

Psalm 25

1. *To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; O my God, in you I trust;
let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies triumph over me*
2. *Let none who look to you be put to shame,
but let the treacherous be shamed and frustrated.*
3. *Make me to know your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.*
4. *Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;
for you have I hoped all the day long.*
5. *Remember, Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.*
6. *Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions,
but think on me in your goodness, O Lord, according to your steadfast love.*
7. *Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore shall he teach sinners in the way.*
8. *He will guide the humble in doing right and teach his way to the lowly.*
9. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.*
10. *For your name's sake, O Lord, be merciful to my sin, for it is great.*
11. *Who are those who fear the Lord?
Them will he teach in the way that they should choose.*
12. *Their soul shall dwell at ease and their offspring shall inherit the land.*
13. *The hidden purpose of the Lord is for those who fear him
and he will show them his covenant.*
14. *My eyes are ever looking to the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*
15. *Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am alone and brought very low.*
16. *The sorrows of my heart have increased; O bring me out of my distress.*
17. *Look upon my adversity and misery and forgive me all my sin.*
18. *Look upon my enemies, for they are many
and they bear a violent hatred against me.*
19. *O keep my soul and deliver me;
Let me not be put to shame, for I have put my trust in you.*
20. *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for my hope has been in you.*
21. *Deliver Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*

Refrain

Show me your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.

Psalm 25 is a lament with expressions of confidence. The cause of the psalmist's sorrow is the violent attack of enemies, who have isolated him and plunged him into loneliness and despair. (v.2. 'Let none who look to you be put to shame, but let the

treacherous be shamed and frustrated.'). He wonders if he is being punished for his present sins and those of his youth. (v.6. 'Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions.')

However, the psalmist is able to approach God, because he has been revealed in history as the God who pardons sinners, saves the afflicted and removes the barriers, which restrict the lives of his people. (v.4 'Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you have I hoped all the day long.')

So, he will lift up his soul (worship) and trust only the Lord. He will wait for God's help. (v. 20 'Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for my hope has been in you,'). He will worship God humbly and with awe. (v.11 'Who are those who fear the Lord? Them will he teach in the way that they should choose.')

He prays that God will deliver him from his enemies and also that God will forgive the sins, which have caused his distress. (v.6, 'Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions.'), and that he will keep him from further offences. (v.7, 'Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore shall he teach sinners in the way.')

Most importantly, the psalmist desires admission into God's friendship (remember that, in John's Gospel, Jesus says to his disciples, 'You are my friends if you do what I command you' 15,14). If this happens, integrity and uprightness will preserve his life like guardian angels. (v.20 'Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for my hope has been in you.')

Most of us don't like being alone. If we are bereaved, we feel a sense of emptiness. People, who are alone, may feel nervous, especially at night, fearful of what might happen. Many people, especially the elderly, are lonely. The restrictions on visiting care homes during the corona virus crisis has made matters worse. We need other people, our families and friends, and many feel lost when they are not around.

Some people, like the psalmist, feel guilty of things, which they have done (or not done) in then past. Did we look after a relative sufficiently? Did we behave in the right way? Do people think that they are being punished for these things?

But Psalm 25 reveals God as a true friend, who cannot fail to love us, just as parents love their children, in spite of difficulties, problems during adolescence and hard decisions, which have to be made during their lives. God doesn't forget us, as we don't forget our children. Like the psalmist, we can take refuge in God, who chooses to be with us and to be alongside us in all the ups and downs of our lives. As we forgive one another in our families, so God will forgive us and stand by us.

Prayer

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

(Collect for Trinity 17)