

Lamenting Sin: Waiting on God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 September 2023

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Welcome to all of you who do not yet know me. My name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church, and it's my joy and privilege to preach God's word to you this morning. If you would please open up your Bibles to Psalm 25.

And if you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand. We'd love to give you a copy that you can use while you're here, and you can take home with you. Psalm, if you're not familiar with it, is like right in the middle of the book, middle of the Bible.

Just open it in the middle. You'll probably be somewhere close to the Psalms, and Psalm 25 is toward the beginning of the book. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.

Father, we humble ourselves before your word once again because we don't want to shape you according to our will, but we want to be shaped by you.

We want our reality, our perceptions, our attitudes, our words and actions to be shaped by what you say.

[1 : 08] So we incline our ears and our hearts to you now. Focus our attention on Jesus. The word made flesh.

Enlarge our view of your grace and mercy that we might give you the praise that you rightly deserve. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. If you are willing and able, please stand for the reading of God's word. Psalm 25.

Of David. Of David. To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust. Let me not be put to shame.

Let not my enemies exalt over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame. They shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know your ways, O Lord.

[2 : 11] Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me. For you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long. Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love.

For they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions. According to your steadfast love, remember me. For the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord. Therefore, he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness.

For those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the Lord?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him and he makes known to them his covenant.

[3 : 22] My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me. For I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged.

Bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins. Consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me.

O guard my soul and deliver me. Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. The superscription of Psalm 25 tells us that this is a psalm of David, meaning most likely that David composed it.

And here David draws a connection between the sins that he has committed and the troubles that he's facing because of his enemies. Sometimes the superscriptions of the psalms give us more specific contextual details.

[4 : 34] For example, the superscription of Psalm 51 tells us that David wrote a psalm when Nathan the prophet confronted him regarding his adultery with Bathsheba. Since Psalm 25 doesn't have that kind of detailed superscription, we can't be sure, but there is a season in David's life that fits naturally with the content of Psalm 25.

In 2 Samuel 11, David covets his servant, Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. And he commits adultery with her while Uriah is away in battle fighting for his king, David, putting his life on the line for him.

David gets Bathsheba pregnant and then he tries to cover his tracks by getting Uriah killed. He sends Uriah to the fiercest part of the battle and he instructs the army to withdraw from him so that Uriah is killed in action.

And David thinks that he's covered it up, but of course, nothing is hidden from the all-seeing eyes of God. And prophet Nathan confronts David about his sin and pronounces God's judgment.

The child of David's adultery is not going to live past infancy. And God says to David in 2 Samuel 12, 11 to 12, Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.

[5 : 51] And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.

This judgment comes to fruition in 2 Samuel 15 to 17 when David's son Absalom revolts, stages a successful coup d'etat, and he forces David to flee in exile and his loyal followers.

And he takes over the throne in Jerusalem. And after Absalom takes over his father's throne in the king's palace, you know what he does? He sleeps with all of his father's concubines publicly in the sight of all Israel, fulfilling the punishment that God had decreed for David's hidden adultery with Bathsheba and for his murder of her husband, Uriah.

But this has the effect of solidifying Absalom's rebellion. And guess who is the shrewd counselor that is counseling Absalom during this time against David?

Ahithophel. And we know that Ahithophel, from 2 Samuel 11, 3 and 2 Samuel 23, 34, he is the grandfather of Bathsheba, whom David adulterated and stole unlawfully.

[7 : 08] And that makes him also the grandfather-in-law of Uriah, whom David murdered. It seems that Ahithophel never quite got over what David did to his granddaughter and to his grandson-in-law.

So he joins Absalom's revolt and counsels him against David. David's adultery and murder were connected to Absalom's rebellion and adultery with David's concubines.

Through his sins, David made enemies. For himself. And he brought these troubles upon himself. And David understands this reality.

And that's why in this psalm, he simultaneously laments the troubles that he is in from his enemies, and he laments the sins that he has committed and asks God for forgiveness.

There is no one-to-one connection or correlation always in Scripture between your sins and the troubles and the calamities that come upon you. But there is a connection that the Bible draws in places.

[8 : 13] And here is an example of that. Psalm 25 is written as an acrostic poem in Hebrew, meaning that each verse begins with the letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and it goes down in order. It's an almost perfect acrostic.

An acrostic is a mnemonic device intended to help people memorize it. So this psalm was often committed to memory. That's an evidence of that. And the only verse that doesn't fit the acrostic is the last verse, which is kind of a postscript, verse 22.

So it's emphasizing that. In addition to being an acrostic, there is a prominent structure in the psalm. It's a chiasmic structure, meaning the first half of the psalm is mirrored in the second half of the psalm, in its words and phrases and content.

And so, for example, in verses 1 to 5, it speaks of trusting God and being not put to shame before the enemies. And then at the end, verse 20 to 21, it speaks of the same thing, trusting God, not being put to shame before the enemies.

And then verses 6 to 7 speak of God's steadfast love and ask for forgiveness for sins. And then verses 16 to 19 speak of God's grace and ask for forgiveness for sin. Verses 8 to 10 says that the Lord instructs those who are humble, sinners who humble themselves.

[9 : 24] And then verses 12 to 15 tells that the Lord instructs the man who fears him. And so there's a matching element to every part of the psalm, except for the middle, which is the core, the crux of the psalm, verse 11, and that's being highlighted, emphasized because it stands alone, which talks about how God pardons guilt for his name's sake.

So using this chiasm, I'm going to preach through those matching sections together until we climax in that middle, in the core, in verse 11. And Psalm 25's overall message for us is that as pilgrims who have not yet arrived, we should humbly confess our sins to God and wait for his redemption.

And it gives us several motivations for that. First, God vindicates those who wait on him. Second, God forgives those who confess their sins. Third, God instructs those who humble themselves.

And fourth, God redeems for his name's sake. These are the reasons why we should turn to him and plead for forgiveness for sin. So the first reason why we should humbly confess our sins to God and wait for his redemption is that God vindicates those who wait on him.

Like us, when we wait on God, you might not be doing anything, but God is up to something. And so it's not in vain. It's not a waste of time.

[10 : 41] And seeing in that light, waiting is actually a very hopeful thing. Because if you're not waiting, that means you've given up. You've despaired.

There is no hope. So if you're waiting, that means there's actually hope. You're waiting for the resolution of something. Those who despair say, Lord, the Lord redeems not.

But those who wait and hope say the Lord redeems not yet. Waiting is not the same as languishing or wasting away.

In fact, Isaiah 40, 31 says that those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary. They shall walk and not be faint.

Waiting for the Lord brings renewal of strength. In the same way, when the guitar strings are loose, you can't play any music. When you strum it, you'll only hear this cacophonous clattering of metal against the wooden body of the guitar.

[11 : 45] It's only when the strings are taught that it can bring forth beautiful music. Likewise for the Christian, it's only when they live in the midst of that tension between the already and the not yet. When they live with hope, waiting on God, that they can produce beautiful music in their lives.

In perseverance and endurance. This is why David says in verse 21, May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. The words integrity and uprightness refer to David's integrity and uprightness.

We know that because those two exact words are used by God himself to describe David in verse Kings 9, 4. But how can David possibly claim integrity and uprightness for himself when he says in verse 11, Pardon my guilt, for it is great.

How can a person with great guilt can be said to have integrity and uprightness? Why does David think that his integrity and uprightness will preserve him?

He tells us in verse 11, For I wait for you. David is not saying that he has been sinless, but he is saying that his hope and trust are unreservedly in the Lord.

[12 : 59] That's his integrity and that's his uprightness. He's waiting on the Lord. Integrity does not mean that you are sinless, but it does mean that there is no sin in your life that you have not renounced or repented of.

David is living in that tension. Like him, we are simultaneously sinner and saint. And in that in-between time, between God's, Jesus' first coming and his second coming, we lament our sins and we confess our sins to God and to one another and we wait on God, hoping in him that there will be a time when sin will be no more.

When we wait on the Lord in the midst of our sins, in the midst of our sufferings and sorrows, we're declaring our hope that the final word has not yet been spoken. And that God's good and sovereign purposes will prevail.

And as David waits on the Lord in this way, he prays for deliverance from his enemies. Verses 2 to 3. Let me not be put to shame. Let not my enemies exalt over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame.

They shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. His enemies are those who are wantonly treacherous, willfully doing whatever treachery they want, which is contrasted with the psalmist's patient waiting.

[14 : 23] David's enemies take matters into their own hands, wantonly treacherous, while David leaves the matter in God's hands. He waits. He hopes. And for this reason, David repeatedly asks God not to let him be put to shame.

Again, this is matched by verses 19 to 20, where he says, Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. O guard my soul and deliver me. Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

To be put to shame or to be disgraced, it refers to being embarrassed by folly or by guilt. That's the difference between guilt and shame.

Guilt is vertical. It describes the feeling of having done something wrong before the law or before God. Shame is horizontal. It's what you feel, the feeling of being exposed to others, embarrassed by others because of the wrong that you have done or the perceived wrong.

David's praying that God would not let him be put to shame before his enemies. God, I wait on you. My hope is in you.

[15 : 39] If you don't deliver me, my enemies will gloat over me and they will say that my hope was in vain and that I was a deluded fool. Don't let that happen. I am waiting on you.

I'm counting on you. Vindicate me. And David expresses his confidence that God will indeed vindicate him. In verse 3, Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame.

But how can David be so confident that he will be vindicated? Because he knows God's character. It brings me to my second point that God is the one who forgives those who confess their sins.

It says in verses 6-7, Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions.

According to your steadfast love, remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. There are several amazing contrasts in these verses. The sins of my youth and my transgressions are contrasted with your mercy and your steadfast love.

[16 : 49] The sins of my youth is also contrasted with God, whose mercy and steadfast love are from of old. David and we, like him, have been sinning from our youth, but the good news is that God has been merciful and steadfast from of old.

He is the ancient of days. In fact, from eternity past, he has been characterized by steadfast love and mercy. my sins and my transgressions are many.

But the good news is that Lord is abounding in steadfast love, as it says in Exodus 34, 6. These verses are alluding to that powerful passage.

Verse 6 and 7 are mirrored by verse 16 to 18. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged and bring me out of my distress.

Consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins. When your troubles seem enlarged before your eyes and they seem to loom large in the horizon and seem to dominate your perspective, we need to ask and pray to God and cry at Him in this way to enlarge our view of His grace, His mercy, His steadfast love.

[18 : 03] Note the repetition of the word remember. Twice, once in verse 6 and again in verse 7, David asks God to remember His steadfast love or to remember Him according to His steadfast love.

And then sandwiched between those two occurrences is another occurrence of the word remember but this time it says remember not the sins of my youth or my transgression. So that structure emphasizes the contrast.

David wants to be remembered not according to his transgressions but according to God's steadfast love. this is because David knows as he says in Psalm 130, if you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

No one. No one could stand. Not a single one in this room. Not a single one out in the world. If God, who is perfect in holiness, chooses to mark all of our iniquities, here's another one.

Here's another one. Who can stand? Who can be justified? Who can have any standing or excuse before God? David knows that if God treats him as he deserves to be treated that he's in trouble.

[19 : 23] His only hope is that God does not remember his sins and that God does not treat him as he deserves but instead that God treats him on the basis of his own mercy, steadfast love, and grace.

God is merciful. It's the word that describes God's tender compassion toward his people like the mother's compassion for a nursing child.

God's not severe or harsh with us. He is merciful. God has steadfast love toward us. This is his loyal love.

His loving kindness. His enduring covenantal love that he shows to a people who have repeatedly been unfaithful to him because he is faithful even when they are not.

In the Hebrew, both the word mercy and steadfast love in verse 6 are actually plural. I love that. It's awkward in English so you don't translate it that way. But God's mercies, God's steadfast loves, as if to counteract the plurality of David's sins and transgressions, as if to convey the reality that where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

[21 : 00] That our sins, yes, they are many, but his mercies are more. God's mercies. A boy who is playing in a little pond where a puddle of water has to be careful because he can't jump too high or he obviously can't dive into it or he will get seriously hurt.

If he rough houses a little too much, there might be no more puddle left. Water might be just a muddy mess. But if you take that boy and drop him in the ocean, he could play and dive and jump all he wants in the freedom of that vast ocean.

In the same way, God's love for us is boundless and bottomless and vast and those who confess their sins and turn to him can relish the freedom of that love.

God is also gracious, he says, which means that he shows kindness or favor to his people. Right? When you find favor with someone, that person delights in you and is inclined to be favorable toward you and that means he's not treating you fairly or equitably but like everyone else, rather than he's treating you with a special favor and special, exceptional grace.

So all three of these words, mercy, steadfast love and grace, they highlight the fact that God forgives those who confess their sins not because of who they are but because of who he is.

[22 : 39] That's our great hope as Christians. David is pleading with God for forgiveness on the basis of his character, on the basis of the covenant that God has made with him.

God, I belong to you. I am yours. I wait on you. My hope and trust are in you. So forgive me. Remember not my sins but remember your mercy and steadfast love and grace.

And as recipients of God's mercy and steadfast love, we do not presume upon God's grace and go on sinning all the more. We turn away from our sinful ways and turn toward the ways of God.

That brings me to my third point. God instructs those who humble themselves and he helps us to walk in his ways. Note the repetition of words like way, path, lead.

It says in verses four and five, make me know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me for you are the God of my salvation. Verses eight to ten, again highlight the same theme.

[23 : 41] Good and upright is the Lord, therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Again and again, way, path, lead. The word lead, it's a verbal form of the word. It's a type of form that literally means cause someone to walk.

So to lead is to cause someone to walk. So it's again playing into that same imagery, that metaphor of a journey. And verses eight to ten are mirrored by verses twelve to fifteen in the second half, which tells us that the Lord instructs in the way those who fear him and plucks their feet out of the net.

Our enemies seek to ensnare our feet in the net of their schemes. Our sins seek to entangle us in its nets. But God's the one who plucks our feet out of the net and keeps us walking on the right path.

It's on that journey. So these metaphors, this extended metaphor reminds us that God's people are pilgrims on the way. We have not yet arrived.

[24 : 57] There will be a day when prayer turns to praise. And there will be a day when faith turns to sight. There will be a day when hope turns into reality.

But that day is not yet. And until that day comes, we should humbly confess our sins to God and wait for his redemption. Lamenting and confessing our sins, it helps us to keep to that narrow gate and the hard way that leads to life that Jesus talks about in Matthew 7 rather than straying to the wide gate and the easy way that leads to destruction.

because when you lament your sins, when you mourn your sins or the sins of our society, then you will no longer delight in those sins. And that temptation loses its illusion.

And if you're confessing your sins to God and to others, you are debasing yourself and you're humbling yourself and God promises he gives grace to the humble.

Who are the kind of people that God personally instructs and teaches and leads, causes to walk in the right way? Verse 9 tells us the humble. Verse 12 and 14 tells us those who fear the Lord.

[26 : 15] Fearing the Lord doesn't mean being terrified of God rather than it means standing in awe of God, his glory, his greatness in such a way that we dare not disobey him. To fear the Lord is to live before the presence of God, under the authority of God, and for the glory of God.

That's what it means to have fear of the Lord. And so in a real way, fear of the Lord is a synonym for humility. And the two terms are often paired together in the book of Proverbs.

Because those who fear the Lord are humble. Because they are not wise in their own eyes, but instead find wisdom in God's word. Those who fear the Lord are humble because they care more about what God says about them than what men say about them.

Those who fear the Lord are humble because they do not deny their sins, but they've really confessed. It's people like that that learned from God and followed him.

A college professor might look for the most intelligent student, handpick the most intelligent student to teach and to advise so that he or she can understand complex material and maybe even progress beyond where they have gone.

[27 : 38] That's their hope. But that's not what God looks for in his people. God looks for humble people who fear him.

in order to grasp a difficult math or a physics concept, you need intelligence. But in order to grasp the wisdom of God, in order to walk in the ways of God, you need humility.

humility. And why does God place such a premium on humility? Why does God care so much that we walk in his paths without veering away from it?

Verse 14 tells us, that friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him and he makes known to them his covenant. God demands humility and God calls to walk in his paths not because he's arbitrary or not because he's a tyrant.

It's because the only way that we lowly humans can relate properly to God, most high, is through humility and fear of the Lord. And it's only when we relate to him rightly that we can have a personal relationship with him.

[28 : 52] The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him. The Christian Standard Bible, which is another translation, puts it this way, the secret counsel of the Lord is for those who fear him.

If we humbly walk with God in the paths of God, God confides in us. He reveals things that he only reveals to his covenant friends.

God cares that we walk in his paths by obeying his commands because it's only in doing so that we can experience his steadfast love and faithfulness. Because what did it say in verse 10?

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. It's only by walking in God's paths and keeping to our covenant with him that we can love him and have a relationship with him.

That's what God desires of us. This is why we lament and turn from our sinful ways so we can keep to his paths and enjoy the friendship of the Lord.

[29 : 55] Do you want more out of your relationship with God? Do you want more of his steadfast love and faithfulness?

Do you want to know him more deeply and walk with him more intimately? Here's the Bible's answer. Obey him.

Stay along his paths. Walk with him. Keep in step with his spirit. Then you will know God more intimately. You will experience more of his steadfast love and faithfulness.

You will have deeper friendship with the living God. That leaves verse 11 which is the center of the chiasm and the crux of the psalm.

Verse 22 which is like an afterward since it falls outside the alphabet acrostic. Verse 22 concludes with this prayer. Redeem Israel O God out of all his troubles.

[30 : 59] The whole psalm up to this point was personal. It was written in the first person. I, me, my, and here David transfers that to the corporate reality of Israel as God's people, as a nation.

And so that this lament becomes the prayer of all God's people. And the God of our salvation that he's waiting for came to us in Jesus Christ.

when prophet Simeon had been waiting, waiting for the consolation of Israel, finally got to behold the child Jesus at the temple. He held him up and said this, my eyes have seen your salvation.

Jesus is the fulfillment of Psalm 25 because he came and accomplished the central prayer of this Psalm, verse 11, for your namesake, O Lord, pardon my guilt for it is great.

I was praying this for you guys this week and we were praying together for this this morning. Do you know that your guilt is great? Lawbreaking offenses in our society get classified into three broad categories and infraction is the least serious, smallest offense which can be punished with up to five days in prison and \$5,000 in the file.

[32 : 21] It's still pretty expensive on. A misdemeanor is next, punishable by up to one year in prison and or \$100,000 in the file. The worst, most serious crime is a felony which is punishable by up to a lifetime in prison or death and or by a \$250,000 fine.

Sometimes we can think of our sins as a minor infraction. Oh, I've done some bad things, little things here and there, but oh man, so many people are so much worse. No.

God is our creator and he is our sovereign ruler, but all of us at one point denied him to his face and we rejected his rule and we sought to be masters of our own fate.

We sought to live for ourselves. We have all in our ways, in our own simple ways, tried to be God rather than submit to God. That's not a little sin.

We have sought to usurp the very throne of God. That's treason. And if treason against the United States government is a felony, how much more when it is committed against the God of the universe who has infinite worth and value and who has never wronged and has given us all that is good.

[33 : 44] Our guilt is great. Do you feel that? If all of us really understood this then we would stop trying to make up for it and pay for our sins ourselves because there's no way that we could ever do enough community service hours, do good deeds to make up for it.

There's no way we can ever pay a big enough punishment, big enough fine to make up for it. And great guilt requires a great pardon.

And praise be to God that he provided Jesus to provide that great pardon for us. Verse 11 says, For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.

Once again, the basis for our pardon for sin is not our worthiness, not our deservingness, but the Lord's character and name. Ezekiel 20, 44 makes this so explicit.

You shall know that I am the Lord. When I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, not according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel. Herein lies our hope, brothers and sisters.

[34 : 57] God does not deal with us according to our sins. God does not repay us according to our iniquities. He could, but he doesn't. It's like having a cosigner on the loan.

As sinners were morally and spiritually bankrupt and left to our devices, we would default on our loans immediately. But because God has singled us out for himself as his people, because God has committed himself to us in covenant, it's like having a cosigner on our loan.

When we can't pay, the cosigner is obligated to pay because now his name and his credit are on the line. Because God has bowed himself to us in covenant and because he has signed on that dotted line, now it's for his name's sake that he pardons our guilt.

That's what Jesus accomplished on the cross. How can a just God pardon a great guilt with impunity? If a judge pardoned great guilt in court, we would be outraged.

So how can God do that? Because of Jesus. Because God didn't just excuse and pardon sin in a cavalier manner, in offhand manner like nothing ever happened.

[36 : 21] Rather, God paid a steep price for our sin. He bore the punishment for our sin in Jesus Christ when he died on the cross and when he was raised on the third day.

Jesus made good our pardon of sin and he was the ransom, the price for our redemption from slavery and death. That's why we can humbly confess our sins to God assured of our pardon.

That's why we can patiently wait for his redemption, our final redemption, assured that that is coming because we already have the down payment of that redemption in the Holy Spirit. our final redemption is certain, it's not a maybe, it's just not yet.

Not yet. Pardon for sin and a peace, steady endurance. Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide.

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Blessings all mine with 10,000 beside. Let's pray. Yes, Father, fill us with that hope this morning.

[37 : 36] Make us wait on you so that as we wait on you, we are renewed, renewed in our strength. So we might soar with wings like eagles.

Impress upon us what great mercies. we have received. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen.