

Theme: “To You, O LORD, I Lift Up My Soul”

When you think of a psalm for comfort, Psalm 23, “**The Lord is my shepherd...**” probably comes to mind. That is one of the most well-known and beloved sections of the Bible. But did you know that there is another psalm written by King David just two psalms later that is filled with messages of comfort as well? Our sermon text for today is Psalm 25. It is a much longer psalm than Psalm 23, and can be divided into four prayers—two of which have a very similar theme. If you look at the bulletin or the printed copy of the sermon I have put a space between each of the four prayers of this psalm and in your bulletin as you follow along with the sermon you can fill out the themes of the four prayers of this psalm.

Text: Psalm 25 (NKJV)

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

**² O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed;
Let not my enemies triumph over me.**

**³ Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed;
Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.**

⁴ Show me 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; On You I wait all the day.**

**⁶ Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses,
For they are from of old.**

**⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions;
According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.**

⁸ Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

⁹ The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth,

To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.

¹¹ For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

¹² Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.

¹³ He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth.

**¹⁴ The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him,
And He will show them His covenant.**

¹⁵ My eyes are ever toward the LORD, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net.

¹⁶ Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted.

¹⁷ The troubles of my heart have enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses!

¹⁸ Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins.

¹⁹ Consider my enemies, for they are many; And they hate me with cruel hatred.

²⁰ Keep my soul, and deliver me; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You.

²¹ Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You.

²² Redeem Israel, O God, Out of all their troubles!

As we read through this psalm maybe you noticed just how many areas of the Christian life it covers. This psalm makes for a great daily prayer, but especially in times of distress. In fact, I use portions of this psalm very often when I visit people in the hospital. Let's take a closer look at the four prayers of this psalm and as we do so think of how the words and phrases of this psalm apply to your own life, and I pray that they will bring you comfort and strength from the Lord.

Prayer #1 – A Prayer for Protection (v. 1-3)

Notice how David expresses his complete and full confidence in the Lord's protection: **"To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me."** What a beautiful description of what prayer is as well, **"lift[ing] up my soul"** to God. In his lifetime King David had many enemies—nations he was at war against, people who tried to kill him, including one of his own sons, Absalom, who had rebelled against him, and of course, David's most famous enemy: the giant Goliath. The Lord gave King David protection and victory throughout his life—even when the odds seemed impossible, as in the case of his battle with Goliath. David prays confidently, **"Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed"** (v. 3)

As we observe our life and the world around us we may question whether those words of v. 3 are actually true. How do we know that this is, in fact, true (and always will be) that no one who **"waits on the Lord,"** that is trusts in the Lord, will be ashamed? Because He has already given us the greatest victory by taking away sin, death, and even hell itself by Jesus' death on the cross and has assured us of eternal life in heaven with Him by Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

That leads us into the second prayer of this psalm...

Prayer #2 – A Prayer for Forgiveness (v. 4-11)

David declares in v. 5, **"For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day."** God is the God of our salvation. In His loving kindness and tender mercy He forgives all of our sins for Jesus' sake. Notice the contrast David expresses between our sinfulness and God's goodness, **"Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old. ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD...¹¹ For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great."**

This section not only contains some beautiful prayers for God's forgiveness it also expresses a desire for God to teach us and guide us in His ways of righteousness and truth. **"Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. ⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me...⁸ Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way. ⁹ The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way. ¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies"** (v. 4-5; 8-10).

As we gather in the Lord's house each week these are our prayers as well: Forgive us, Lord, according to Your grace and mercy, and teach us, guide us on Your paths of righteousness. Keep us from those destructive sins that ruin our lives and threaten our souls. **"Show me 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; On You I wait all the day"** (v. 4-5).

That leads us to the third prayer in this psalm...

Prayer #3 – A Prayer for a Godly Life (v. 12-14)

The expression **"fear the LORD"** is referenced twice in this short section and shows up repeatedly in the Bible. It's unfortunate that the word **"fear"** is the word that most English translations use to translate this Hebrew word. Our English minds usually think of "being afraid" when we hear the word **"fear."** But the **"fear of the LORD"** does not mean to "be afraid of God," but rather to "stand in awe of Him; revere, respect, honor, and trust in Him." It's a very full word in Hebrew that we can't really translate with one word in English. Notice what God promises those who **"fear Him"** (v. 14):

“Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. ¹³ He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth. ¹⁴ The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant” (v. 12-14). When we “**fear the LORD**”—revere, honor, respect, trust, and believe in Him—He will teach us, bless us, and show us “**His covenant**,” His promises of life and salvation.

The fourth prayer of this psalm has a very similar theme to the first prayer. They act as sort of “bookends” to this psalm.

Prayer #4 – A Second Prayer for Protection (v. 15-22)

Notice that David’s pleas for protection in this last section deal with not only our physical protection, but most importantly our spiritual protection: **“Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted. ¹⁷ The troubles of my heart have enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses! ¹⁸ Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins...²⁰ Keep my soul, and deliver me; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You” (v. 16-18, 20).**

We need our Savior’s protecting hand of deliverance with us every day, especially in times of distress. But how much more grateful are we for the fact that He has **“pluck[ed] [our] feet out of the net” (v. 15)** of our spiritual enemies: the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. That protection and deliverance is not just for this life, and it isn’t temporary. It’s eternal. As much as we human beings detest waiting, David reminds us we can **“wait for You [the Lord]” (v. 21)**, because we know that in the end He will deliver us and **“Redeem Israel...Out of all their troubles!” (v. 22).**

As you might have heard the nation of Israel is going through the severe trouble of war with their enemies in the Middle East right now, and we pray for their protection and for the LORD to end that conflict. In David’s day, the Israelites were God’s chosen Old Testament people, and he was their king. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul reminds us that true Israel, spiritual Israel, does not depend on our nationality or our race, but on faith (see **Romans 9:6-9**). Believers are God’s “Israel” in the New Testament. So when we read that last verse of the psalm, remember David is talking about us about you and all believers: **“Redeem Israel [Your people; all believers], O God, Out of all their troubles!” (v. 22).**

What troubles are you facing in your life right now? What physical, emotional, or spiritual distresses are afflicting you and your loved ones? Do what King David did: **“Lift up [your] soul” (v. 1)** to the LORD. Wait on Him and put your complete and full trust in Him. He will deliver you. If not in this life, He will completely deliver us from **“all [our] troubles” (v. 22)** in the next! He has sealed that promise with the blood of His own Son on Calvary’s cross! May these inspired words of prayer and promise from Psalm 25 bless your life and comfort your heart and soul this week, no matter what troubles and distresses you are facing. **“To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, I trust in You...For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day” (v. 1, 2, 5).** Amen.