

# A MASTERCLASS PART 2

PSALM 25:8-15 JANUARY 24, 2018

Head over to Psalm 25 and we'll begin at verse 8 this evening.

Most of us are probably familiar with University of Phoenix's "I am a Phoenix" ad campaign. We *should* be - they spend over \$100 million a year on advertising.<sup>1</sup> The commercials tell stories of regular people who enroll in the University's programs, overcome obstacles, and not only receive a degree, but have been transformed along the way, making them stronger, smarter and better equipped to achieve in life. At least, that's what the ads suggest.

Last week we started looking at Psalm 25 as if we were students in one of King David's master classes. David was an expert in spiritual devotion and intimacy with God. He had way more than graduate level training in these areas. And his Psalms not only touch our hearts emotionally, they also serve as lectures which guide us along the way that David himself had taken as *he* learned to follow the Lord.

We saw in the first section that David talked about when and why he *enrolled* in God's masterclass. In our verses this evening, he gives an *evaluation* of the program and the professor. And he testifies that if you join God's program, it will change your life, not just setting you up for a great future, but actually transforming the *fabric* of who you are.

We want to think about that transformation tonight *and* reflect upon the wonderful future we have to look forward to as we follow God's will and His ways.

We begin at verse 8.

## **Psalm 25:8 - <sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.**

Last week's verses focused on the tender mercies of God and how *personally* affectionate He is to His people. Here David continues his praise of the Lord, proclaiming that God is good and upright. He is a *generous* God and 'upright' is meant to describe God as being 'on the level'. And so, it makes sense that the Lord would want to impart truth to human beings. He's a generous God who loves truth and wants to reveal Himself. So it's natural that He would be a Teacher. And David points out that God, out of His own goodness, reaches out to sinners, hoping to save and willing to accept *anyone* who will trust in Him and wait on Him.

Jesus said in Luke 5 that He came to earth to call sinners to repentance and through that relationship God is able to transform our lives as He teaches us in His ways.

## **Psalm 25:9 - <sup>9</sup>The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.**

We should notice a significant reclassification here: The people who a verse ago were categorized as "sinners" are now called "the humble." If you have the King James Version, it calls them "the meek." These people, receiving God's instruction and going the way of the Lord are, from the very beginning, being fundamentally transformed. They're being redefined and reshaped. No longer are they simply "sinners." No, once in the transformative hands of God, they are becoming people who

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<sup>1</sup> <http://adage.com/article/news/university-phoenix-spends-100-million-annually-advertising/138849/>

resemble Jesus Christ. And we see that as He transforms them, He then guides them to live a life of humility and meekness.

James reiterates this process in his letter when he writes:

**James 1:21b-22 - receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls  
22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**

When a person becomes a Christian, God not only *saves* them, but He also *sends* them on a path - the path David is describing here using the term "justice." Although that might have too legal a flavor for us. In other translations like the NLT or the ESV or the NIV it's simply rendered as: "doing right." We're led by God to become like Him: Humble and upright and showing generous grace to those around us. The enemy of this process is pride. The Bible says that God *resists* the proud. If we want to progress in this program, humility is a necessary requirement.

**Psalm 25:10 - <sup>10</sup>All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.**

Walking with God is not only about a destination, it's about the transformation along the way. And David expects that we will be willing accomplices in the work of God. He expects that we will keep God's covenant and His testimonies. Testimonies here refers to God's ordinances and regulations.

Now David wrote from a different position than we read it. He was under the Mosaic covenant and the Davidic covenant. Those are covenants that do not apply to us. *We* are under the *new* covenant, established by Jesus Christ, which means that the regulations that David lived under regarding diet and days and the rest aren't binding on us. However, we are *most definitely* under commands and regulations and statutes given under the New Covenant in the New Testament. So, even though the *specifics* David would've been thinking of are different for us, the *sentiment* is still applicable.

We're in the dispensation of grace, but it's not a dispensation of anarchy. We're given *many* commands and boundaries and statutes by the Lord that we're expected to adhere to. Rather than chafe against those things, David encourages us that they are good and merciful. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth" he says. Really? It certainly doesn't always *feel* that way. But it's true whether we *feel* it or not. And it is, perhaps, better understood when we read it this way: "All the Lord's ways show faithful love and truth." That's the case even when walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

**Psalm 25:11 - <sup>11</sup>For Your name's sake, O Lord, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.**

David can never think for very long about God's greatness without realizing his own unworthiness. As he extols the virtues of God, the Master Teacher and the incredible work the Lord does in the lives of His people, David realizes that he's not qualified to be a disciple. He should've been expelled long ago. And so here he prays another plea for forgiveness and pardon.

The thing about asking for or receiving a pardon is that you're admitting the fact that you're guilty. This was news to Sheriff Joe Arpaio a few weeks ago. He was being interviewed and the host asked him something about the presidential pardon he had received and pointed out that when a person

accepts a pardon, they are admitting guilt for a crime. Joe tried to disagree, but, it's true. It's even been legally decided at the Supreme Court level. To accept a pardon is to admit guilt.<sup>2</sup>

David didn't need to be convinced. He looked within and recognized that not only was he guilty, his iniquity was *great*. He had a wonderful awareness of sin. That may seem like a strange thing to say, but that's only because we live in a culture that just wants to feel good about ourselves all the time, whether those feelings are true or justified or not. David, one of the most spiritual men in all the Bible, was keenly aware of his *need* for salvation. And he demonstrates for us that mature Christians are people who acknowledge the enemy within and who recognize how poor and bankrupt they are before God.

Paul lived out this example. Commentators notice a backwards progression in the way he described himself. He went from calling himself to an apostle to the least of the apostles to the least of all God's people to the chief of sinners! And it's not that these guys just had poor self esteem. No, we recognize that they had an incredibly rich, vibrant relationship with God. It's that the more they walked with the Lord, the more they understood His truth and His ways. They more humble they became and the more sensitive they were to the glory of God's gracious salvation.

**Psalm 25:12 - <sup>12</sup>Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.**

The transformation has progressed further here. In verse 8 those being taught were called "sinners". In verse 9 they had become "the humble." Now, we see they are God-fearers! They are growing and changing and becoming more holy as the Lord does His work and as they cooperate with it.

"Him shall He teach in the way He chooses" can also be rendered "Him shall He teach the path they should choose," reminding us that the Christian life is not just eternal or mystical, it's also immensely practical. God intends to show you and I how to navigate life with real-world guidance. Where should I live? What should I do? Who I'm in relationship with? These are things that God wants to address, not in weird ways - as if we *divine* Him - but through His word and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and through Godly advice from other believers.

So, on a practical level, as I'm living life, I should not focus on *how* to get where I want to go. Rather, I should focus on fearing God, Who is unfailingly faithful to get me exactly where I need to go. He'll lead me to the good, in His mercy. So the supreme answer we are on the hunt for is: What does God want me to do in my life today? How is He leading me?

**Psalm 25:13 - <sup>13</sup>He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth.**

As I've already pointed out, David's specific circumstances were somewhat different than ours. Under the Mosaic covenant there were physical promises for spiritual obedience. Our relationship with God is packed with promises of *spiritual* abundance and that, in the end, we will inherit the earth as we rule with Christ in His Kingdom. All of us Christians should take time to consider the inheritance the Lord has promised to us so that we don't grow weary in doing good.

**Psalm 25:14 - <sup>14</sup>The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.**

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.newsweek.com/joe-arpaio-found-out-admitted-guilt-trump-pardon-live-tv-781824>

Great verse. There are a *lot* of different renderings, depending on which translation you pick up. Instead of “the secret of the Lord,” one says, “the friendship of the Lord.” Another says, “the Lord confides in those who fear Him.” Another says, “Intimate fellowship of the Lord.” But no matter which way it’s translated, what’s clear is that God gives special, intimate access to His heart to those who fear Him. Let me read it for us in the Amplified version:

**Psalm 25:14 (AMP) - The secret [of the sweet, satisfying companionship] of the Lord have they who fear - revere and worship - Him, and He will show them His covenant, and reveal to them its [deep, inner] meaning.**

Jesus said that He has made us His friends. Friends with whom He shares His heart. And so, though David is talking about teaching and learning, it’s not at all sterile or clinical. It’s close and personal. That’s what the Lord wants for us. That’s the program He’s invited us into. A relationship of rich, personal interaction that not only brings satisfaction to our lives, but instruction as well.

**Psalm 25:15 - <sup>15</sup>My eyes *are* ever toward the Lord, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net.**

David’s confidence in God’s love and power made it a no-brainer for him to relinquish control of his life into God’s hands. And, like we saw earlier, rather than spend his life worrying about circumstances or specific decisions, he could focus his attention fully on the Lord, knowing that God would not only show unfailing love and mercy to him but that God would also give him direction so that David would know what to do and when to do it.

David had discovered a lot of secrets to life and now he’s sharing them with us. They all centered around the fear of God and realizing who God is. That didn’t mean he had no struggles, in fact he was under pressure and attack all the time. But despite all those things, he was being transformed into the hero that we remember him as. And if we could go to him and ask him how it happened, he would explain what he says here: That as we fear the Lord and allow Him to do what He wants to do in our lives, then we are transformed from fabric to future. And, along the way, we grow in intimate closeness with our Creator and Savior, who invites us to bind our hearts up with His and enjoy spiritual life, life more abundantly, day in and day out as we walk with Jesus Christ.