

December 10, 2017

Psalm 25

- ¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
- ² O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.
- ³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

- ⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
- ⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

- ⁶ Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
- ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

- ⁸ Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- ⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
- ¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

- ¹¹ For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
- ¹² Who are they that fear the LORD?
He will teach them the way that they should choose.

- ¹³ They will abide in prosperity,
and their children shall possess the land.
- ¹⁴ The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes his covenant known to them.
- ¹⁵ My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

- ¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
- ¹⁷ Relieve the troubles of my heart,
and bring me out of my distress.
- ¹⁸ Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.

- ¹⁹ Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
- ²⁰ O guard my life, and deliver me;
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
- ²¹ May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for you.
- ²² Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all its troubles.

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In the 25th Psalm, the psalmist affirms that living within the streams of God's loving intentions for us always leads to good and true life. Living within the rhythms of God's good and eternal will for humanity safeguards us from shame, relieves the troubles and fears of our hearts, and rescues us from the trappings and troubles that result from our imperfection and our propensity to live according to our own will and desires. We join the psalmist in longing for God's guidance for the sake of life that is good and true, and we cry out, "Make us to know your ways, O Lord! Teach us your paths! Lead us in your truth!" God's guidance is always lovingly offered to us, and if we discern and implement it, we are carried forward in the stream of life to places of goodness and integrity. But how do we truly know what that guidance is?

As we journey together through this season of Advent, we consider that God has answered the prayers of the Psalmist most powerfully and clearly in the Christmas incarnation. We are imperfect people who long to be shown the way. We long to live with integrity in ways that are truly prosperous, upright, and powerful for God's sake. In the incarnation of God in Christ, our longings are met. God's love, instruction, guidance, and redemption are ours in Christ. God help us to accept this long-awaited gift that comes to us freely by God's grace!

Prayer

Eternal God and creator of all life, when we find ourselves waiting and longing for your guidance, protection, rescue, and healing, point our focus to Jesus. Reveal your grace and intentions through his witness, and bring us redemption through the Christ-like attitudes and actions of the people. Amen.