

"Wisdom Psalms"

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Scripture Reading: Psalm 25 NRSV

¹To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. ²O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. ³Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. ⁴Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. ⁵Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. ⁶Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. ⁷Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord! ⁸Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. ⁹He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. ¹⁰All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees. ¹¹For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. ¹²Who are they that fear the Lord? He will teach them the way that they should choose. ¹³They will abide in prosperity, and their children shall possess the land. ¹⁴The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes his covenant known to them. ¹⁵My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. ¹⁶Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. ¹⁷Relieve the troubles of my heart, and bring me out of my distress. ¹⁸Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. ¹⁹Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. ²⁰O guard my life, and deliver me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. ²¹May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. ²²Redeem Israel, O God, out of all its troubles.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever been caught in a really bad storm either in a boat, car, or out walking? What were your impressions of the power of nature?
2. How would you define the word "trust?" Some bible scholars argue that this is the golden thread found throughout the Scriptures of the most important thing for us to do. Would you agree? Why or why not?
3. Psalm 25 is considered a wisdom psalm. What reference to wisdom do you see in this poem?
4. Two thousand years ago, in the middle of a pandemic, Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote "an infected mind is far more dangerous pestilence than any plague—because one threatens your life, the other destroys your character." One thing that can contaminate our thinking is shame, which is mentioned numerous times in our passage. How would you define shame? One person differentiated guilt from shame this way: Guilt knows that you did something bad, but shame thinks that you yourself are bad. How can get help us out of the quagmire of shame?
5. Throughout the poem, the psalmist asks for God's guidance and teach the way. What do you think the ways of God are?
6. Psalm 25 reminds us that we don't have to be perfect to receive God's direction. What verses in the psalm speak to you about that?

7. How might personal character and integrity guard us in our lives, as the psalmist writes?
8. How can we become more teachable in our lives--in our relationship with God, others, and ourselves?
9. The psalm concludes in an open-ended fashion. The psalmist is still waiting for deliverance, yet he or she is at peace. How can we experience this peace when things are unresolved?