

* The Heights Baptist Church *
* Topic: Trusting in God * Psalm 25 * 1/26/2025 *

MAIN POINT

The good, wholesome, and trustworthy words of God serve as the perfect guidebook for our lives. It behooves us to put our trust in God and his word.

INTRODUCTION

Note to study leader: This week's lesson is a stand-alone lesson while a one-week break is being taken from the sermon series on "Change".

A classic tease involved making fun of a husband driving around lost while refusing to stop to get directions. How has figuring out how to get somewhere changed over the past 30 years?

It used to require paper maps and stopping for directions when the map let us down. Now, we plug in our desired destination into our phone, and away we go.

Where do people usually go in order to get directions on how to live life?

People seek guidance from many people, maybe a trusted friend or an expert on a particular subject. The Bible says having an abundance of godly counselors is wise (Prov. 11:14), but first and foremost, we need to seek guidance from the one true God who is all-knowing, all-loving, and completely in control.

*"When we throw off God, we throw off the one who knows us best. We throw off the one who created and designed us, who knows how we are going to best thrive mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally. We throw off that which is best for us. Every command of God is for our opportunity to thrive."
Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, May 29th, 2024 ("Just a Minute" Facebook post)*

UNDERSTANDING

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 25:1-4

What must David have believed about God that caused him to turn to, trust in, and place his hope in the Lord?

We aren't sure which of the many difficulties David faced in his life that caused him to write this Psalm, but he was somehow troubled by enemies and weighed down by his situation. Yet in his emotional struggle, he made the choice to turn to the Lord for his help. He believed that God was in control with the power to grant him victory over his enemies.

What did David request from God in verses 4 and 5, and how is this request related to the attributes of God David mentions in these verses?

David is asking God to guide him in this very difficult circumstance. He acknowledges that his hope is in God all day long.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ HEBREWS 11:1 AND 6

How does Hebrews 11:1 define faith? What two elements are required for our faith in God?

Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see. Faith requires that we believe in God, and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Which of these two elements do you have the most difficult time with?

David believed that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Faith isn't just believing in God. What we believe about God matters. If we struggle with either of these two elements of faith, we will tend to find some other, lesser authority—often ourselves—by which to direct our lives.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 25:5-14

What requests does David make of God in these verses?

David turned to the Lord to wait on Him for deliverance from his enemies. Furthermore, he asked God to direct his paths. If David was going to trust in the Lord, then he was going to follow in His path. Faith demonstrates itself in action, so David asked God for guidance in how to live in a way that pleased Him.

How is God described in this passage, and how does this relate to the requests David makes of him?

In this passage, God is described as the One with truth, the God of salvation. He is compassionate and faithful, good, and upright. He is the forgiver of sins and honors those who fear Him. In light of these characteristics, David realizes God is the only one who can grant him the urgent requests he is making. God is the only one who absolutely knows what is best for David, and the only one who can orchestrate all of the events in David's life to clear out and illuminate his path in the direction he should go.

What is the connection between asking for God's guidance and asking God to forgive our sin?

One aspect of walking with the Lord is recognizing when we have veered off His path and sinned against Him. For this we need forgiveness, and the Lord is good and upright, eager to forgive and to show sinners His good and fulfilling ways. Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." And Psalm 66:18 tells us, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." Even though as Christians who have been born again we are forgiven in Christ for every sin we commit—past, present, and future, choosing to live in sin as a Christian blocks our fellowship with God. We need to confess our sins to him (1 John 1:9) and allow him to cleanse us from all unrighteousness if we want him to show us the way we should go.

What is the connection between asking for God's guidance and acknowledging our fear of him (verses 12 and 14)?

Fearing God is not the same as being terrified of a powerful enemy ("perfect love drives out fear" 1 John 4:18). But as Christians who have walked with God a long time, rightfully viewing him as our Father, we may become too comfortable with God. Let us not forget to be in reverent awe of him, honoring him as our glorious, all-powerful, holy, righteous, and majestic God.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 25:15-22

In these verses, David goes beyond just asking about his physical wellbeing and asks God to help him with his emotional wellbeing. What emotions might David be experiencing?

We read of being lonely and afflicted, troubled, and anguished, and at risk of being put to shame.

These emotions are sandwiched between verses 15 and 21. How do these verses show us the pathway to God's peace in spite of circumstances?

"My eyes are ever on the LORD, only he will release my feet from the snare." "My hope LORD, is in you." David's faith and focus are on God, not circumstances.

How could David have been expressing his reliance on God, and yet feeling lonely and afflicted?

Many great people of faith have felt lonely—David, Job, Jeremiah, and Esther, to name a few. And Jesus himself was known as a man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3). It is clear that these people had faith, and yet were under duress. In Psalm 25, we find David in a state of loneliness and affliction, yet he demonstrated great faith in the midst of it all. These emotions are a product of living in a world where sin’s curse touches all.

How do we “take refuge in” God (verse 20)?

We won’t automatically put our faith in God as our refuge. Our faith is developed by abiding in Christ (John 15:5). Some things we can do to abide in Christ is to spend time in his word (Romans 10:17), spending time with godly believers who are walking in faith (Hebrews 13:7), and spending time talking with God (Philippians 4:4-7).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DEUTERONOMY 31:1-8

The book of Deuteronomy is Moses’ charge to Israel as they were preparing to go into the promised land. This was a new generation who were not adults when they left Egypt 40 years earlier. They were facing the daunting task of dealing with the powerful, sinful Canaanites who currently resided in the land, and they are learning that Moses won’t be going into the promised land with them.

What are the main points Moses makes in these verses?

God is going with you. He will do the work. You have seen him do this in the past (helping them defeat Sihon and Og—see Numbers 21:21-31). God will deliver you. Be strong and courageous. Don’t be terrified or afraid. God will never leave you or forsake you.

What is significant about Moses telling this to “all Israel” ((verses 1-6), and then summoning Joshua and repeating it specifically to him (verses 7-9)?

All of Israel was facing this difficult task. And it’s especially important for church leaders to place their faith completely in Christ as they lead the church.

Put verse 6 in your own words. How important are these words for us in the church today?

These promises are repeated for us in Hebrews 13:5. We too must always remember these truths.

APPLICATION

How are you encouraged or challenged by this Psalm to put your trust fully in God?

How are you encouraged or challenged by this Psalm to seek guidance from the Lord?

In what circumstances in your life do you recognize the need for God’s guidance, and how will you take refuge in Him and seek His wisdom in these areas?

PRAYER

God, you are sovereign over everything and you love us perfectly. We thank you for the absolute truth of your Word. Grant us Your guidance, help us confront our wrong perceptions about you, and give us courage so that we might better serve you in the Christian community and in the world. Ultimately, it is you alone who can perfectly help us walk through this life in a way that is good, right, and pleasing to You. Help us not to be afraid and to trust in You alone. And we thank you for placing godly Christian brothers and sisters in our lives as well, so we can walk together with you. In Jesus’ name we pray.

COMMENTARY

PSALM 25

25:1-3 Disgraced (Hb bosh) is used three times in these two verses and once more in verse 20. The belief of the psalmist was that Yahweh would not allow His people to be put to shame because of their faithfulness to Him and the fact that His reputation was at stake (69:6; 119:31).

25:4-5 Guide and teach are essentially synonymous in this context, and they refer to Yahweh's directing those who are faithful to Him. His truth is the guide for their lives (43:3). The paths are similar to "ways" in verse 10 and are connected not only to God's truth but also to His faithful love.

25:6-7 The juxtaposition of remember... do not remember, and remember in these verses is significant. The first demonstrates that Yahweh's consciousness of His own attributes is the motivation for Him to act beneficently toward His people. In contrast to this, the sins of the psalmist must not be remembered, that is, they must be forgiven (vv. 11,18). Only after this has taken place could Yahweh remember (act on behalf of) the psalmist (74:2; 106:4; 112:6).

25:8-10 Way and ways are probably not the way of life or conduct of God's people in this instance, as these terms are commonly used elsewhere (143:8; Dt 5:33; also note this use in Ps 25:12). They are more likely related to verses 4-5, and they represent Yahweh's instruction of His people in the truth. In this sense the Lord's ways are equivalent to His covenant and decrees.

25:11 As in the case of verse 6, it is Yahweh's reputation (His name) that is at stake in His forgiveness of the sins of the psalmist. God's reputation is closely connected with His actions toward His people (Ezek 36:22).

25:12-13 The promise of inheriting the land is closely tied with those who are faithful to God. The promise of the land was never a "blank check" for Israel, but it could be realized only when the people were faithful (Dt 4:1,28-30).

25:14 The Hebrew word sod expresses the idea of "confidential," referring either to the material that is secret or to a "circle of confidants." Given the parallel of His covenant, it seems better to understand this as the content of God's secret counsel. God has the right to conceal what He wants (Pr 25:2), but He can also reveal His secret counsel to anyone He chooses. In this case it is revealed to those who fear Him (trust in Him and are faithful to Him).

25:15 Eyes are often used in the context of faith in the sense that a person "looks to" Yahweh as his source of help (123:2; 141:8).

25:16-17 The Hebrew text of this verse is difficult, reading literally "the distresses of my heart, they make wide." Although the form for "make wide" usually refers to relief from distress (4:2; 18:37), it can also express the meaning of "enlarge," which would be a figurative expression for increase. This idea is related to numerous enemies who surrounded the psalmist (v. 19).

25:18-20 To be put to shame is similar to "disgrace."

25:21 Integrity and what is right are personified in a similar way as Yahweh's attributes were personified in 23:6. These characteristics will protect those who remain in God's will (37:37).