

Psalm 25

Introduction – This Psalm is a sustained plea for help and forgiveness, possibly written by David during the rebellion of Absalom. The Psalms teach us much about what and how to pray and the nature of these songs being placed in the church's inspired songbook invites us to find application in our own lives. We are to join David as he trusts in the greater-David Who answered these prayers. *"It is easy to apply the several passages of this psalm to ourselves in the singing of it; for we have often troubles, and always sins, to complain of at the throne of grace"* – Matthew Henry.

Desire, Dependence, and Direction in the Tender Mercies of God (vv1-7) – Verse 1 is the ancient Sursum Corda: "lift up your hearts!" In true worship, we not only lift up voices, but our souls, our hearts and we must do this with an honest desire for God in Whom we trust. Times of distress will then, in Spirit-wrought faith, only increase this desire, for psalm-singing teaches us that only God can deliver us from disappointment in Him in the midst of our enemies.

David finds himself unsure as to what he should do, where he should go, and so he seeks direction from God. He does this because when God leads, it is in His truth and God is his salvation; therefore, *"On You, I wait all the day."* Learn where to direct your questions and upon Whom to wait.

Remember and Remember-not (vv6-7) – Sandwiched in a beautiful chiastic-structure, the Psalmist pleads with God to remember him according to His lovingkindness and mercy and not according to the psalm-singer's transgressions. Never forget that God loves you. Never forget how long that love has existed: *"for they are from of old."* God set His electing love upon you before you could ever obey or disobey Him; His love is based upon His mercies and goodness and not at all because of you. It is on the basis of that love that you may plead and complain before God; you can never earn the right to do so. Do not be like Eve who listened to the devil and doubted God's love. How do you know that God loves you specifically? Simply by believing – by faith. God says, "this is my Word, this is my gospel, this is my Son – now what must you do?" Believe.

Praying the Promises Mixed with Pleas (vv8-14) – Because God is good, He will answer (v8), teaching the humble (v9-10, and we should remember the words of Jesus: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth* – Matt 5:5).

The Secret of the Lord – (*This all runs together*)...but central to all of this section is the secret of the Lord: His covenant with His people (v14). Those who fear God (v12) come to understand His ways (and all other fears are swallowed up – i.e. 1 Pet 3:5-6). God's covenant is established unilaterally by Him and so sinners are brought into new life for His name's sake, and not out of any merit on our own (v11). It is because of His covenant promises that we stand with confidence – *"He himself shall dwell in prosperity and his descendants shall inherit the earth"* (v13). This teaches us to pray with optimism for God's covenant has a particular trajectory in time and space. Consider David's (and your) difficult circumstances and learn how to pray in such times.

The secret of the covenant is learning to pray (1) I don't deserve any of it, and (2) I deserve all of it. In Jesus Christ, we die and we are raised in new life – a life filled with promises of vindication. Do not refuse to be crucified with Him; and do not refuse to be resurrected in Him. These are two regular errors to which we must repent. How is this possible? Fear God and He will show you His covenant.

Deliverance for Me and My People (vv15-22) – The Psalm-singer believes this (v15), but does not rest in pleading his case before God (vv16-21). Acknowledging both his troubles and his sins (v18) which are great (v11), he still prays for deliverance from his enemies (v19-20, v3 – *"without cause"*). Resting in the mercy of God alone (v16), there is no charge that can be brought before God that will stick because we are not pleading as though we deserve to be delivered, but only *"for Your name's sake"* (v11). *"O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do it for Your name's sake; for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against You"* (Jer 14:7). Therefore, "let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You...for I wait for You" (vv20-21).

Answering Far More Than We Ask or Imagine (v22) – Was David's prayer answered? Yes, his kingdom was re-established after the rebellion of Absalom. But David knew that far more was at stake than his own redemption. David's kingdom came to an end, and yet the promise was made and David's kingdom was born again in the greater David whose kingdom is without end. Think of it: you are here and you are Israel because God answered this prayer of David far beyond all he could ask or imagine. And He does so for all of His people in Christ. His tender mercies, His lovingkindnesses, His goodness, His covenant and the secret of the LORD *"is with those who fear Him."*