

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 25

God's Ways in Dark Days

Quote

"I had rather be in the heart of Africa in the will of God than on the throne of England out of the will of God."

David Livingstone

I. Introduction

Guiding Lights

F. B. Meyer, noted nineteenth-century British preacher, was sailing from northern Ireland into a seaside port on the coast of England. Nothing could be seen through the thick darkness but a confusing array of lights on shore. Wondering how the captain could possibly navigate the ship safely into harbor, Meyer asked the captain how he could see to steer the ship on this dark night. The captain took him up to the bridge and asked, "Do you see that big light on shore to the left?" Meyer affirmed he could. "And do you see the other big light over there to the right? And now do you see that outstanding light farther still this way? "Keep your eyes on those three lights and see what happens."

As the ship sailed ahead, the large light on the left gradually merged into the middle one. Then the two lights gradually eclipsed the third until the three were merged into one. "There now," said the captain, "all I have to do is see that those three big lights become one. Then I sail straight ahead."

In much the same way, every believer sails through this dark world in desperate need of the guiding light of God's Word. It is incumbent upon all believers to be led by the guiding light of divine relation, which can lead them into the future. This is the central theme of Psalm 25, a psalm "of David." In a time of darkness in his life, he asked for divine guidance to lead him to know God's will (vv. 4–5, 8–10,

12, 21). As the way seemed unclear, David asked to be pointed to the Lord's perfect path.

The historical background of this psalm is not known. But the circumstances involve a painful period when the psalmist was attacked by enemies (vv. 2–3, 19), entrapped in a trial (v. 15), isolated from supporters (v. 16), discouraged of heart (v. 17), and hated by foes (v. 19). In his hour of desperation, he needed to be restored according to the Lord's perfect will. So David called out to God for deliverance (vv. 1–3), direction (vv. 4–15), and defense (vv. 16–22). This psalm is an acrostic in which each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet to aid in memorization and instruction.

II. Commentary

God's Ways in Dark Days

MAIN IDEA

David offers a prayer seeking deliverance from his enemies, direction into God's way, and defense from dangers.

A A Prayer for God's Deliverance (25:1–3)

SUPPORTING IDEA: Knowing that God alone is able to deliver him from his enemies, David pleads for the Lord to save him from the shame of defeat.

25:1–3. First, David affirmed his **faith** in God by saying, **To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust.** Clearly, the psalmist had a personal relationship with God through a saving **faith** that sustained him in this crisis. Although David's **treacherous** enemies attempted to put him to **shame** and **triumph over** him, David declared with confidence before the Lord that **no one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame** (cp. Ps. 35:26). His appeal not to be put to shame is repeated in verse 20 and sets the tone for the psalm.

B A Prayer for God's Direction (25:4–15)

SUPPORTING IDEA: Seeking divine direction, David asks God to lead him into his divine will while releasing him from the snare of his enemies.

25:4–5. As God delivered David from his enemies, he asked for general direction into the Lord's will. Show me your ways, David prayed, and **teach me your paths.**

Ways and **paths** are metaphors for the will of God. David entreated God to reveal his will so it might be pursued and traveled. Not presuming to know God's will, he requested that God **guide** his life moment by moment **all day long**, since he was aware of his sinful nature (v. 18).

Furthermore, David asked God to guide him **in your truth** and to **teach** him. He knew that God's ways are established in **truth**, or that which is firm and stable. Only God who was the Savior could deliver David from his enemies according to his ways and paths that David must learn to follow.

25:6–7. Three times in these verses David used the word **remember**. He asked, **Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love**. David was recalling the **mercy** and love of God shown to him in the past to secure the same benefits of God for the present. David then asked God, **Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways**. This was a request for God not to reward him for his sins of the past according to what he deserved but according to what he needed—**mercy**. David then comforted himself by remembering one of the attributes of God—that God is **good**.

25:8–10. In an attempt to discover the will of God, David turned his attention to the greatness of God. **The Lord**, he declared, is **good and upright**, therefore he **instructs, guides, and teaches**. Furthermore, he instructs sinners, those who have gone their rebellious way (v. 7) and strayed from God's way, back into his way. The will of God is something to be pursued, never avoided or treated with suspicion because **all the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful** for those who keep the demands of his **covenant**.

25:11–14. If God's name was to be glorified by his servant, David must regularly ask God to **forgive** his **iniquity**. What is more, the person whom God will **instruct** in his **way** is the one who **fears the Lord** (cp. Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 3:32). This way is not a random event but **the way** that is chosen by God himself. Such **holy** reverence for God leads to prosperity that would continue to David's **descendants**. This **covenant** is a reference to the promise made by God to Israel (cp. Exod. 20:12; Lev. 26:3; Deut. 4:1). **The Lord confides in those who fear him**, just as a person takes a friend into his confidence and reveals his secret intentions. This personal approach taken by God in revealing his **covenant** is only for those who reverence him.

25:15. Rather than gazing upon the many dangers that surrounded him, David's eyes were always on the Lord, for only he would release David's **feet from the snare**. The Lord alone could overcome the traps set by David's opponents. For David, a Godward focus led to a Godward direction and the divine path.

C A Prayer for God's Defense (25:16–22)

SUPPORTING IDEA: Searching for a defense from his adversaries who seek his life, David appeals for the Lord to remember his character.

25:16–19. David returned to his initial subject in this psalm which has a chiastic structure (A-B-A). Verses 1–7 and 16–22 are parallel sections (A), prayers for divine protection, while verses 8–15 (B) are a plea for divine direction. This final section (vv. 16–22) contains short, staccato prayer requests, asking for God's defense from his enemies. David was isolated, lonely, and afflicted, and full of troubles, anguish, affliction, and distress because he was surrounded by enemies who hated him. In this fiery ordeal he pleaded with God to turn to him, free him from this pain, and take away all his sins.

25:20–22. In this crisis David asked God to guard his life and rescue him from his enemies. As he would take refuge in God, he determined to walk in integrity and uprightness which the Lord would honor. David ended the psalm by asking God to redeem Israel ... from all their troubles. This was an intercessory prayer by the king, asking God to redeem or save Israel from its difficulties.