

"Selected Psalms"

Psalm 23-25

- The Psalms provide comfort and help and encouragement when we face our most difficult moments in life
- They speak truth just when we might be inclined to believe lies
- They tell us about God and about ourselves
- Many are among the first scriptures that spring to mind when we are discouraged
- And, as we'll read today, for good reason

- We'll talk about the valley of the shadow of death
- And confronting enemies
- But also green pastures - goodness and mercy

- We'll remind ourselves that the earth is the Lord's
- And that He is the King of glory - strong and mighty

- Today, finding help in "Selected Psalms"

- Mention the book of Psalms and one in particular may spring to mind first
- It could be one of the most well-known passages in all the Bible
- The world knows it - though it may reject its message - certainly rejecting its "shepherd"
- But those of us who know this "shepherd" know it too
- Because it speaks of Him
- And does so in such a beautiful way

- We cling to it
- We quote it at gravesides when we are stricken with grief
- And it comforts the heart
- Pointing us to the great comforter

- Our first selected Psalm - number 23...

Psalm 23

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

- The Lord is our keeper and provider

- He knows exactly what we need
- He's intimately acquainted with us
- Knowing our thoughts, feelings, desires, and dispositions
- And He provides, without fail

- Whatever our circumstances, He makes peacefulness available
- When the world cannot provide green pastures or still waters, He can
- When pastures of life are barren and waters are raging, there is calm in Him

- He offers restoration
- That's the idea of returning to the starting point
- Even when, in our minds, there is no going back
- And He leads, but it's a narrow road He leads us upon
- It is the paths of righteousness
- And we are to walk in that which is right and just
- Because it is His name that we must glorify

- Whether death is far away or nearby
- He is ever-nearby
- And because this is the case, there is no need for fear
- Because He is in charge
- Because He is equipped with every tool to provide comfort

- He provides for our needs abundantly
- Though enemies may seek to deprive us
- He refreshes and provides to overflowing

- Good things come to us
- Because He provides them
- And He does so for all our days
- Even when we come to die in body, we know it is not the end
- For life after death awaits
- And that blessing never ends

- These are transcendent reminders
- In desperate times and in hard places
- These are things we need to hear

- Another Psalm of David follows...

Psalm 24

- 1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
- 2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
- 3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

- Kings and prime ministers and presidents and parliaments may have authority
- But the earth belongs to the Lord
- Every nation and state and territory
- But not just the land is His, the people are His too

- He is the founder of the earth
- The Creator
- The land is in the midst of the seas because He placed it there

- So, who can approach such a powerful Master?
- Who can ascend to where He resides?
- Well, only those who are perfectly clean
- Pure
- Without a trace of vanity or deceitfulness
- Because the curse of sin effects all, none can approach Him
- But for His son, who forgives and reconciles, and makes clean

- Those who know His son, the Savior, are truly blessed
- We are capable of doing right because of Him
- The God of salvation has sent Him to die in our place

- Those of us that hold this blessing look to Him, we seek Him
- We are inclined to, and do indeed, praise Him

- We shout to all around - look to Him!
- Lift up your heads
- He's the King of glory
- He's the Lord strong and mighty
- And no one can stand before Him in battle
- He deserves glory - and will have it
- From every creature, every where

- This glimpse of our God gives such confidence
- We know not what we will face
- But we know, if we know God, that He is over it all

- And He walks with us
- The next Psalm of David...

Psalm 25:1-5

1 Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.
 2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.
 3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.
 4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.
 5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

- When we could look to ourselves, or to others for help, we should instead look to God
- He is One who can be trusted
- He is ever-faithful, ever-just, ever-right
- There is no shame in trusting Him
- He is the One who can provide victory against enemies
- With His help, we will not be defeated
- It is not those who trust God who should be ashamed
- But rather those that trust Him not
- That make transgression against Him and against those that are His
- While we are trusting, we must know His ways
- We must know the paths He insists we walk
- All He says is truth and we will need to walk by it
- Therefore we need Him to teach us
- He is the God of salvation
- So we should wait to hear from Him
- Even if it takes all day!

Psalm 25:6-9

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.
 7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.
 8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.
 9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

- Our prayer should be that He is God to us
- That He acts according to His attributes, which are lovingkindness and mercy
- Even if we have forgotten Him through some portion of our lives
- We pray He forgets us not
- Even if we have transgressed against Him

- We pray He leads us in a new path
- His path
- But we need His teaching
- We cannot find the way on our own

Psalm 25:10-22

10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

12 What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

- His paths are unlike the paths of the world
- They are true paths
- In which He offers mercy
- When we receive that mercy
- It is to His glory
- Even though our iniquity was great
- He forgave

- All that fear the Lord learn His ways
- And we walk at peace with Him
- We look to Him, our Rescuer
- We do so always
- Even when the troubles are big
- Because He truly redeems

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2021