

# A MASTERCLASS WITH KING DAVID (PART 3)

PSALM 25:16-22 FEBRUARY 7, 2018

We're going to close out our study of Psalm 25 this evening, starting at verse 16. We've been imagining that King David is hosting a masterclass on intimacy with God and living the Christian life, giving us incredible spiritual truths that have been revealed to him through experience and by the Holy Spirit.

The last time we were together the words were full of praise and confidence as David proclaimed God's greatness and the power of His work on behalf of His people. He was talking about covenant and transformation and goodness and our feet being plucked out of every net. But now, in a closing prayer here at the end, David's demeanor seems to dramatically change. Rather than oozing calm and confidence, David comes across as anxious, even desperate concerning the circumstances of his life. The reality of the dangers he was up against flooded his mind and it drove him to his knees.

But here's the important part: What we will find is that in this time of strain David doubles down on *exactly* what he said in verse 1. His lecture to us about God and faith and spirituality isn't just theoretical. It's David's hope. And it's the way of life he is determined to live, no turning back.

I'm always amazed to hear the statistical data about socialism on college campuses or among college professors. "About 18 percent of social [science professors] in the United States self-identify as Marxists, compared to only about 5 percent who identify as conservatives."<sup>1</sup>

As of 2016, "*The Communist Manifesto* still ranks among the three most frequently assigned texts at American universities, appearing in more than 3,000 college course syllabi."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, these professors don't *live* in communist nations. They can lecture their theories from the comfort of freedom and affluence, while people *in* socialist countries like Venezuela, Vietnam and North Korea struggle to survive.

In other words, the theory doesn't work in reality. What about our Christian faith? We hear passages and preaching full of promises, but does trusting in God really work when foes and fears and the flesh comes knocking at the door? David says it does and he not only *says* it, he *lived* it and invites us to live it too.

Let's join David in his prayer and see what lessons and encouragements we can gain for the reality we each face in this life.

**Psalm 25:16 - <sup>16</sup>Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I *am* desolate and afflicted.**

Throughout the Psalm we have, hopefully, noticed the intimacy of the relationship between God and Christian. It's a relationship full of kindness and attention and affection. It is *intimate* fellowship with our Savior.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.academia.org/self-identifying-marxist-professors-outnumber-conservatives-as-college-professors/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/communist-manifesto-among-top-three-books-assigned-in-college-2016-01-27?dist=beforebell>

Here, for some unspecified reason, David feels that there is a break in the connection. He asks the Lord to turn toward Him. Now, we can be sure from the Bible that God will never, *no never* leave us or forsake us. Jesus made us that promise. And David himself knew this was true.

**Psalm 22:24 - <sup>24</sup>For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.**

But what we see here is that in a time of great pressure and anguish, David felt a distance from God and all he was left with was loneliness and hurt. So in this verse we can learn a great many things.

First, David has been declaring many truths about God's mercy and grace. And now we see him *appeal* to that grace. He's practicing what he preaches. Grace is not just some fairy tale idea meant to help tuck people in at night. It is the answer to fear and to the onslaughts we face.

Second, withdrawal from the Lord never leads to growth, it leads to desolation. David felt far from God, not because God had moved back, but because there was some barrier of doubt or sin or callousness on David's part. In verse 18 he connects his affliction to his own sin. But the application for us is this: If we feel spiritually dry or alienated or at a distance from God, the answer is *never* to withdraw further or to separate from the Word or from our community of Christians. The answer is to immediately go into the throne room of heaven and attach ourselves again to our Lord.

Third, we see, as we do so often through David's example, that we can talk to God about *anything!* We do not need to be shy about any issue when we go to prayer. The Scripture is clear that we can (and should) pour out the whole of our hearts in prayer before the Lord and then allow Him to do what He wants to do.

**Psalm 25:17 - <sup>17</sup>The troubles of my heart have enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses!**

We're not sure when and why this song was written, but there are some clues that it was later in David's life. He references his 'youth' back in verse 7. But here we see that all the circumstances in his life have not just magically worked out. In fact, it seems that they have gone from bad to worse at this point in time.

We should notice 2 things from David's example here: First, he does not complain about God. He doesn't say, "God, I've been faithful. I've done what You wanted. Why don't You make everything comfortable for me?" He pleads with the Lord, but he's not *upset* with the Lord. Second, he does not lose his *confidence* in the Lord. Things have gone from bad to worse, so where does he go for help? He goes to his God. He's *still* confident that the Lord is mighty to save and deliver him out of these ever-growing troubles. And they weren't just external troubles. Look at verse 18:

**Psalm 25:18 - <sup>18</sup>Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins.**

As always, David was quick to acknowledge the enemy within and to lay himself bare for God to perform spiritual surgery on his heart. He wasn't interested in *working* off his sins, he wanted them *removed* and forgiven by God. That was his only hope.

Notice though the first half of the verse. The New Living Translation reads it this way: "Feel my pain and see my trouble." That's a dramatic prayer. But that's *exactly* what our God has done. Our God

has felt our pain. Jesus came as a Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief. He did not bypass suffering, He did not bypass grief. We read in Hebrews:

**Hebrews 2:18 - [H]e himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.**

Our Savior understands our suffering because He has felt it Himself. And He knows *exactly* what is going on in your heart and around your life. He sees and He knows and He will not leave you as an orphan. Instead He has come to embrace us with grace and forgiveness and empowering for whatever situation we're facing today.

**Psalm 25:19 - <sup>19</sup>Consider my enemies, for they are many; And they hate me with cruel hatred.**

David has asked God to deal with the enemy within, but he also asks the Lord to deal with the enemy outside. And here he doesn't try to give God a list of actions He should take, but he simply asks the Lord to consider his foes. He had some big league troubles but he was friend to a big league God. And David believed that God was on the side of His people. He knew that God moved on behalf of His people. So David prays that God would *defend* him against the attacks of his enemies.

I think there's a lesson on prayer for us here. We know David is not young when he wrote this Psalm. So, he's seen God move on his behalf when he came against Goliath. When he came against Saul. When he faced so many other armies and enemies. Yet, here he is, praying the same thing again. And that's ok. He didn't give up praying for God's regular intervention in his life. In a similar way, Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." The Lord isn't hoping we'll get to a point where we pray about fewer and fewer things. "Oh, if I had real mature faith, I wouldn't pray about that issue again." That's not the case at all! David has been talking about how to have a deep, transformative, mature relationship with God, and we see he's still praying some of the prayers that he would pray as a young man. He was still convinced that God cared about these daily situations *AND* that God was the solution to the troubles he faced in life. That God had the answer or the sustenance David would need to travel through the time of trouble.

**Psalm 25:20 - <sup>20</sup>Keep my soul, and deliver me; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You.**

This is the key point for us tonight: In this time of immense difficulty and dread, David does not jump ship or make an about face. He doubles down on *exactly* what he said back in verse 1. Let me read that for us again:

**Psalm 25:1 - <sup>1</sup>To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. <sup>2</sup>O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me.**

We've been progressing through this Psalm as if we're students in a classroom, listening to David lecture out of the wealth of his experience. But by verse 20, we're no longer in the classroom. David is talking about his concrete reality. And what does he do when the *real* problems of life spring up around him? He doubles down. He applies his own lecture and reaffirms his absolute trust in God.

Now, the prayer in verse 20 sounds much more strained and much more urgent than it did in verse 1, but the truth and the plan is the same. And though, it seems, David will not experience immediate

deliverance, his trust is secure. He knows God is still strong to save. He knows God is still mindful of him. He knows that he is on a path leading to life and to glory.

David is able to endure his suffering because he is *resolved*. He has *decided* to follow his Savior. No turning back, no turning back. He *chooses* to fear the Lord, rather than fear his circumstances. He *chooses* to wait on God rather than scramble for the quickest exit out of his short-term trouble. He understands that the ultimate solution to all that he is facing and all he ever *will* face is not circumstance, it is *Savior*. If the *Lord* is near, nothing else matters, at least not ultimately. Because the Lord is a Savior, full of grace and lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. And so, knowing this, David does not change his plans or pivot his position. He presses into the Lord with hope and expectation, not because he was given a prophecy of what would happen, but because he knew God's *heart*. He knew what kind of a Person God is and so, of course, went running to Him, not only in prayer, but we see in the next verse, in conduct.

**Psalm 25:21 - <sup>21</sup>Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You.**

While he waited and endured these problems, David felt sure that integrity and uprightness would act like bodyguards for him. He would be *preserved* by walking in the way of righteousness.

Now, tonight, all of us who are Christians are waiting on the Lord for something. Maybe you're waiting for deliverance from some trial or maybe you're just waiting for the Lord's return. Either way, as we wait, our lives should be characterized by honesty, faithfulness, truthfulness and Christ-likeness. Because fearing God, following Jesus, being a Christian isn't just an attitude, it's an activity as well.

Here David gets to live up to his promise back in verse 5, where he said, "I'll wait on the Lord all day!" Ok, well, here's how he's going to do that. With integrity and uprightness. Walking the way of righteousness as revealed in the Scriptures.

And then he closes the song, not with resolution to his troubles, but in the waiting. Verse 22:

**Psalm 25:22 - <sup>22</sup>Redeem Israel, O God, Out of all their troubles!**

In one sense, he's left hanging and all Israel is hanging with them. But he's hanging on the Lord. On His promises. He's left hanging to God's faithfulness and mercy. And he closes the song reminding us that God is strong enough for *all* of His people and *all* of their troubles. When David says, "redeem" there it means "ransom." God has enough for all of it. He won't run out before He gets to us.

And so, tonight, as we leave David's classroom for the concrete reality of life, we'll probably run into some problem or some trouble, some suffering. But here's what we can do: rush to God in prayer, with confidence that He is ready to hear us and ready to sustain us. We do not need to be shy, but should be bold to pour out our hearts *honestly* before this loving Savior, who has not forgotten us, but who sees and knows and has suffered just as we have. And who is working out His redemption in our lives this very day, even this moment.