

PSALM 25 – Trust in the LORD! (Part 1 of 3)

Trust is not an easy thing to do and yet we trust people all the time in one way or another. When we lose our way while in a foreign place, we ask and trust strangers to help us. We hope that they give us the right directions. Generally speaking, strangers will show us the right way. This area of trust is a minor issue because we can easily ask another stranger if we have been misguided. However, there are many instances in life when decisions are made based upon trust and there is no turning back. In the major circumstances of life we need to trust people we know well, who will not betray us, who have our best interests at heart and who will give the best advice. They will point us in the right direction as best as they possibly can, for we know they are not omnipotent and omniscient. They do not know all things and cannot do all things.

The Christian has a God who is omnipotent and omniscient; He knows all things and can do all things. This was David's experience when he penned Psalm 25. He shares with us what it means to trust in the LORD, his God.

1. **In Times of Danger (25:1-2)** – It is not possible to know exactly when David wrote this psalm. It could have been when he was a fugitive fleeing from King Saul who wanted to kill him because God had anointed David to be the next King of Israel. It could also have been when David's own son, Absalom, usurped his kingdom and wanted to kill him and thus become the next King of Israel. Or, it could have been at any point in David's life when his enemies overwhelmed him. Be that as it may, verse 1 of this psalm sets the tone for the entire psalm, with the emphasis being the LORD. Literally, the verse could be translated thus: "To Thee, O LORD, my soul, I will continuously lift up." To lift up one's soul is common. It means to cry for help. We cry to many people for help. At the first sign of trouble or when we do not know how to solve a problem in our studies, we ask for help. Life's problems are much harder to solve than a problem on pen and paper. We would go to men with high connections such as leaders in countries or men with very good resources for help. If I have a financial problem such as a debt that I cannot pay, I would approach men with money for help. Such avenues of help are not healthy for believers. These individuals could be used by God to help us. However, when we approach them for help WITHOUT PRAYING TO THE LORD, then it is wrong! As believers, we must always remember that there is nothing in this life that is of flesh and blood any more. Every struggle we encounter has a spiritual dimension (cf. Ephesians 6:12). Therefore, it is wrong and foolish to not pray first to God for help and even to ask God for help as a last resort when all else fails. God must always be the first Person whom we turn to for help. David emphasized this when he put the object of his help, i.e. the LORD, before his cry for help in the first verse of this psalm.

When God is always the first person we cry to for help for problems big or small, then when it comes to problems of life and death proportions, it would be natural for us to cry to the LORD for help as the first resort. David emphasized this here. He knew that God is able to do all things and that nothing would happen to him without his heavenly Father's permission. The tone of this psalm suggests that David's enemies wanted to

badly hurt him, perhaps even to death! This is confirmed in verse 19 where the phrase "cruel hatred" could be translated as "hatred of violence" or "violent hatred." The word "hatred" is "cha-mas", i.e. violence. **Psalm 140:1** (KJV), *"To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man."* [emphasis added] David would continually lift up his soul to the LORD and would not be deterred. No matter how long he had to wait for the LORD to intervene and help, he would patiently persevere.

Verse 2 (synthetic parallelism) – From crying to "the LORD" (Jehovah), David then cried to "God" (elohiyim). His cry to the LORD was based upon the covenantal relationship that he had with God in terms of his personal salvation. The use of "God" means that David was appealing to the power and might of the LORD. He acknowledged here that God has the power to help, for it is only a matter of whether He wants to help or not. The use of the personal pronoun "my" highlights this personal appeal. David's cry was that he would always trust in God no matter what the circumstances were and how fierce or numerous his enemies were. He cried to God, "let me not be ashamed." It does not mean that David doubted God's ability to help him; but he cried to God because he knew that God could help him. He pleaded with God to help him and he was not being presumptuous. He knew that God is real and will be true to His holy and perfect Word. He knew that as long as God's will in his life was not completed, he would live. David cried for God's intervention as he knew that his trust and faith in God would not be ashamed, i.e. God would not fail him. The last line of the verse confirms this understanding. He cried, "let not mine enemies triumph over me." He cried to the LORD because he did not want his enemies to triumph over him, in that they would not succeed in halting God's will in his life.

The enemies desired to hurt and probably to kill him. If they succeeded David's service unto the LORD would be cut off. David did not want this to happen and he appealed to God to hear his cry based upon God's will for his life. God's will and work was paramount in David's request. The focus of our prayers, even in times of trials and persecution, ought to be for the will of God to be accomplished in our lives.

2. **God never Fails – (25:3)** – David's theology was remarkable. He would not ask God to deliver him if he has transgressed in any way. David's relationship with his God was based upon truth and righteousness. David was a man after God's own heart and he did not take advantage of his personal relationship with God. He cried to God to help those who would patiently wait on Him and that their persevering trust in the LORD would not result in shame, i.e. disappointment. David was not hurrying God. He knew that the LORD had allowed trials to come his way, to strengthen his faith. The book of Job teaches this wonderful truth and David probably knew this. To patiently wait for the LORD's will to be accomplished was not for David' sake only; it is also for all believers who would patiently wait.

Furthermore, it was not to all who just patiently wait but only to those who wait patiently and who "are not guilty of any transgression." The ones who are out to shame are the ones who sin without a just cause. In other words, if God's people have

sinned and done wrong, they ought to quietly repent and bear the consequences of their sinful actions. They should not cry to God to ask that their consequences be removed. If God were to accede to such a request, then God would have transgressed too. The person who makes such a request to God is wrong to even ask. He has sinned and now he wants God to be a partaker of his sin? That is why David was very clear in his request which was based upon a right understanding of God and his relationship with God. Let those who persecute David for no good reason be foiled in their evil plans!

3. The LORD will Show the Way (25:4-5) – David cried to the LORD, using four imperatives in the next two verses to highlight the urgency of his cry. He was not demanding that God come to help, for that would be disrespectful and a sin. He asked God to show him the way. David wanted to know what God wanted to teach and guide him in the way that he ought to go so that God's will would be accomplished in his life. Note the word "ways." It means a series of directions rather than just a way. Many lessons can be learned from one trial. David wanted to learn through all of his trials. Without God showing him, he would not be able to find and see the ways. He reverted back to using "LORD" in verse 4. This is again based upon the LORD's covenantal relationship with him. Using synonymous parallelism in verse 4, David emphasized the point that he wanted to do God's will and not his own. The words "show" and "teach" have the same meaning here. He acknowledged his inability to find the way alone, just as we cannot understand God's Word and His will in our lives if we do not cry to Him to show us the way and to teach us.

David wanted with all his heart whatever God had planned for him in moulding and shaping him to become the man who would please God. David was not self willed at all. He wanted to obey God's will in his life. If it was to be accomplished only by the way of trials, then so be it. He would just wait patiently for it to be done. He would not sin by murmuring and indulging in self pity. He was not looking for a life of ease.

Verse 5 (synthetic parallelism) – To lead someone is to hold his hand and to guide him. Here, David asked God, after He has shown him the ways, to hold his hand and to lead him. The way that David wanted to travel on is called the way of truth! The destination is just as important as the journey. Not only must the end be pleasing to God, the way toward the end of the journey must also be led by God in truth! David asked for this way of leading and so must all believers. He asked God to teach him besides showing and leading him. One of the best virtues in the believer's life is to be teachable. This results in ever learning and improving. Applied to the spiritual realm, it means that he is becoming more and more like Christ.

David addressed God as the God of his salvation. God who has saved him from his sin will surely save him from his enemies. If our eternity is safe in the hand of God almighty, so will be our temporal sojourn on the earth. Again, David's theology was outstanding! God will always be the same Saviour to His redeemed. Since He is the God of our salvation, why do we not cry to Him for help more? On this relationship, David added here that he would "wait all the day" regardless of how long it takes. He

trusted in the LORD unequivocally and he knew that the God of his salvation would never fail him and let him down! David's trust in his God was supreme and unyielding! Should not all true believers have the same level and degree of trust in their God and Saviour Jesus Christ?

[to be continued]