

## **"When Troubles Squat In Your Heart"**

**Psalms 25:1-18**

**13 November 2022**

I don't know who needs to hear this, but-

**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

Somebody here needed to hear that at the start of the sermon. The Holy Spirit is speaking to you right now. So, if your heart is breaking, if you feel overwhelmed with life, if your marriage is struggling, if you're kids are driving you crazy, if you hate your job, whatever, you fill in the blank, and then-

**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

That's what David is doing in Psalm 25. His heart is stuffed full of troubles. And, he doesn't like it! Who wants their heart to be burdened, to be troubled with all the complexities of life? Not me! But, that's is how life is sometimes, isn't it? We want life to be easy, but it just isn't. And, the sooner we realize that, the better we will be able to cope with all the complexities of life. Life is hard and there's no way to insulate yourself from it. When Adam sinned, he messed this world up.

And, because Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, sometimes troubles just barge into your life, barge into your heart uninvited. Troubles just show up on your doorstep. But, they don't ring the doorbell. They just barge right in. And, they make themselves comfortable in your heart. That's what troubles do. So, what do you do when trouble does you that way? 1) You talk to Jesus and 2) you let others know. More on that as we go along.

Okay. We're actually going back to Psalm 25, where we started out this preaching series. Turn there in your Bibles. I just couldn't get away from this series in the psalms. I have lived in these psalms over the past few months. They have become dear to me. They have been my companions. They have been comforting my soul. The friendship of the Lord, which David mentions in Psalm 25, I have experienced that friendship in these psalms. I hope you have too.

So, I wasn't sure where we would go the next 2 weeks before Advent starts, so I just came back to where I've been hanging out. There are several verses in these psalms that I have clung to, and repeated often, and prayed vigorously, so I thought I'd revisit one this week. And, maybe again next week. We'll see. Anyways, back to Psalm 25 we go.

LOOK AT VERSE 15...

*My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.*

Who can't relate to that? At some point in our lives, this has been all of us. Lonely. Afflicted. Troubles. Distresses. And, that may be you this morning. Well, David knows how you feel. And, there's actually a lot of hope just oozing out of these verses. But these verses are also kinda strange. They seem like they don't go together, but they actually share a seat on the bus. They're kind of a weird couple, but they capture the life of a disciple of Jesus. Let me explain what I mean.

In verse 15, David is full of confidence. He says that his eyes are ever toward the Lord. He stays focused on Yahweh. He's not rattled. He's confident. He fully expects the Lord to intervene and pluck him out of the net. He really believes that Yahweh will deliver him out of his troubles.

But, then in the next verse David says he's 1) lonely and 2) afflicted and 3) the troubles of his heart have enlarged! So, David is full of confidence on one hand, but he's also desperate on the other. He's confident, but desperate. And, that's discipleship. The life of a disciple entails this overwhelming confidence in Jesus, as well as unbridled desperation! That's discipleship. And, that's prayer too, isn't it? This is the posture we often have in prayer: desperation and confidence.

I love what Paul Miller says in his book *A Praying Life*. He says:

*We forget that helplessness is how the Christian life works... The gospel, God's free gift of grace in Jesus, only works when we realize that we don't have it together. The same is true for prayer. The very thing we are allergic to— our helplessness— is what makes prayer work. It works because we are helpless. We can't do life on our own... When our kids were two, five, eight, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen, I wrote this in my prayer journal:*

*March 19, 1991. Amazing how when I don't pray in the morning, evil just floods into our home. I absolutely must pray! Oh, God, give me the grace to pray.*

*It took me seventeen years to realize that I couldn't parent on my own. It was not a great spiritual insight, just a realistic observation. If I didn't pray deliberately and reflectively for members of my family by name every morning, they'd kill one another. I was incapable of getting inside their hearts. I was desperate... God answered my prayer. As I began to pray regularly for the children, he began to work in their hearts... It didn't take me long to realize that I did my best parenting by prayer. I began to speak less to the kids and more to God. It was actually quite relaxing."* (A Praying Life, p.55, 59)

Parents, you feel this, right? Well, David would say "ditto" to Paul Miller. David knows that helplessness is how the Christian life works. Helplessness and desperation are how David's life works! David knows that you can have absolute confidence in God, and yet be absolutely desperate. So, this prayer in vv. 15-18 is not a casual, *"Jesus, please watch over us today. Grant us traveling mercies"* kind of prayer. This is one of those nail-biting, pace the floor, pull your hair out, go through a whole box of Kleenex, I am desperate kind of prayers.

But, even though David may be biting his nails and pacing the floor in desperation, this prayer is remarkably stuffed with faith! He tells us in verse 15 that his eyes are ever towards the Lord, which implies that David is not obsessing over the things that are troubling him. Yes, he's aware of his troubles. He can't deny that. He feels it in his heart. But, David's not obsessing over his troubles. He's focused on Yahweh. His troubles- *just like you and me*- his troubles come to mind often, but he keeps introducing them to Jesus.

And, that's what you have to do when your troubles keep coming back to mind. You have to introduce them to Jesus over and over again. You have to say, *"Hey, trouble. Meet my Savior. He's gonna take care of you."*

And, that's what David is doing here. He's desperate, so he goes in faith to God with his troubles in hand. David is saying, *"I'm focused on You, Lord. I know You will come through for me. But, I need You to intervene now! No delays! Turn to me and be gracious to me. STAT!"*

So, there's this strange cocktail of confidence and desperation in David's prayer. Ralph Davis captures this when he says, *"Indeed, are not most of our prayers a mix of assurance and anxiety, of trust and trouble?... Sometimes in the middle of that nexus of trust and trouble, the trouble will intensify and multiply. We don't like to talk this way, at least not in church, but sometimes when we trust and pray, things get much worse."*

And, we see that progression here in Psalm 25:

Trust

*My eyes are ever toward the LORD...*

Prayer

*Turn to me and be gracious to me...*

Things get much worse

*The troubles of my heart are enlarged...*

Sometimes, when you are genuinely trusting the Lord with your situation, your situation gets much worse! Ever have that happen? Where you feel like *Job 2.0*? Where you just keep getting hit by life? Where you're living life, staying focused on Jesus, trusting Him. And, you go to Jesus with your trouble in prayer, only to find that more trouble has arrived and made itself at home in your heart! Ugh! I hate that! That's David here. One thing after another. Trouble upon trouble.

But, notice too how David just piles up all these troublesome words to describe how he feels: *lonely, afflicted, troubles, distresses, affliction, trouble*. Not exactly the so-called "victorious Christian life." Life in this fallen world is often the "afflicted Christian life." It's hard. It's not easy.

And, on top of all the affliction and trouble, David tells us that he's lonely, too. He feels all alone in verse 16. David uses a Hebrew word for "lonely" that is used elsewhere in the Old Testament for an only child, or only having *one* of something. For instance, it's the same word used in Genesis when God told Abraham *"Take your only son, Isaac...and offer him as a sacrifice..."* (Genesis 22:2). So, David feels like he's the only one suffering. He feels all alone. David is saying, *"I feel like I'm the only one going through this. I feel like I'm the only one who has troubles that are stretching out his heart. Turn to me, Lord, and be gracious to me! Bring me out of this distress!"*

Don't you sometimes feel that way? I do. Sometimes I feel like I'm the only one suffering, the only one experiencing trouble and affliction. You've felt that way before, right? Or, am I the only one who gets down and feels sorry for himself? I trust we've all been there. And, that may be you today. Do you feel all alone, like you're the only one suffering? Do you ever feel like you don't have any friends, as if no one cares? That's David.

And what does all this suffering and loneliness do to one's heart? David says that the troubles of his heart have enlarged. It's like his heart is stretchy, like it's made of silly putty. It just stretches and expands with more

troubles. The Hebrew is, "*Troubles have enlarged my heart.*" All these troubles have stretched his heart out. It's like there's a "Welcome" sign hanging on the outside of his heart, inviting trouble in.

The Hebrew word that David uses here for "enlarged" is the word that is used often in the Old Testament when the Lord says that He will "enlarge" or "expand" the boundaries of the land. So, David is saying, "*The property lines for my heart keep expanding. I've got more acres than I know what to do with, but there's a problem: Troubles have moved onto my property and are now squatting on every acre of it!*" David's troubles are squatting on his heart. They've pushed and expanded the boundaries of his heart.

And that's how it is sometimes. It's not like you just have one problem and that's all that can fit in your heart. One trouble per customer. One trouble per disciple. Sometimes it is that way. Sometimes we're just dealing with one issue in our life. But there are other times- *many times!*- where it's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve...thousand problems that have barged into our hearts!

What do we do then? Well, obviously, we need to tell Jesus. We need to pour our hearts out to Him. But, we also need to tell someone else. We need to confide in others.

Listen, when your heart is full of troubles, you need to tell someone. You cannot carry these burdens on your own. God has given you other Christians, He's given you a church family who can help you, who can pray for you, who can encourage you.

So, let's be a church where it's normal to have someone come up to you and say, "*My heart is full of troubles. Will you pray for me?*"

Let's be that kind of church. And, I think we are. But, let's do it more. You don't have to go into any details about what's troubling you, because Jesus knows. Just be willing to go up to someone, or text someone, or DM someone, or call someone, and just simply say-

"*My heart is full of troubles. Will you pray for me?*"

That's it. 11 words. And, then that person will pray as the Holy Spirit leads. We can do this, right? Imagine what a church culture we will reinforce if we do this? Imagine what our kids will think? We're all about "making disciples-making disciples" here at Grace. That's our tagline. Well, what if we disciplined the kids of this church, when their hearts are breaking, to go to someone and say, "*My heart is full of troubles. Will you pray for me?*"

You are safe to do that here. This is a safe place for struggling disciples. I hope you feel so welcome and loved here that when your heart is breaking, and you feel overwhelmed, that you feel comfortable enough to go up to someone and ask for prayer. To say 11 words:

"*My heart is full of troubles. Will you pray for me?*" I hope that becomes "normal" around here. It's what Jesus wants for His church. And it's what the Devil hates!

Scott Sauls says, "*When God's children start showing up for each other, the accuser starts to tremble.*" (Beautiful People Don't Just Happen: How God Redeems Regret, Hurt, and Fear in the Making of Better Humans, p.7)

Let's keep showing up for one another. Let's care for one another in this way and watch the Devil tremble.

Okay.

LOOK AT VERSE 17 AGAIN...

*The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.*

David now asks Yahweh to deliver him from all these distresses. The Hebrew word for "distresses" is often paired with the word "besieged" in the Old Testament. So, when a city was besieged and the people were trapped inside and couldn't go anywhere, and didn't have food or water, the "distress" they felt was real. That's what David is getting at here. He feels like someone who has nowhere to go. He's trapped. He's hemmed in, in a tight spot and he is praying desperately for Yahweh to bring him out of his distresses.

And, it's not just *distress* singular. It's plural! *Distresses*. And, that's how life often is. We get bombarded by troubles and distresses *plural!* Plural distresses! Plural troubles!

But, the trouble we often encounter when we are bombarded with trouble is that we try to solve it all ourselves. We try to bring ourselves out of our distresses. Notice that David asks the Lord to bring him out of his distresses. When we try to control things that are not controllable, our souls get all twisted up in knots. We were not made to control things. We were made to turn our eyes to the Lord in trust. Most of the static and chaos that we experience when troubles move into our hearts uninvited is caused by us trying to control the uncontrollable.

So, we have to learn- *and re-learn*- to rest. To be at peace with the pace of God. Let me say that again, because I don't know who needs to hear it, but here ya go:

*Learn to be at peace with the pace of God.*

Someone here needed to hear that. God will bring you out of your distresses in His time, in His way, according to His infinite and perfect wisdom. Your job is not to bring yourself out. Your job is to bring yourself to Jesus.

So, David is not running away from these troubles and distresses. He isn't trying to solve it all on his own, or in his own wisdom. He takes it all to Jesus. He doesn't try to control the uncontrollable. Instead, he turns his eyes to the only One who is in control, namely Jesus. This might be a great spot in the sermon to remind you to-

### **TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

And, now, turn your eyes back to Psalm 25. We'll look at one more verse.

LOOK AT VERSE 18...

*Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.*

David told us that his eyes were upon the Lord, but now he wants Yahweh to look upon him! Of course, God sees and already knows all that is happening in David's life. What David means when he says, "*Consider my affliction and my trouble...*" is, "*Do something about this right now!*" David wants God to act pronto. And sometimes you have to pray that way, "*Jesus, I need You to intervene right now. No more waiting. Look at what I'm going through and come through for me big time!*" Sometimes you gotta pray, "*Do something about this right now, Jesus!*" You can do that. Jesus doesn't mind.

To quote another David, David Powlison said this about David-

*David does not mentally rehearse the fact that God is in control in order to quietly press on with unflinching composure. Instead, he pleads candidly and believingly with God. He essentially cries out: "This is big trouble. You must help me. I need you. You are my only hope." Prayer means asking for something you need and want. Supplication means really asking. Frank supplication is the furthest thing from keeping everything in perspective so you can press on with life as normal. Supplication is not a calming exercise, like deep breathing. Supplication pleads for help from Someone who can help. The sovereign God does not intend that you maintain the status quo while suffering. Pain disrupts normal. It's supposed to disrupt normal. It's supposed to make you feel a need for help... When you let life's troubles get to you, it gets you to the only One who can help. (God's Grace in Your Suffering, p. 66)*

Trouble gets our attention, doesn't it? God uses trouble to remind us that we need Jesus. So, get used to praying, "*Jesus, this is big trouble. You must help me. I need you. You are my only hope.*"

If you pray like that, you just might find that you have successfully rolled your burdens on the Lord. But, David's troubles are not the biggest problem he has. He's a sinner. He needs grace. Which is why he asks for forgiveness in verse 18. Yes, he's suffering. Yes, his heart is being stretched by all his troubles, but there's a deeper issue with his heart: *his sin*. He knows that he needs grace. He needs forgiveness. He needs cleansing. And, he finds that with Yahweh.

It's as if David got an early draft of 1 John:

1 John 1:8-9

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Let me remind you today, Christian: You are forgiven. You are clean. You are righteous. Because of Jesus. Rest in that. This is the Gospel. Jesus loves you. He died for you. He can't remember your sins. That ought to take a load off you.

And, if your heart is breaking-

**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

If the troubles of your heart are enlarged-

**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

If you feel lonely and afflicted-

**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

If you feel overwhelmed with life-  
**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

If your marriage is struggling-  
**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

If you're kids are driving you crazy-  
**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

If you hate your job-  
**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

If you feel guilty, ashamed, and condemned because of your sin-  
**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

Whatever, you fill in the blank, just-  
**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.**

In 1922, Helen Lemmel wrote the hymn, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus." These words may be what your heart needs as we close:

*O soul are you weary and troubled  
No light in the darkness you see  
There's light for a look at the Savior  
And life more abundant and free*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in his wonderful face  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of his glory and grace*

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"When Troubles Squat In Your Heart"  
Psalm 25:15-18  
Sermon Study Questions

1. READ Psalm 25:15-18. Discuss what Ralph Davis said:

*"Indeed, are not most of our prayers a mix of assurance and anxiety, of trust and trouble?...Sometimes in the middle of that nexus of trust and trouble, the trouble will intensify and multiply. We don't like to talk this way, at least not in church, but sometimes when we trust and pray, things get much worse."*

Describe a time when life just kept hitting you with one trial after another. How did you survive?

2. Discuss what Paul Miller said about prayer:

*We forget that helplessness is how the Christian life works... The gospel, God's free gift of grace in Jesus, only works when we realize that we don't have it together. The same is true for prayer. The very thing we are allergic to— our helplessness— is what makes prayer work. It works because we are helpless. We can't do life on our own... When our kids were two, five, eight, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen, I wrote this in my prayer journal:*

*March 19, 1991. Amazing how when I don't pray in the morning, evil just floods into our home. I absolutely must pray! Oh, God, give me the grace to pray.*

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3. READ Psalm 25:17. Discuss what Pastor Benji said about sharing our struggles:

*When your heart is full of troubles, you need to tell someone. You cannot carry these burdens on your own. God has given you other Christians, He's given you a church family who can help you, who can pray for you, who can encourage you. So, let's be a church where it's normal to have someone come up to you and say, "My heart is full of troubles. Will you pray for me?"*

*Let's be that kind of church. And, I think we are. But, let's do it more. You don't have to go into any details about what's troubling you, because Jesus knows. Just be willing to go up to someone, or text someone, or DM someone, or call someone, and just simply say- "My heart is full of troubles. Will you pray for me?"*

4. Discuss what Scott Sauls said:

*"When God's children start showing up for each other, the accuser starts to tremble."*

5. Discuss this thought from the sermon:

*Trouble gets our attention, doesn't it? God uses trouble to remind us that we need Jesus. So, get used to praying, "Jesus, this is big trouble. You must help me. I need you. You are my only hope."*

Where do you need Jesus today?