

Happy Advent to you all! May God bless you and yours this Christmas season.
Pastor Don

“Jesus: our hope for deliverance & forgiveness” Psalms 25:1-11 Dec. 2, 2012

A man goes to the hospital for tests. He finds out that he has a terminal disease and that it is highly contagious. The doctor says that they will have to quarantine him. And that he would have to eat only pancakes and veal cutlets. the man asked why would that help him get well. the doctor said no but that is what slides best under the door to your room.

Psalm 25 is an acrostic poem, which means each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet, one verse per letter; hence making this psalm 22 verses long. It is a mixture of remorse and repentance, making it a unique psalm. It is divided into three sections; part one is verses 1-7 which talk about prayers in times of trial. Part 2 is verses 8-15 which is praise in periods of confidence. Part 3 finishes the chapter by petitioning God for help in troubled times. Do we praise God as well as petition His help?

In the 1st 3 verses, David is appealing to God to not let him be ashamed before his enemies. 72 psalms talk about our enemies. Enemies are those who not only oppose us, but also oppose living life God's way. We need to remember that our enemies are not always people. Lust, greed, power, prestige, pride, possessions and selfishness are all enemies of Christians. These temptations are our enemies because they hinder us from living life God's way. David begins this psalm by asking for help and protection from his enemies. Do we ask for God's help and protection from our enemies? Or do we try to fight them off in our own strength? We can defeat them only by the power of God. Do we seek it? These 3 verses are a great picture of David's dependence on God. Are we dependant on God? Do we trust Him /do we lift up our souls to Him?

Do we have a reason to be ashamed before our enemies? Do we have unconfessed sin in our lives? Are we living God's way or our way? In verses 4-7 David is repenting and asking for God's forgiveness. Do not remember the sins of my youth David says. He reminds God of His lovingkindness and tender mercies. He asks for forgiveness for God's goodness sake; which is His mercy; have we asked God for forgiveness & mercy?

David asks God to show him His ways and teach him His paths. David is asking God for instructions on how to live a better, more acceptable life in His sight. Do we do that? Do we ask God to show us His ways & instruct us on how to live a life pleasing to Him?

Notice that David asked God for guidance. To live a successful Christian life, we must want to be guided by God. We must listen, learn and obey. The bible is God's primary way of communicating to us. Do we read it? Do we study it? Do we obey it? Learning what the bible says will help us gain wisdom and knowledge, learn what God expects of us and enable us to

follow God's will for our lives. David did not demand answers from God, he sought direction from God. Which do we do?

David says you are the God of my salvation and on you I wait all the day. Do we know that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to God except through Him? Do we know that Jesus is our only hope for eternal salvation? The new living translation says the last half of vs. 5 this way. "All day long I put my hope in you." What are we putting our hope in each and every day? If it is not Jesus, it is not the right stuff.

David praises God in vs. 8-11. Good and upright is the Lord. In the middle of seeking forgiveness and getting right with God, David praises God. God is good; all the time God is good. Matthew 19:17 Jesus said "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God." Because God is good, He is upright; God is righteous. Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." We have nothing to fear.

God is with us; he is our hope. Because He is good and righteous, He extends mercy and grace to all who will receive them. He forgives all who seek forgiveness. That is God's goodness, extending the gift of eternal life freely to all those who will accept it. Eternal life is a free gift, but it must be accepted by the repentant person. If it is not accepted as a free gift, then that person is still condemned under their sins. Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Because of God's righteousness, sin must be atoned for. Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Our sin debt has been paid by the blood of Jesus; but all those who fail to receive God's forgiveness, will face the consequences of their actions. A righteous God is a just God. The guilty will be punished. God will bring justice to this fallen world. Our only hope for eternal salvation is the blood of Jesus. Are we washed in His blood? Are we on the path of mercy and truth? Do we keep His testimonies and His covenant? Are we humble? Have we accepted God's mercy and grace as pardon for our sins? Do we seek God's pardon for our great iniquities? Is He our only hope?

In verse 11 David says "for your name's sake oh Lord, pardon my iniquity for it is great."

The closer we get to God, the more we will pay attention to our sins. Our sinful nature will become more real to us and we will be more aware of it. Our sins will bother us more and we will constantly be repenting of them. 3 times in this Psalm, David asked for God's forgiveness of his sins. How sensitive are we to our sin? Are we aware of both kinds of sins? Sins of commission, wrong things that we do; as well as sins of omission, good things that we fail to do? James 4:17 says "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." Most of us probably commit more sins of omission than we do sins of commission. What is God calling us to do today/ are we doing it?

Hope is what keeps us going. Dale Carnegie once said "Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." Cicero said where there is life there is hope. Thomas Kempis said that to hope in God above all things is the strongest solace Christians can have. Is our hope based on nothing less than Jesus Christ and his righteousness? Proverbs 24:16 says

“For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.” Christians have their hope in Jesus, and no matter how many times the world knocks us down, our faith in Him will help us get up again. His Spirit will lift us up where as the people of the world who have not received Jesus yet, stay down because they feel they have no hope. Jesus is everyone’s hope; some just don’t know it yet. It is our job to tell them. Do we spread hope where ever we go? We need to because God’s enemies do not spread hope; they spread despair and disappointment.

Sammy was 15 and very excited that Dec. was here and Christmas is coming. Sammy was not your average 15 year old boy. No Sammy was a little slow; he had a mental handicap so he was more like an eleven year old than a teenager. Everyone at church loved Sammy and they let him participate in the children’s Sunday school programs. Sammy was very excited as Christmas Eve service approached. He knew that each child would each get a present from the church. Last year he got a telescope which he used regularly and really enjoyed. He wondered what he would get this year. Finally it was Christmas Eve. Mom, dad and Sammy went to the church early so mom could practice her solo she was scheduled to sing. Sammy went straight to the Christmas tree to find his present.

He finally found it. It was huge! It was the biggest present under the tree! Wow! Sammy thought; what could it be? A bicycle/ a pony/ a remote control car? His mind was filled with all kinds of thoughts and he could not wait to open it. Hope abounded in little Sammy’s heart. The Christmas Eve service took forever Sammy thought; please hurry up, I want to open my present. Finally, the preacher asked all the kids to come up front. It was now present time. Everyone got their gift. They were all excited, happy and appreciative. The preacher made Sammy wait until last. He said oh my there is only 1 present left, I wonder whose it could be? It’s mine little Sammy said as he ran to get it. Quickly he tore off all the paper and opened the box. Filled with hope and excitement; oh what wonderful thing could this be. Then disbelief and bewilderment filled Sammy’s mind as he found this huge beautifully wrapped box was totally empty. Someone had played a very mean trick on Sammy. He began to cry and the children began to laugh at him. He and his parents went home as fast as they could. No explanation no words of comfort, just the jeers and laughter of the other little children in their ears.

Poor Sammy; somebody played a mean, dirty trick on him. Everyone has enemies. Psalm 25 teaches us to pray for help in dealing with them. I hope this is a fictional story, but Christians do have enemies, sometimes even in their own church or family. Cain and Able were brothers remember. But God gives us hope in the face of our enemies. God can fill every empty box and empty promise that our enemies give us with something good and better than we were expecting. God is our true hope, everything and everyone else will let us down. God will never let us down! He loves us and only wants what is best for us. What is best for us is Jesus Christ. That is why He sent him into the world to die for our sins. John 3:16 **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”**

Jesus came to bring us life. Jesus came to bring us hope. Jesus came as an expression of God’s love. Jer.33:14-16 **“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: ‘In those days and**

at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: The Lord our righteousness.”

God is righteous! He is our only hope! Are we trusting in Him?

David ends this Psalm with a prayer for himself and his country. Vs.19-22 "Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. Keep my soul, and deliver me; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. Let integrity & uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all their troubles!"
Do we pray for our nation? Jesus died for the whole world, are we praying for it? He is its only hope are we telling people that? Is our hope built on nothing less than Jesus Christ and his righteousness? Are we standing on Christ, the solid rock, or are we standing on sinking sand?
As we celebrate the 1st advent, are we looking forward to the 2nd one? Christ is coming again it could be very soon; are we ready? Are we helping others get ready? The only way to be ready is to believe in Jesus Christ, our hope for deliverance and forgiveness.
Amen! Let's pray.