, particular circumstance, particular decision, let me just encourage you to do a few things.

For one, open up the book. Read His Word. Shape your life around the Word of God.

Conform your mind to the Word. Romans tells us, do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Then you will be able to test and discern what is the will of God, His good and pleasing and perfect will.

Let the Word, by His Spirit, shape your thinking. Let every decision flow from there. And then pray. Seek counsel. Pray.

[18:19] Seek counsel. Pray. Seek counsel. And then take a step forward. And trust that the Lord is in control. David seeks guidance from the Lord.

That's not all. One more here. David cries out for forgiveness. Look there to verse 6. He says, Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions. According to your steadfast love, remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. Don't remember my sin.

Remember your mercy. Don't remember my sin. Remember me and your steadfast love.

Remember me. Verse 11, he says, Pardon my guilt, for it is great.

David stands in need of forgiveness. King David, just like you and me, is a sinner.

[19:28] And would you notice just how quickly he moves here from physical issues, physical needs, to spiritual issues in prayer? In fact, I think this seems to be primary for him.

Doesn't it seem primary to you? He has enemies wanting him dead over here. He feels lonely over here. But what seems more pressing to him? It's his sin.

It's his need for guidance. This seems to be the bigger issue for David. David cries out to the Lord for forgiveness. Lord, don't remember my sin. David recognizes his own guilt.

He remembers the sins of his youth. David remembers how sinful he has been. He remembers them well. But he prays, Lord, you don't remember them.

You remove them from me as far as the east is from the west. Church, I wonder, do you pray like this? Do you ever cry out to the Lord for protection and comfort and guidance and forgiveness?

[20:36] Some of you, I'd be willing to bet, tend to respond to your troubles by looking forward to a different day, by distracting yourself, by determining just to get through it or just by giving up in defeat.

David shows us that we must depend fully on the Lord. To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul, he says in verse 1.

Oh my God, in you I trust. I take refuge in you, he says, verse 20. I wait for you, he says in verse 21. And in our second point this morning, I just want to ask, why?

Why does he do this? Why does David depend on the Lord? And maybe that you've gone through something in your life and you have other friends, family members, non-believers around you see how you respond in dependence on the Lord and they say, why?

What is it about the Lord that leads you to trust in him? David answers by pointing us to his character and his covenant.

[21 : 44] So second, second, we see the character and the covenant of the Lord. You all know that we've been in the process of fostering and we had to go through training and watch a lot of videos and go to classes in order to become licensed foster parents and one thing that we learned during the training process was that children who have been neglected sometimes don't cry out as often as other children may and people tend to think, well man, these babies are just, they're just great sleepers but really, what it is is that they have been conditioned not to cry out because when they do, nobody comes to their help.

So what's the point of crying? It's tragic, isn't it? David shows us here in the rest of the psalm that God's people cry out to him.

Why? Because of who he is, his proven goodness, his proven faithfulness to them and because he's brought us into this abiding, everlasting, covenant relationship with him.

And notice here how David roots his prayers in the character of God. He is the God of his salvation, verse 5. So that's why he prays for protection and deliverance from his enemies.

He is a God of mercy and steadfast love and so that's why he prays, God remember your mercy not my sin. He is a God who is good and upright, therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

[23 : 24] That's why David prays for guidance, verse 8. David roots his requests, he roots his prayers, he roots his cries out in God's character.

Why cry out if God isn't a good God of salvation? Why cry out if God is not a God of mercy and steadfast love? We're wasting our time if he's not who he says he is.

In fact, David seems to be reflecting on God's own self-revelation to Moses in Exodus chapter 34.

You remember what God said to Moses in Exodus 34 as he revealed himself.

It says, The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.

It's like David looks at this text on one hand, and then he looks at his circumstance in the other hand, and he says, God, I believe what you have said about yourself.

[24 : 52] I believe that you are merciful. I believe that you are forgiving, and so now I'm asking you to show yourself to be merciful to me.

I'm asking you to be forgiving to me. I believe it because you said it in your word. I believe that you are gracious and slow to anger, and I believe that you are abounding in steadfast love.

I believe that you are faithful. you have said it about yourself, and so now would you be slow to anger with me? Would you abound in steadfast love to me?

David is asking God to act in accordance with who he has said that he is. I wonder if we pray this way, church. Don't you just love to hear somebody pray who you can just tell is saturated with the word of God?

It's like that's just the language they speak. They slip in and out of quoting scripture as they pray. Their requests are rooted in who God has said that he is and what God has promised that he will do.

[26 : 04] That is how we ought to pray. We anchor our prayers in his character. God, you are good. God, you are merciful.

God, you are patient. God, you love to show sinners the way. God, you lead the humble in what is right. And so, God, would you do this for me? Would you lead me?

Would you make me humble? Would you show your steadfast love to me? Would you make me obedient? All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

We call out to God because of who he is. Not only this, David also cries out to the Lord because of his covenant.

I want you to think back to Exodus 34 again with me, just for a moment. Let me read it again. The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.

[27 : 24] That second part is a big problem for us, isn't it? That second part is just as much a part of the character of God as the first part. God is just as much full of wrath and holiness and will not clear the guilty as he is full of steadfast love and mercy and slow to anger.

How can we be certain that God will remember mercy and steadfast love and not remember our sins? You see the issue? How can David pray this way, say, God, remember your steadfast love, don't remember my sins?

It is only because God by his own doing has brought David into covenant with himself and has promised of his own initiative to bless David and to be David's covenant God and to wipe away his sins and to be his Lord.

That's the only confidence David has to pray this way. Look there, starting in verse 10. says, all the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

[28 : 56] His soul shall abide in well-being and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him and he makes known to them his covenant.

My eyes are ever toward the Lord for he will pluck my feet out of the net. This is covenant language. All of these prayers of David, everything he's asked for, protection from his enemies, comfort in his affliction, guidance in his indecision, forgiveness of sin, these are all blessings of being in covenant with God.

His steadfast love, his mercy, his patience, his kindness, his goodness towards us, these are all covenant blessings. Not everyone gets to experience these blessings.

Because not everyone is in covenant with the Lord. David prays this way because he is in covenant with the Lord and he knows that the Lord has brought him into covenant with him.

The Lord has promised these good things, these good blessings to David. God's covenant, his promise has brought David and his people into covenant relationship with the Lord.

[30 : 15] And so, David prays. In fact, he calls to mind God's covenant promises to Abraham in Genesis 15. Did you notice that? Verse 13, he adds, the one who is humble, who fears the Lord, who walks in covenant faithfulness, his soul will abide in well-being and his offspring will inherit the land.

Ask yourself who that might be. Does anybody you know fit this description? one that perfectly fears the Lord, is perfectly humble?

Anybody you know that perfectly walks in all his ways? Certainly it wasn't David, not perfectly. It wasn't Abraham or Moses, not perfectly.

the only one to perfectly fulfill God's covenant and to perfectly walk in humble dependence all the days of his life, to walk in all his ways and all his paths, is none other but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ Jesus is the true and better son of David. He is the true and better Israel. He is the one, only one, to perfectly keep God's covenant and he's the only one who by right has earned all of these covenant blessings that David prays for and by grace he gives them freely to sinners like us.

[32 : 04] As Christ prepared to give his life in place of covenant breakers like you and I, he lifted his glass and instituted a new covenant saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood so that now any who are in him, Jew and Gentile alike, any who are in him by faith are now brought into covenant with the Lord.

Lord. How can you know for certain that God is for you and not against you in your sin?

There is but one way. Come to Christ Jesus by faith. How can you know for certain that God will protect you ultimately from all your enemies?

There is but one way. come to the Lord Jesus in faith who died to save us from all our enemies.

How can you know for certain that God will guide you and lead you all the days of your life?

Come to Christ who is himself the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by him. Where do we look to find comfort in our affliction?

[33 : 26] It is by coming to Christ Jesus by faith. How do we know that God will forgive you of every sin? There is but one way.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Not of good that I have done. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. If you are in Christ by faith we trust for his name's sake he will lead us safely home to the true promised land.

In the new heavens and the new earth who is it that is in covenant with the Lord? Galatians 3 tells us it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham the man of faith.

in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. Church as his covenant people we can cry out to him in full dependence and confidence in every circumstance in every affliction trusting that the Lord will teach us and lead us and forgive us and protect us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[35 : 03] But not just us individually. I want you to look there to the end of the psalm in verse 22 and notice how he finishes this psalm. It almost seems out of place doesn't it?

You would expect after all of these individual requests of David that maybe he would finish by saying something like redeem me out of all my troubles God. Would you come and help me redeem me?

What does he say? Redeem Israel oh God out of all his troubles. This is not just a prayer for himself.

He extends it as a prayer for all those who are in covenant with the Lord. All his covenant people.

In church as we think about how to apply this psalm each and every one of us ought to be encouraged. If you are in Christ by faith you ought to be encouraged to cry out to him individually for all of the many problems that you face every single day but not just for yourself.

[36 : 18] Are you crying out on behalf of the church? Are you crying out on behalf of all of God's covenant people those who are in Christ by faith?

Are you so invested in one another's lives that you know what each other needs and what the afflictions of one another's heart is? What's weighing one another down?

Are you praying for one another for protection for comfort for guidance for forgiveness?

forgiveness? David shows us here how to cry out to the Lord in dependence not just for your own troubles but for one another's troubles rooting our cries and our comfort in both the character and the covenant of God.

So listen to this from 2 Corinthians chapter 1 as we close. Paul writes blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with a comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God whereas we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

If we are afflicted it is for your comfort and salvation and if we are comforted it is for your comfort which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we endure.

[37 : 53] Our hope for you is unshaken for we know that as you share in our sufferings you will also share in our comfort. As you look around and you hear the needs around you the troubles that each other goes through throughout our lives.

For those who are prone to just hunker down and wait for a different day to come would you point

them to the present faithfulness of the Lord with them now? For those who are prone to turn to distractions prone to wonder would you point them to their need for the Lord above all else?

For those who are prone to just grit through it and be determined and be strong and push their way through would you point them to the Lord's strength on their behalf? For those who just feel defeated ready to toss in the towel would you point them to the Lord's victory on their behalf in the

coming day when he will return and wipe away every tear from every eye?

Let's pray. Lord we want to be a people who walk in complete dependence on you. We have more needs than we can count and even the ones we can count are just the beginning Lord of our true state our true need.

Father we need forgiveness we need comfort we need protection we need guidance we need your presence with us but Lord we pray asking for these things in confidence because you've promised them to us in Christ.

[39 : 37] We praise you for the gospel of Jesus that that brings us sinners like us into covenant with you and gives us full access to the blessing of knowing you and walking with you in this life.

We love you Lord we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.