

The Teacher
Psalm 25: 1-10
December 1, 2024

This is a Psalm of David. Yes, the same shepherd boy who stood up to the giant Goliath. He started out a shepherd boy, took a sling and killed the giant and then was invited by King Saul to work for and serve him. He did that and then Saul wanted to do away with him as he thought his own son should reign over the people but the Lord had David, a man after His own heart in mind to be the next king over the nation of Israel. Jonathan understood that as he and David became friends.

David liked to play music which he did for Saul and we have some of his lyrics in the Psalms which I will be focusing on for the coming year. Today we will be looking at a Psalm of David, Psalm 25 with the title in the Lutheran Study Bible: "Teach me Your paths."

David is looking to God for his learning, for his wisdom as you have been learning if you have been reading along with the texts given you to read each week. We are now in the Proverbs where wisdom is compared to foolishness. David is looking to the Lord for wisdom as he lives out his life. He knows that it isn't in the enticing things of the world where he will help his life but in the Lord where he will be shown the path he should travel on as he goes about his life, lived in the Lord.

David says the Lord is the one Who lifts up his soul, is who he trusts. He knows his trust is in one who will not let him be put to shame. David knows the Lord is the source of his salvation. He knows the Lord loves him and it is He who forgives sins and on the Lord's paths he will not be led astray to evil.

We agree with David. We know that what he has written, we believe. We know the path the Lord lays before us will not lead us to a dead end but to eternal life. We know that even though there will be times when it looks dim, the Lord is with us and will lead us on paths that will keep us moving forward in Him.

David in this Psalm is wanting the Lord to teach him. I'm sure he had many in his day who wanted to teach him all sorts of things. Too many were probably wanting to teach him the things of the world, many from a secular world view. That view thinks of man as the measure of all things or some other god besides the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. David's and our view of the world through God looks to Him to lead our decisions and direction as we go about our days.

As we go about our days, what are we being told or being taught that go against God's ways? We know we are as those who David points out in the last couple verses we have in the text for today. We know we are sinners who need the Lord's instruction. Yes, He instructs us through His Word and sacraments. We know that it is as He says that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and declare us righteous because of what Jesus did for us on that cross.

We don't come to Him saying: "God, you have to forgive my sins for I deserve to be forgiven". No we come with a humble heart, knowing we don't deserve His mercy, His forgiveness. He forgives for He is faithful to His promises and He is just when He declares us righteous because the debt has been paid, not by us but by His Son who intercedes for us with God the Father as we go about our days, forgiven.

David appeals to the love of God, the steadfast love of the Lord. We all know the verse from John which states: *John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."*

Yes, we look to our loving God to forgive. We see His love for us as He hung on that cross, dying that we might live. The Bible states: *John 15:12-14 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you."*

What is the commandment listed in the first part of this text? It is that you love one another as I have loved you. He loved us so much that He died for us, for our sins and then called us brothers and sisters, promising to raise us up on the last day. Would we be willing to die for someone else?

Die, maybe but are we challenged to die everyday as we are to lay down what people will think of us by living out our lives as Christians? Are we willing to stand up for what we have been taught by God in His Word? Are we willing to let others know what the Word says as we love others, so much so that we let them know of the truth of God's Word even if it may go against what they believe, what they feel that goes against God and His Word?

We are challenged everyday with the Word of God vs the ways and the beliefs of most of the world. How many times do you hear of millions of years? How many times

do you hear and see that the world thinks it is just fine for to people of the same sex to be lauded for their lifestyle? How many today think it is OK and is right for someone to choose to have their bodies or the bodies of their children mutilated because of a feeling, a mind that is confused thinking feelings are of greater worth than the Word of God who made us male and female? Do we stand up for those whose lives are in danger in the womb? How many other things do we deal with, day to day that go against the Word of God but we say nothing, do nothing, not wanting to cause a scene, to possibly get the evil look, or thought of as old fashioned or not with the times?

Yes, there are challenges that we should take on as we go about life, lived as people who love our neighbor so much that we will proclaim God's truth over even friendship that the world considers friendship but is a lie. Which would you prefer, a doctor who comes in the room telling you everything is all right and to not worry but go home and be well or a doctor who comes into the room and tells you the truth, even if it may mean some challenging days ahead with nausea and pain ahead but the good possibility of you coming through it and being able to live out a few more or even many years? I think most if not all of us would want the doctor to tell the truth, yes, with compassion but the truth.

A real friend should do the same. They should warn and encourage us to do the right thing. We should expect that. That is why we have the habit of meeting here, together, not only to hear the Word of God but to be encouraged by those who care about us, praying for us as we have to deal with this world and the challenges each of us have. They may not be the same challenges but are challenges just the same and if we have others alongside us, helping and encouraging us, we can more easily live out the lives the Lord has given us to live in Him.

David in the text talks of the Lord leading in His truth and teaching him. When you think of teaching or being taught, what items does a teacher use to teach? We look at classrooms today and we might have markers and whiteboards vs the chalk and blackboards some of us grew up with. Teachers may have a video projector or a TV on a stand to provide information to the students instead of an overhead projector or maybe some film reels in those little canisters. They may have papers produced on copy machines instead of the mimeograph machines where some fingers turned a little blue at times.

Students today may even have tablets, not the Big Chief paper tablets, tablets that may say they are paper white but there is no paper involved. There have been so many changes for teachers these days as they bring the same or similar information to the students as they learn how to deal with this world we live in and to use the information as they go out into the world which has changed and continues to change.

There is a lot of change but one thing never changes and that is God's Word. Why is it so important to learn God's Word and to be in it on a regular basis? It is because the world in which we live seeks to negate God Word and tries to depict it as old fashioned, not able to apply to the ever changing world we live in today.

I know we might be tempted to follow along with the world but God knows all things. He knows the truth of the world and how it operates. He made it all and sustains it all even if people think they know better.

He knows the world was created in six 24 hour days and not over billions of years. He knows there are only two genders, male and female and that marriage is only to be between a man and a woman who are here to produce children. Yes, some will not be able because of sin that has made it impossible to have children but even if that is the case, He wants all to look to Him and how they can do the will of God in their everyday lives. I know there are so many who do not see life as a gift from God but choose to take that life as it might be inconvenient or a challenge but whose life is worth more? God as the Bible says is no respecter of one person over another. No, He loves all equally.

God has so much invested in this world and the people who live in it. He gave His Son so that we could have life. If He did that for all, wouldn't He want all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth? How are we to come to that knowledge? We need to know what He teaches and that is in His Word. Not only that He came to us through the water and the Word in our baptisms. He came to us through the water and the Word giving us His Holy Spirit who dwells in all who believe.

This is the first Sunday in Advent, a time when we look forward to the coming of Jesus. We need to be taught of the love of God who came to this earth to save sinners of which we are some. He through David has pointed us to the paths of the LORD which are love and faithfulness. May He, the teacher direct our paths on those paths as we bring the truth to the world around us.