

Lesson Three – June 14, 2020

THE HEART OF THE SHEPHERD

PSALM 25:1-11

Overview: David is in that reflective mode, which indicates that David is much older, much wiser, but yet still searching for the answers that would give him peace not from who he desires to become but from who he once was. You see that in verse 7 where David prayerfully pleads to the Lord to “not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways”. David’s mind and his thoughts are wandering as he reflectively prays for God’s insight and forgiveness. David has committed some outlandish sins and while we do not know exactly when he wrote this Psalm, it is clear that it is well after his many transgressions. Yet he has not let go of his past; the sin in his younger days continues to haunt him, but we can see that David has confidence that God will not shame Him. He trusts that God will be just and merciful, and with that confidence comes a sense of submission and dependence on God. “Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior; and my hope is in you all day long.” (verse 5) David by surrendering to God reaches that point in his life where he desires to walk in the paths of the Lord and receive his divine instruction.

What is central focus of this Psalm? What is David telling us?

David is reaching out to God reflecting on who he once was, repenting and seeking forgiveness so that he would not be shamed. He is crying out to God to help him in this journey he is on and that it is only through His shepherding and His care that David can have peace. He has assurance that God will keep him on course. Why? Because David humbly trusts God and this deep sense of trust gives David hope and certainty that God will teach him and guide him in His ways. David has assurance of that not only because he trusts God but also because he knows that God is good and upright and always does what is right. It is this goodness that David is drawn to, knowing that God will be there for him. But David acknowledges that it only comes when we submit ourselves to Him in humbleness. When we are humble, he will teach us His ways, but when we are arrogant, He will be silent. God can be trusted to guide those who obey His words, and He will be merciful and gracious to those who repent and come to Him.

Progression or Steps that lead to a deeper relationship with God

There is a beautiful progression of truth that can easily be lost along the way when we allow our prideful and arrogant ways to dictate and control our being. David's transgressions in his youthful days haunted him. However, we see David's tremendous love and faith in God as David grew older and came to realize that God is merciful and just and will pardon our iniquities when we come to Him and surrender to Him. This progression of truth begins with the transgressions David committed as a younger man and because of those sins David became fearful of the shame that naturally flows from a sinful life. He prayed to God seeking God to help him avoid the shame, but he did so not by simply asking God, but by putting his trust in God, knowing that God is good and righteous and full of mercy. By putting trust and hope in God, David is acknowledging that God's ways are the only effective deterrent to shame. And when we trust in God, by repenting and turning to Him with a humble heart, He will teach us and guide us in His ways leading us to a righteous way of life, that gives glory to Him. This progression is a slow process that begins with sin followed by the haunting of guilt that burns the essence of our soul. When the feelings of guilt wells up to a point of sorrow and shame, when we have reached that point of brokenness we have One to whom we can put our faith and trust in, Jesus Christ, who lovingly and willingly died on the Cross and was resurrected so that when we repent and humbly accept Him as our Lord and Savior we will be forgiven and with that our shame will be washed away. When we seek Jesus and put our faith in Him, He will teach us, guide us and lead us on a path of righteousness that will free us from our shame and give glory to God.

How does this impact your walk with God?

Psalm 25 teaches us to seek God in the hard times regardless of why we are in those hard times. James 1:5-6 is a clear summary of Psalm 25: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind." The context of James' counsel is the need for wisdom in the midst of various trials. (James 1:2-3. James tells us by faith to seek God and His wisdom in our trials. That is what David tells us in Psalm 25.

Just like David, we often find ourselves in difficult and frightening circumstances. But as you reflect on your circumstances, and the closer you draw near to the Lord, the more hideous and frightening the sins that you committed throughout

your life become. They remind us of how corrupt our heart was, and still is. It is with a thankful and trusting heart that we can thank God for His great love for us that He would send His Son to bear our penalty for those sins. Then and only then can we realize the great need for grace. But we also have to be patient to allow God to work in our lives and then as He teaches us and guides us, we have a great responsibility to extend that same grace He has granted to us to others.

But how do we seek the Lord in our hard times? David lays this out for us. First, David shows us that we have to show guilt over our sins, a remorseful guilt that leads to shame. Then and only then will the sin drive us to confess our sin and seek a pardon. Note again verse 11: “For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Second, when we seek the Lord properly, it is important for us to reflect on God’s attributes: God is trustworthy and faithful (verses 1,3). He is marked by truth (verses 5,10) He is the Savior (verse 5). He is compassionate and loving (verse 6). He is good and upright (verse 8. He is just (verse 9) and forgiving (verse 11). Third, when we seek the Lord properly, we do so with a passion to follow His ways. In that regard, we are submitting ourselves to being teachable and willing to walk in His ways. It means that we are willing to obey Him. Fourth, no matter how difficult our circumstances, the Lord is able to deliver us from them, for His glory and our good.

Our duty is to affirm by faith, as David does in Psalm 25, that the Lord is always good, loving, and compassionate. He is fully able to deliver us from our situation, even when we were the cause of them. But we must approach with humility and seek Him, and if we do so, fully repenting and surrendering our lives to Him, He will shepherd us and instruct us as sinners granting us His wisdom to guide us out of our difficulties. ***How teachable are you? Do you daily lay your sins and worldly ways before God?***