

THE KING IN A TROUBLED TIME

Psalm 25

Intro: I think that most of you know that I chose to speak in the present series on the Psalms because many of us are memorizing some of the Psalms in the annual Bible memory work that we do beginning in January of each year, and going on for twelve weeks. Those who choose to do the memory work join one of the groups we have. At the present we have five groups. One meets here at the church on Sunday night after the evening service. And then another group meets at the Lockwood home on Monday night. Another meets at the Jim Wierson home on Thursday night. A fourth group meets in the John Custis home on Friday night. And the fifth group meets in the Peyrollaz home on Saturday morning. Each one in each group takes a turn at quoting from memory the assignment for that week. Most do seven verses a week. Some do three. And some of the little children do one verse a week. We provide memory books where the assignments are printed out verse by verse. Sometimes a verse or two is added from other Psalms if the verses for the main Psalm is less than seven.

So we started out this year with Psalm 1, but since that Psalm has only six verses, we added Psalm 5:11 to the assignment. But so far we have memorized Psalm 19 in two assignments, Psalm 23 which has five verses to which we added Psalm 20:7. Then we did Psalm 24 in two assignments, to which we added four verses from the Psalm which I am using this morning because Psalm 24 only had ten verses, and we added the verses that have brought me to Psalm 25 this morning. Now I think most are working on Psalm 27 which had fourteen verses which is just right for two assignments.

I hope I am not confusing you with these details, but I want all of you to know why I have chosen Psalm 25 for this morning's message.

Many of us have been doing Bible memory work for years. Others have started in recent years, but I want to emphasize the importance of memorizing the Word of God for all Christians. In Psalm 1 the one who wrote that Psalm said in the Psalm that the truly happy man is one who delights in the Word of God, and who has formed the habit of meditating on the Word, on the Scriptures, on the Bible, "day and night." That means constantly. Now I don't know any greater way to be able to meditate on the Word any time during the day than by memorizing it. We all need to be

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reading something from the Bible every day and every night. And we need to think about what we are reading. This is what meditation is. But it is not always to be carrying a Bible with us, but if we are memorizing the Word, even a little bit at a time, we can be meditating on the Word in spare moments that we have throughout the day. And the more we quote a verse, the more deeply it is written in our hearts. The Navigators, the Christian organization which Jerry Bridges has worked for for many years, has made a real study of Bible memorization, and they have said that if you will quote a verse every day for seven weeks, you will never forget it. It is work, but it is worth it. If you start it, you will probably do it the rest of your life.

I think that we would be shocked to know how few professing Christians actually read something from the Bible every day. But fewer than that consistently memorize the Word. You know, meditating on the Word has been compared with the way a cow eats her food. She will graze in a pasture, and then she gets down and chew up for digestion the food that she has eaten, That's what we need to do. We read the Word, but then we meditate on it so that it will really do us some good. And that is the reason we all need to memorize chapters, or verses taken from the chapters, so we can think about it, so we can digest the truth to the point that it will strengthen us so that we will grow in the Lord.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the younger Timothy to meditate on the Word, and this is what he said about it. You will find these words in 1 Timothy 4:13: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." And then he added two verses later in verse 15, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." Paul meant by this that if you really give yourself to reading and meditating on the Word, it is going to make a difference in you and in the way you live, and people will see the change even though they don't know what you have been doing.

So, if you haven't been memorizing, let me know that you want to start, and I will do all I can to help you. And if there are too many for me to help by myself, I will get one of our elders or deacons, or in the case of you ladies and girls, I will get a lady to help you. This really important for all of us to be doing.

Now let me move on to the Psalm I want to consider with you this morning: Psalm 25. This is a Psalm from which we have only taken four

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verses out of the twenty-two to memorize. It is not because the whole Psalm is not important, but just because we needed four verses to fill out one of our assignments. And they are four very important verses that are worth memorizing. Let me point the four verses out to you, and then I want to make a point about them.

They are verses 4, 5, and 6, and then verse 12. (Read them, and point out how useful they are just as single verses. Notice that 4, 5, and 6 are prayers, prayers which all of us would do well to pray. In verse 12 the Psalmist who wrote this Psalm stopped praying to speak to the one who is reading the Psalm. And the Psalm can be divided up in this way.)

The divisions of the Psalm:

- 1) The Psalmist is praying, speaking to the Lord (vv. 1-7).
- 2) The Psalmist is speaking to us, or to whomever the Psalmist originally wrote the Psalm, speaking about God (vv. 8-10).
- 3) The Psalmist turns to the Lord again in verse 11. This is an example of an ejaculatory prayer
- 4) Then in verses 12 through 15 again the Psalmist speaks to us again, or to anyone reading the Psalm. Here he is speaking about the man who fears God
- 5) The last seven verses of the Psalm again are prayer.

Now having seen the way the Psalm has written, and I have simply referred to him as “the Psalmist, *but who is he?*”

Well, at the beginning of this Psalm it says, “a Psalm of David.” But some one reading the Bible for the first time might ask, “Who is David?” And we would be able to tell him or her, whoever who asked us, that this Psalm was written by King David of Israel. In fact you will notice that most of the Psalms from the first Psalm on, and then after Psalm 25, most of the Psalms up to through Psalm 41 were written by David.

I have called this Psalm, “The King in a Troubled Time.” Actually trouble, great troubles, and many of them, characterized this man of God, and will characterize the lives of those who really love and fear the Lord. With all of the military power that David had in his army, and regardless of how successful he had been in war, still he prayed as one who had no protection but in the Lord. There was both a tenderness in David’s prayer, and yet at the same time a great urgency which he presented to the Lord.

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We don't know how old David was when he wrote this prayer, but in some ways he spoke like a beginner. He prayed in the first section of his prayer like one who might be ashamed because his faith might appear to be insufficient. He appeared to speak as one who did not know anything about the ways of the Lord, but who wanted to learn. This is because there are always those situations coming up in our Lord's dealings with us which we do not understand, and so call upon the Lord, crying out to Him to show us His ways and to teach us His paths because circumstances can arise in our lives for which we have no way of knowing what the Lord is doing with us. But we see that David did not let His trials turn him away from the Lord, but took all trials as another opportunity to learn more about the ways of the Lord and the paths, new paths, in which His is leading us.

The truth about this is that the ways of the Lord are so varied from time to time that David spoke as one who did not know the reason for the present trial that he was going through. He knew that he had no security, no hope, except in the Lord. And twice he told the Lord to remember the "tender mercies and lovingkindnesses" (note the plurals) which God had poured out on him before, and yet the "remember" in verse 7 is a "remember not." Psalm 103 is another of David's psalms in which he spoke not only of his sins, but "our sins," the burden of regret that is carried by all of the people of God concerning the past, and even sometimes in the past in verses 10 through 12 of Psalm 103 we read these words:

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust (Psa. 103:10-14).

In verses 8-10 we see David dwelling on the character of God as well as that which attracts the blessing of God upon His people. God is good, but He looks for meekness in the hearts of His people.

In David's ejaculatory prayer in verse 11 we see that our sins always

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appear greater, like they really are, when we consider them in the light of the character of God.

As we come to verse 12 where David continued to speak to his readers (and probably to himself) he gave evidence that there was one very important thing that he knew about the trials that come into our lives. And that has to do with fearing the Lord. Notice the Lord deals with us and teaches us according to His ways and not our ways. That is why we are often confused about what the Lord is dealing with us. But this is where we find peace. What a wonderful promise in the words of verse 13, “His soul shall dwell at ease.” We can be going through dangers and trials that may overwhelm us, but in the Lord we can have peace even before we know what the outcome will be.

“The secret of the Lord” is understanding that the Lord is accomplishing in us good things that cannot be accomplished in any other way except in the trials of life.

Verse 15 shows the strength of David’s faith. He knew that he must keep his eyes always on the Lord. David’s own words in Psalm 16:8 apply here:

I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

At verse 16 the rest of the Psalm is prayer.

Note the urgency which David expressed. Every verse is a request, an urgent appeal for help. Verse 16 has to do with what David wanted the Lord to do for him.

In verse 17 he tells the Lord how great His distress was as if the Lord did not know. But this is what the Lord wants us to do. The same continues in verse 18, and the question of David’s sins comes up again. His appeal continues right down to verse 21.

And then we have a very interesting point in verse 22. One thing that trials do for us, is to give us a great concern for all of the people of God. We have troubles, but they do too. We need help, but we can’t see our need of the blessing of the Lord without realizing how much the rest of God’s people need help too.

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Concl: But let me ask a question as I close. We know that David had troubles, don't we? And they were great. He was faced with things that he had never been faced with before. But here is the question: Why is it that neither David nor the Lord tell us what his troubles were? We know he had his enemies, and so we know that much. But the exact nature of his troubles, and what other trials they brought to his life, we do not know. Why? Because the Lord does not want us to think that our troubles have to be like those of David before this Psalm has a message for us. It makes no difference what our trials might be, how much like David's, or how different. That is not the point. The points are that God is in control of our troubles, and that God has gracious purposes for bringing them into our lives. And that just as God was faithful to David in all of his trials, so will He be with us in our trials. So Psalm 25 has everything to do with David, and everything to do with us. God was always faithful to David, even though there were times when it was obvious that he did not deserve it, and so it is not our worthiness that we need to focus on, but God's faithfulness in spite of our unfaithfulness and other sins. But such grace should cause us to turn to the Lord with greater determination to learn about Him and from Him for ourselves, that we might have peace in our hearts, and profit from all that He is doing with us.