

This psalm seems familiar because many of the themes are repeated in other psalms particularly Ps 27, but all scripture is God breathed with the Holy Spirit inspiring David to write this down and so God wants this message to be for us today.

2 Timothy 3v16 says

‘All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work’.

So lets prepare ourselves for a message from God for each one of us this morning through the instruction in this psalm about how we should speak to God when we are anxious or afraid, about submitting ourselves to His will, about proclaiming all the good things He has done and listening to what He is saying to us.

I know some of you follow Lectio 365 with Pete Grieg, and they use the mantra which could be applied from this Psalm and the other 149 psalms,

PRAY. Pause (wait), rejoice and reflect, Ask and Yield. We will see all of that in Psalm 25 today.

This Psalm is one of the Acrostic ones meaning that in Hebrew the start of each line is the next letter of the alphabet. If this were in English it might read

All good things come from God

Blessed are we by His mighty ways

Come drink from His everlasting streams etc

This is to help people to memorise them and shows that care was taken in writing the psalm.

This psalm was probably written at the time that David’s third son, Absalom had rallied Israel to fight against his father and David had fled from Jerusalem.

Let’s look at David’s character and background before we dive into the Psalm itself because it gives us insight into David’s mind when he wrote this Psalm.

In 1 Samuel 16v7 God guided Samuel to anoint David as the next King to follow Saul. Samuel thought the beefy brothers of David looked more like King material, but God said

‘People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’ So we know God saw something special in this shepherd boy who was the bravest person in the land as not even Saul the King would fight the giant Philistine.

Shortly after when David is anointed with oil, we hear **‘And the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day on’.**

When David takes on Goliath in the next chapter, he says **‘The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the Lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine’.**

Reflection 1-So David’s identity is assured, he knows God loves him and he trusts in God, but sometimes he will have doubts as we will see in Psalm 25. **Let us be certain** that our Father loves us, and we can be honest with Him about our fears and failures,

David is faithful, that we know.

He is faithful foremost to God, it is clearly in his very soul that he should honour God at all times. He is faithful to King Saul as God’s anointed (even to the point of sparing Saul’s life when Saul was trying to kill him) and he is faithful to his father, going back from his duties to the King to help with the flock.

Saul, anointed by God has made some poor life choices and has allowed Satan to infect his mind, body and soul, having lost his relationship with God. David plays music to Saul to send the **‘tormenting Spirit away’** so David knows that when he is King he must stay close to God to avoid the same fate as Saul and ultimately nearly all the other Kings including David’s son Solomon at the end.

Reflection 2-We need to keep our eyes fixed on God and take our decisions to him, like David to avoid Satan creeping in.

David is a successful commander of the armies and is loved by the people for his success in battle as he is **blessed by God**. When Saul becomes jealous David runs for his life.

After Saul’s death, David is crowned King and Nathan the prophet gives him a word from God.

‘I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be leader of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes... And I will give you rest from all your enemies.

Reflection 3- God blesses us too, keep a diary to record answers to prayer

Possibly aged 30, David sees Bathsheba, a married woman bathing and sends for her and she subsequently becomes pregnant and then he arranges for her husband Uriah to be murdered. I think this is the sins of his youth that are referred to in the psalm line 7.

David was reminded by the prophet Nathan that he had done wrong and we hear that the Lord was displeased and the first child of Basheba dies. We have to wrestle with such retribution from God described in the Old Testament, **but when writing the Psalm David will be conscious that God can exercise his displeasure as well as his blessing.**

Let's look at Psalm 25 now!

Line 1-Unto thee Oh Lord do I lift up my soul (KJV)

Well we could speak about the first two lines and stop there! In the bible **the heart and soul are interconnected but distinct.** The heart represents our emotions, desires and will, while the soul is the life force or essence of a person, and is the eternal part of us.

Like the analogy of a windsurfer who is sitting in the water and then catches the wind (which is the Holy Spirit) and lifts up out of the water, David wants to lift himself out of the mire he is currently in.

Line 2- I trust in thee

We can think of Isaiah 40:31 Those who trust in the Lord will rise up like eagles, they will run and not grow weary and walk and not grow faint.

David needs his soul lifting in the mess he is in at this moment, and he makes a key statement of trust in God. Do we trust God? We can test that by looking at how we react when life is difficult. Here David is on the run from His son, betrayed and getting older, he needs guidance from God. I mentioned earlier that God has spoken clearly to David and that He was with David in all his trials, but David is struggling to make sense of what is happening.

Reflection 4-It can be like that for us too can't it? So a good place to start is to reaffirm our trust in the Lord and let our posture of humility and our actions reflect that.

In Psalm 34v7 the Lord says you don't need fortified cities when you trust me. It's the reason that God was cross with David when he took a census of his troops when God forbade him to do so. **Here David is realigning himself to trust God's way.**

When I am anxious, sometimes all I can say is Jesus I trust in you and Jesus I love you and know you are for me. Trust means that you choose God's way over worldly ways and head face into the problems.

That's why it says in Psalm 23 v5 'You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies', **Those enemies may be physical people, temptations of the flesh or spiritual attack.**

This Psalm starts and finishes with David waiting on the Lord, at the beginning he lifts up his soul and at the end line 21 he is again waiting on the Lord, and **waiting is an active not a passive activity. A restaurant waiter doesn't tell the customer what to eat, they wait to be told.**

In verses 2 and 3 David is saying that he has been anointed by God so please don't let his enemies triumph (physical, flesh and the devil) and cause his physical enemies and Israel to conclude that his faith in God is misplaced. Absalom is spreading disinformation about David but also reminding the people of Israel of the sins of David's youth.

In verses 4-5 David is asking for guidance, that's a great place for us all to start in our prayer life.

Have you prayed about something and clearly heard or been guided by God about that situation? **God is looking most of all for a willing heart not perfection.** That's why all the characters in the bible are flawed people that God has used to do amazing things and **that can give us hope that he will guide and use us.**

In v5 David acknowledges that **his salvation (from sin and his enemies) comes from God, that he needs God's truth and he will wait on Him to receive guidance.**

Reflection 5-We need to wait on the Lord to get guidance. How do we hear from God? Through an audible whisper, reading scripture, words given to others,,,,

In v6 David speaks out the covenant God has with him, but is conscious that he has fallen short. Absalom is reminding him of that and the enemy can often do that and so in v 7 David asks God not to remember Basheba, Uriah and the other ways he did wrong. **David is reminding himself that God is good, he knows God has forgiven him, but sometimes we all have doubts and live in condemnation which curtails the fruit in our lives.**

Reflection 6- In our prayers distinguish fact (what we see around us) from the truth of God's words. Like David speak truth to the facts

v6 'Remember O Lord thy tender mercies and thy loving kindness ;for they have been ever of old'

and allow God to change the facts.

After David sinned with Basheba and Uriah (and caused Joab to sin by involving him in Uriah's murder) the prophet Nathan says in 2 Samuel 12

'Because of what you have done, I will cause your whole household to rebel against you, I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes and he will go to bed with them in public view. You {sinned} secretly but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of Israel. **This is what happened!**

In 2 Samuel 12 v13 David replies @ I have sinned against the Lord'

Nathan replies 'Yes but the Lord has forgiven you and you won't die for this sin. Nevertheless because you have shown utter contempt for the Lord by doing this your child will die.

So David understood that there are real consequences to his actions and yet the Lord protected him his whole life.

V9 David reminds us that humility is the key to receiving and keeping God's instructions.

In v 10 David is meditating on God's goodness and that he hears our prayers so that when he asks for pardon in v11 **he knows he will be heard**. He reminds himself in v10 that God blesses those who are loyal to him.

Verses 12-15 is another meditation on the goodness of God

In v13 David reminds himself of the benefits of fearing the Lord, '**his soul shall dwell at ease and his seed shall inherit the earth.**' Fearing the Lord of course is not being afraid of him, but treating him with reverence.'

In Isaiah 11 2-3 says that the spirit of the Lord is on those who fear him and Proverbs 9v10 the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

V15 David who is snared in the situation he in, **knows that God will rescue him from the net that is closing in around him**. In dealing with Absalom, God did tell him where to fight (in the forest) and it seems a God incidence that Absalom is trapped in a tree by his long hair (which represents his lack of humility and vanity)getting caught and killed.

As we see in Psalm 91, God protects us and this is happening all the time but we may not be able to see it.

Reflection 7-Count your blessings each night (and you will sleep better and be healthier!)

In verses 16-21 David pours out his anguish again and presses into God again to deliver him. **This shows us that God expects us to share our troubles with Him** and is not surprised when we cry out How long O Lord, a lament found in many psalms notably psalm 13. As David waits on the Lord, he expresses his frustration and asks God to intervene (as God has done so on so many occasions).

V21, David again repeats that he is waiting on the Lord and asks God to rescue Israel . David is in the line of the Messiah, so Satan would have been doing his utmost to destroy David, **but despite his flaws David succeeds where Saul does not, because when he messes up he goes back to the Lord, repents and waits on the Lord and that is what we need to do.**

David had FOMO, fear of missing out on God's blessing and so he pressed in and stayed faithful, **we need to develop FOMO!**

Postscript 1 Samuel 21

Israel battles the Philistine giants and David now aged, is nearly killed by a Philistine giant but is rescued by Abishai and in a subsequent battle Goliath's brother is killed and then in a final symmetry, a huge giant with 6 fingers and six toes defied and taunted Israel and was killed by Jonathan son of David's brother Shimea. **We can see God is always at work protecting David and keeping His covenant.**

After this David incurred God's wrath again and he built an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite which appeased God. This was thought to be the spot where Abraham nearly sacrificed his son and was where Solomon built his temple.

So in the story of David replicated in the Psalms, we see David's relationship with God is **intensely personal** and God intervened time and time again answering David's prayers, protecting David as He said he would and correcting David as well. David's life was one of continual battles. **I would like the intimacy that David had with God, wouldn't you and to get answers to my questions, should I do this or that?**

Because Jesus came and then sent the Holy Spirit we can also be intimate with God.

Summarising David's prayer techniques

Wait on the Lord

Pause

Remember God's goodness & celebrate it

Reflect and Rejoice

Be humble and honest in our requests

Ask

Listen to his instructions & obey them

Yield

I'll finish with Matthew 7 7-8

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.