

Thanks to Josh – wow that was great! Hard to follow!

I will not be singing the sermon – you don't want to hear that.

Let's read the whole Psalm, God's Word in 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.

Let's pray. Lord, thanks for your Word – and move in us now to understand, interpret it, and apply it to our lives. In JC, amen.

So, if you're driving in a strange city, which of the follow would you do:

- A. Look at a map or GPS on your phone –
- B. Stop and Ask for help
- C. Just keep driving, and find your way?

I'd probably do A, I would do the map, Claire the phone. Now I had a friend Mark – in seminary in Pasadena, CA, more than 20 years ago, who would do C. He told me that he liked to drive around in LA – I did not. He had a sense of adventure in driving and apparently had the time to explore.

That wasn't such a problem in trying to find a movie theater in LA, but its not a good way to go through life.

The world offers so much in the way of guidance, so we don't have to depend on just finding our way. We are bombarded by blogs, books, talking heads on TV, and even radio.

On Thursday, I was driving in to ZPC in the morning, when I found a man talking on the radio going on and on about self-talk and being positive. He kept repeating how important it was to be positive, see the world and tell yourself to be positive. He kept at it until I changed the station.

I found that I agreed with most of what he said but, if that's all he had to say, be positive and believe in yourself, but it was very thin.

David, a flawed leader and believer in God, was also described as a man after God's own heart. In this Psalm, he tells us to look somewhere else for guidance, hope, truth, and instruction. We look to something deep - to God – who is the giver of all truth.

This Psalm certainly has to do with instruction and teaching – it's in several places in the Psalm.

It's also embedded in the Psalm structure too. This psalm is an alphabetical acrostic – where the first letter of the first word of each line, except the last line, begins with the ABC's of the Hebrew alphabet. This would be a device for children to use to remember the Psalm.

In our earlier video – Josh shared how he can't memorize the bible, but can memorize songs. That's good to have different ways to learn. For young Jewish children, the ABC's would be a good way to learn this Psalm.

Let's take a look at why and how we look to God for guidance, truth, and instruction.

Who is God?

- Trustworthy, Savior – v. 2, 5
- Merciful, loving – v. 6
- Good, upright – v. 8

God is worthy of trust – verse 2.

God is the giver of salvation – verse 5.

Right now he is worthy of our attention.

Verse 6 – God is merciful – and has steadfast love.

God is worthy of our attention and praise – because of that mercy and love.

Verse 8 says God is good and upright.

God is good, but not limited to moral goodness, theologians say. Through scripture we see that God is good – in that he keeps his promises, he has integrity, he is not only truth, but loving and gracious too – so he is good.

We should long to experience that goodness and experience in a world where there is so much not good.

Out of God's goodness we can get guidance, truth, and learn the ways to go in our own lives.

What do we do?

- Have enemies – v. 2, 19
- Rebel and sin – v. 7, 18
- Need instruction – v. 4-5, 8, 12, 15

We have enemies. I learned this week that 72 of the 150 Psalms speak of enemies. Our enemies might be people who oppose us, but they might also be people who oppose or get in the way of God's way of living. For some of us, enemies might be temptations, money, success, distractions that keep us from seeing God's goodness –or seeing God's guidance.

Sometimes even things that are good, keep us from things that are of God. My family has enjoyed the good things about youth sports with our 4 kids, the competition, good sportsmanship, and teamwork.

But I know I have to be careful not to let that slip into something obsessive for me - a desire for my kid to win championships, to be the best player on the team, to get a college scholarship – those aren't bad things – but pursuing those might distract me from something that is higher, better, more important, my relationship with God.

In addition to enemies, we rebel and sin.

In the NIV, verse 7 says, “Remember not my sins of my youth and my rebellious ways.”

If I run into my neighbor's car because I am driving carelessly, I've done wrong, so I need to say I'm sorry. But I also need to pay for repairs.

With God we can't pay enough to bridge the gap between our rebellion and God's goodness. So God pays. He pays to make things right where we have drifted away and outright rebel.

Remember we said God is the giver of salvation. He is merciful and loving.

God pays for our sins through Jesus, the only sinless one, dying on the cross.

We must accept that payment, and place our faith in Jesus Christ to receive it.

So...we started this message by saying how do we get direction, guidance? Do you just drive around or do you use GPS or ask for help?

We need instruction from God!

I think sometimes even as a pastor, I read the Bible devotionally – or sometimes read it even mindlessly and think, “That's nice.”

But many years ago, as a young guy in college, I learned a better way to get instruction, to get guidance from the Bible – a simple way we can all use to study the Bible.

It's in these three questions we ask when we read the Bible:

What does it say?

What does it mean?

What does it mean for me?

What does it say? Who is the author? What is he saying? Who are the characters? What is the setting? What is happening?

What does it mean? Go beyond what it says – to what is the meaning?

For this Psalm, Psalm 25, we see David talking about enemies. I know he had many enemies, so he needed protection. He also is very personal, he uses a lot of personal language, for his own sin and rebellion, his enemies – for protection, he is humbly asking God to guide him and protect him.

He says, show me your way, guide me in truth, instruct me – he repeats these themes.

What does it mean for me?

If David prayed so personally, maybe I should too.

Pray with Passion like Josh sang in the video.

Ask God continuously how to live – show me your ways, guide me in truth – learn how to do that – you can do that this week for a current situation in your life!

So how do we pray like David?

What do we ask God?

Remember your love for me – v. 6

Remember not my rebellion – v. 7

Show me your ways - v. 4

Guide me in truth -v. 5

Verse 6 says be mindful – another translation says remember your love.

And don't remember my rebellious ways.

What does this mean? Well it's personal.

“God, remember how you told me in the rest of the Bible you are loving, merciful, full of grace?

Can you give me that now?”

“And Lord, You know how I rebelled? Can you forgive me, forget those sinful ways please?”

God says also in the Psalms, that he removes our sins as far as the east is from the west.

That happens through Jesus' forgiveness by dying on the cross.

So ask for forgiveness, accept it that it's yours, and receive it humbly in faith!

Josh in the video sang:

My hope is you.

Show me your ways.

Guide me in truth.

In all my days.

My hope is you.

Pray like that!

I need guidance from God and need to pray specifically.

Over the last year or so, I have had 3 people recommend the book, *The Hole in the Gospel*. I wondered if God was talking to me. So I've been reading it. In the book, author Rich Stearns tells the story of how God literally called him away from a great job as the CEO of Lenox China to become President of World Vision, one of the largest Christian relief agencies in the world.

In the story, Rich says two people were telling him they felt God was calling him to this new job, at World Vision. And they wouldn't let up. After a long process, he finally agreed to an interview and was offered the position of president of World Vision. He didn't want to accept it, knowing he would accept about ¼ the salary and have to move his family across country, out of their dream home, and he would have to deal with the poorest of the poor in the world. He felt caught: Thinking this was God calling him to go, but he didn't want to go.

As David did, Rich Stearns humbly prayed for guidance, over and over, even asking his children and the board of directors at World Vision to pray for guidance as well.

After being offered the job, he was to fly to Seattle on a Friday to check out World Vision. That very morning, he had a meeting with a man Keith from London, who was a major investor in Lenox. Keith told Rich he was getting ready to merge 2 companies in England to make it the largest tableware company in the world. On the spot, he asked Rich to become CEO and be his partner. The partnership would be 10% ownership, a stake worth \$25-\$50 million dollars.

Rich quickly remembered that his wife Renee had told him about 2 months earlier that she believed that at the moment of decision whether or not to go to World Vision, a great temptation, a financial one, would come and tempt Rich not to go to World Vision. It was happening now!

Rich, still in his meeting with Keith, shared how he couldn't accept this great offer now because that very day he was flying to meet with a large unnamed charity to be their president and he needed to finish the process with them first.

Keith was taken aback by Richard's response, but then shared something amazing. Keith shared that many years ago his 10 year old daughter, whom he and his wife had adopted from India had died, and how badly he grieved. Then he found an appeal through World Vision to sponsor a child. He sponsored a 10 year old girl from India, from the same region as his daughter, and it helped him to let go of his grief and changed his life. So Keith said, "I see Rich, how a big charity would benefit from someone like you, but selfishly I hope you decide to work for me."

Rich was shocked...and then shared the company he was meeting with was World Vision. Neither Keith nor Rich felt this was a coincidence! Rich felt God was saying that through World Vision, he could reach the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich for Jesus.

Rich Stearns soon accepted the call from World Vision to be President and has been leading them to help poor children all over the world for many years, in the name, and with the grace of Jesus Christ.

God uses His word, other people, and His Holy Spirit to call us to him.  
Whatever our circumstance, whether it is to be a company president or some situation we have in the week ahead...we need to recognize our need for God, to pray for guidance in a specific area, watch for God's answer.

Communion:

Our God is a personal God who hears our prayers.

God is personal.

David knew that, see it in this Psalm 25.

Jesus' disciples knew that too. They knew he loved them.

He shared life with them...even giving his life.

We can be personal with him too. Giving our lives in faith to him.

We are called to be personal with Jesus today.

We'll share the Lord's Supper – and in a moment you will be invited to come forward, if you have faith in him as Savior and Lord, to receive his grace.

He gave his body and blood his life for you.

Receive that through communion this morning.

Lets' pray. Thx for this meal, for all you are, for guiding us, bless this meal to give us new life again in you.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Come to tear a piece, dip in the cup.

If someone else needs you to, please take a piece of bread to them.

Close:

Homework:

This week, pray as David did for God's guidance in one specific area in your life.

So...

Recognize God's goodness, recognize your need for God, pray for guidance in a specific area, watch for the answer.

Benediction: Now, go from this place into the world with the:

Love of God the Father.

Grace of Jesus the Christ,

Guidance of the Holy Spirit, Amen.