

I. Review

Please turn to the book of Psalms, chapter 25. Last week, we began Psalms chapter 25, and I told you that this was one of the most inspirational and practical Psalms you will find throughout the book of Psalms, probably even the whole Bible. It shows us how, through our growth process as a child of God, we can go through it and understand how easy it is, just by following the simple format that I laid out in the seven verses last week in chapter 25.

Spiritual growth is something that every child of God needs to go through. If God has something that He wants you to accomplish, something that He wants you to do for Him in this life, the only way you will ever realize that is to go through a process of spiritual growth. As we have talked about from all kinds of different angles over the last couple of weeks, God will reveal Himself to you.

Last week, I showed you that simple process: God taking you after salvation developing and deepening your understanding in fundamentally four key areas that the Christian life is built on. You can always tell the legitimacy of something by what it is built on. If you ever debate a Catholic about the Catholic Church, the easiest way to deal with a Catholic is that their church is built on four or five different concepts: the Mass, the Eucharist, the Sacraments, the Orders, and the priesthood. Yet, without any one of those, you have no Catholic Church. The easiest way to deal with them is to show them that none of those things are found in the Bible. You cannot find the word Mass, Eucharist, or Sacraments anywhere in the Word of God. Yet, their whole church is built on that faulty foundation, which damns hundreds of thousands, even millions of people to the lake of fire.

➤ Four Key Areas the Church & Christianity must be built on

But when it comes to New Testament Bible Christianity, you will find that what it is built on is found in the Bible. There are **four key areas** that the New Testament Bible-believing Church and New Testament Christianity have to be built on. God gives these to you at the time of salvation, but you do not understand them yet. You may not even recognize them yet. As I told you last week, there are **two revealings** of God in your life. There is the revealing that you need to be saved. Then, as you grow through this process, there is the revealing of these four areas in your life that deepens your understanding and brings you to a greater understanding that these are the four concepts that the Church of Jesus Christ is built on.

1. **Grace:** Grace is the substance of everything that we have in salvation. The Bible says, Genesis 6:8, "*Noah found **grace** in the eyes of the Lord.*" Grace is what God gives us that we do not deserve.
2. **Mercy:** What He gives us through grace that we do not deserve is the second concept, and that is mercy. So, God's Church is built on, and the Christian life developing your growth is built on, grace. Grace will lead you to understand mercy, the two ingredients that you have to have.

3. **Lovingkindness:** God's lovingkindness. There is a difference between kindness and lovingkindness. Kindness can be something that you display towards somebody to just be kind to them. But lovingkindness is a motive behind that kindness, that you truly love that person. You find that in your personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not just give us kindness; He gives us lovingkindness.
4. **Forgiveness:** God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness at the time of salvation and God's forgiveness in our life as we walk through life as a child of God, keeping ourselves clean before the Lord on a daily basis.

These are the four things: grace, mercy, and the longsuffering of God will lead you to understanding God's forgiveness in your life. Then you take that forgiveness, growing in these four, as God reveals Himself to you through the Word of God, and not allowing any of His words to fall to the ground. Like we saw with young Samuel on Thursday night. What a great Bible study that was, based on that question. This is the key: your faith is built on these four things. Not some lie made up that you could not find in the Bible, but four things that are absolutely key in the Word of God.

You remember, I laid out for you how Psalms 25:1-7 shows you this incredible process.

1. ***Show me thy ways, O Lord.*** We talked about how that is God revealing Himself to us through the Word of God. Last Sunday, I used 1 Samuel 3. The question came into Bible study a couple of weeks ago that I sat on until I got to do last Sunday because I wanted to tie them together, where you see in young Samuel's life, God showing Samuel the way that He wanted Samuel to go.
2. ***Teach me thy paths.*** There is a pathway that you go through life. We know it as in Jeremiah 6:16, the old paths, which our church is named after.
3. ***Lead me in thy truth and teach me.*** The pathway to God has to be through the Word of God.
4. ***Learning to wait on God.*** Developing patience. I told you last week that is probably the hardest thing that all of us have to do: learning patience to wait on God. But I will tell you this: time spent waiting on God is never time spent wasted. God works through a particular process of timing. As you grow, you will learn no matter what it is in your Christian life, no matter where God takes you, no matter what path, you will learn that the key is God's timing, not our timing.
5. ***Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindness toward me.*** We talked about that.
6. ***Remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions.***
7. ***But remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.*** We talked about the aspect of forgiveness, beginning to forgive others because we understand God's forgiveness in our lives. So many of God's people will take God's forgiveness, but they will not forgive somebody else. All of their life, they will hang on to something that they should have let go a long time ago.

God's people today, pastors and churches, I hear them talk a lot about what I call superficial concepts about building spiritual growth or a relationship with Christ. I see and read teachings and ideas that never really address the true issue of your spiritual growth. But it is places like

Psalms 25 that will be, as far as I am concerned, should be life-changing that will define each of us in time. It is simply a three-point process:

1. God's investment in us.
2. Our investment in Him.
3. Our investment in others.

It is just that simple, but there is a process to get you there.

II. Psalms 25:8-22

Today, we are going to look at the second half of Psalms 25. Let us read our text today.

8. *Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*
9. *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*
10. *All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*
11. *For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*
12. *What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*
13. *His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.*
14. *The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*
15. *Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*
16. *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.*
17. *The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.*
18. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*
19. *Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.*
20. *O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.*
21. *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.*
22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*

I told you last week, even though you have some incredible practical applications and truth in this particular psalm, these inspirational applications are found in chapter 25, which is a tribulation psalm doctrinally. I want you to understand that. You will remember how all this works. 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 tells us that the things in the Old Testament happened to the nation of Israel, and God used those things. Then, as we begin into the New Testament, He tells us, looking back into the issues, the struggles, the trials, the things that God did for the nation of Israel, those things become our examples and our ensamples that we too in this life have to face the same issues. It is the parallels between Israel and the Church. I know they are two different dispensations, completely two different ways God is dealing with them, but the spiritual parallels in their relationship with God are exactly what ours is. They may be in the Old Testament, but we are in the New Testament. So, God tells us that those things we can learn from their mistakes.

We can learn from the good things God does, and in the New Testament, they become our examples and our ensamples. Then He says, "*upon whom the ends of the world are come,*" which is you and me.

➤ Psalms 25:15-22 Dealing with Israel in the Tribulation Period

You can see that verses 15 through 22, coming to the end of our chapter here, clearly deal with the nation of Israel in the Tribulation Period.

- In Psalms 25:15, he talks about being plucked out of the net. If you take a word study of the word "net" through the Old Testament, you will find a number of places where that net is actually a trap that the Antichrist sets for the nation of Israel in the Tribulation, and how God continually delivers them.
- In Psalms 25:16, he talks about God turning back toward the nation of Israel to heal them in the Tribulation. There comes a time toward the end of the last half of the Tribulation where God actually turns the captivity of the nation of Israel as He begins to end the Tribulation at the Second Coming of Christ.
- Psalms 25:17 talks about the "troubles of my heart," that will be Jacob's time of trouble, which we have talked about.
- Psalms 25:18, God beginning to forgive the nation of Israel and take His wrath from them and begin to heal them.
- Psalms 25:19, the enemies there will be the Antichrist and the world system that is against the Jew during the Tribulation Period.
- In Psalms 25:20, you see God delivering them from the Antichrist.
- Psalms 25:21, Israel is waiting on God. If you want to find this, go over to Revelation 6:10, and the Bible says that during the last half of the Tribulation period, the saints that are martyred are up under the souls of the altar, and they are asking the Lord, "How long do we have to wait before You come back?" There it is right there.

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? Revelation 6:10

- Psalms 25:22 sums the whole thing up doctrinally when he just simply says, "*Redeem Israel, O God.*"

So, you can clearly see how this Psalm will be about God's people, the nation of Israel, going through the Tribulation in verses 15 through 22. But when we go back to the beginning of verses 8 through 14, even though again we are in the Tribulation, we can see eight more keys to our spiritual growth and an inspirational application. This we can add to what we looked at last week.

III. Eight Keys to Spiritual Growth

I want to walk through these for you, and I have showed you that doctrinally this is to the Jew in the Tribulation. But now I want to turn my attention to the practical side of this in looking at our verses here.

1.) Verse 8: *Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*

Without a doubt, if you are going to deal with people in the ministry, and many of you do, this will be the root of all of the issues of people that we deal with, and many times in our own lives. It simply comes down—I do not care what a person gets into, forget the different categories of sin—it simply comes down in the final analysis, our way versus God's way. If you are ever going to get to where God wants you to be, that is one of the concessions you have to give up at some point in your life. **“This way” must be “His way.”** I have told people before that come into me for counseling with just horrendous problems. I lay out a pathway for them, and they begin to balk at it a little bit, and it is like they are losing some kind of freedom to decide their own life. I tell them, "Hey, your way got you where you are at today. You have to change from that way to go God's way."

Honestly I am telling you, developing this so you can understand it is going to be the key in all of our lives. I do not care what you get into or what you do not get into, I do not care what sin you fall into or whatever, it all comes back to this concept: you decided to go your way versus clearly the way that God has for you. I do not know any place that lays this out clearer. If you want a definitive passage on this, it would be James chapter 1. Let us turn over to James 1:22-25. I want you to begin to see where this root problem is going to come into your life that is going to destroy you at some point, certainly take you out of God's way. Yet I am going to tell you, in 50-plus years in the ministry, I have seen people that quit going God's way and start going their way, and they try to defend it like it really is God's way. Well, before we get done this morning, you will see the fallacy of that thinking. Look at James 1:22

22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Here is where our problems begin. They begin with you sitting in a church, hearing the Word of God, but doing nothing with it. This is where the problem starts

23. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

If you have your little China marker—mark the word "natural face" in yellow. You know what the natural face of all of us is? Who we really are!

Now, ladies, let me just start by saying this: you all look lovely today, you really do. But if we may all be honest, you did not look this good when you first got up this morning. You had to work at it. I might say you do a great job. You look lovely today, but you know, when you drag out of bed in the morning, 5:30, 6:30, whenever you get up, and you walk into the bathroom and you look into that mirror, do you know what you see? You see your natural face. You see what you really look like before you fix it. The advantage that guys have is that we look ugly all the time. There is not a whole lot we can do to fix how we look.

But men are stuck with what we look like. I know you try to fix your hair, you try to comb your hair and all that stuff, but hey, we are who we are. But women, and maybe that is why women do that, because the church is likened to a bride, a woman. So as women like to fix their natural face, which I think I agree with Bob Jones Sr., if the barn door needs painting, paint it. I get that. But we as Christians do the exact same thing. It is okay for a lady because I always look at fixing your face, ladies, as enhancing the beauty you already have. See, you can get away with that, even though some of you have to work a little harder at it. But anyway, it is a thing where, hey, Christians do the same thing, and that is what this verse is saying. Let's go on:

24. *For he beholdeth himself, and **goeth his way**, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*
25. *But whoso looketh into **the perfect law of liberty**, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

This is where, if you are going to have a problem as a Christian, and I pray that you do not, this is where it all starts. But if you ever start to lose interest in the things of God, it is going to be because you now have decided to go your own way, and you have changed in your attitude of heart about the preaching of the Word of God and not doing anything with it, because that is what it is talking about. **The “perfect law of liberty” is the Word of God.** Every Sunday morning, Thursday night, every sermon you listen to is a natural looking glass, and you behold your face in this looking glass of the Word of God, and this is what preaching is designed to do. Preaching is designed to show you and me what we really look like, our natural face. It says, *"For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way."* They come to church, and maybe they liked it for what, five years, six years, and then suddenly something changes. You decide now you are not going to go God's way. You get off that beaten path, and now you are going to go your way. This is why church is the first thing that goes. This is why when people begin to have problems, the first thing they take out of their life is being here on Sunday morning, being here on Thursday night. You know why? You do not want to have to look into that mirror. You would rather sit home and tell yourself how wonderful you are, how beautiful you are. He says right here in James 1:22, *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* You have deceived yourself.

I have never met anybody in all of my years in the ministry that ever quit going God's way, that started going their way, that did not deceive themselves in it. The bottom line is the reason why they are not here today: they do not want to have to look into that mirror. They do not want to have to see that natural face. Here we are looking into it and going His way and not your way and continuing therein.

He says, *"not a forgetful hearer of the word, but a doer of the work."* You cannot separate hearing the Word of God from the work of God. That is the second thing that goes. **The first thing that goes, you do not come to church anymore. The second thing that goes, whatever ministry you are in, if you are ever in one, you do not do it anymore.** You have all the ideas and all the justifications for it, and you can list it out forever. But the Bible says, “the looking

glass,” you have to hear the word, then you have to do the work. Then he loses in verse 25, the blessings of God.

2.) Verse 9: *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*

Here is a great illustration where the world defines a word one way and God defines it another, and these are always good to note and mark into your Bible. Here we see how the word meekness is defined in the Word of God. **The world will define meekness as weakness, but that is not how God defines it.** When you go over to Galatians 5:22-23, where you find the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit of God, you will find that meekness is one of them. It is one of the fruit. You will notice in Galatians 5:22-23, looking at the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit of God, and this is good: love, joy, peace, then longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. When you stand back and look at that, you will find there is the process again, there is the pattern. Love, joy, and peace: these are the things inside us. These are the things that are in your relationship with God. This is what you will find when you go His way and not your way. Then longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance: these are the outward expressions to others based on the three inward with you and the Lord in your relationship. Meekness is not weakness. But rather meekness in the Bible is the power of God in your life under the control of the Holy Spirit of God through a fear of God in a humbleness. You are not meek before man with your preaching. Yet, I know pastors that are; they are afraid they are going to upset somebody in the congregation. Hey, if you ever become a pastor, and I know you want to teach people the Bible, I know you want people to grow, but I am going to tell you, every time you get up in a pulpit, not only do you want to preach the Bible to people and help them grow, help encourage them, you want to offend somebody that needs to be offended too. But too many preachers are too meek. It is not meek that I am afraid I am going to offend you. It is meek when I preach in the power of the Holy Spirit of God, I want to offend you if you need offended. I want that looking glass mirror to speak to you like nobody else can. He can blow me off; you can call me all kinds of crude names and whatever the case and write me off and whatever you want to do. That is what everybody does with somebody that preaches the Word of God. But I will tell you one thing, the mirror never lies. Why do you think the idea is if you break a mirror, you have seven years of bad luck? Because when you do not look into this mirror, you lose the blessings of God. **Meekness is not weakness.** It is not puffed up with all you know, but humble before men and submissive before the Holy Spirit of God as you give out the Word of God.

3.) Verse 10: *All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

This will be, as we saw last week, the old path out of Jeremiah 6:16. This path will be the way of God for your life. When it talks about going His way and not yours, this is the pathway He is talking about. You see, as God reveals Himself to you, He will show you the pathway of what He wants you to do. In the Bible, it is called the will of God versus the plan of God. Now, the will of God is the same for everybody: that is to be more like Jesus Christ every day. But through that, God reveals Himself, and *though the will of God may be the same for everybody, the plan of God is different.* God has something for each one of you. Whatever God's pathway you will take, whatever He has for you, it will always be built around two things: mercy and truth. Mercy will

be how you deal with the people you deal with, lovingkindness and grace. But truth will be the Word of God that you will always give them. You will always want with your people to give them the looking glass. How they look in it is between them and the Lord. But you do not do them any favor by not preaching and showing them who they really are. When you go back to Hosea 4:1-2, and back to these Old Testament prophets, they are great guys and what they say to Israel's problem, but they are also our problems today. He says in Hosea 4:1 that we are told that when you do not have truth, the first thing that goes is mercy. Boy, that is so true.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

4.) Verse 11: *For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*

Understanding who we really are. When it comes to our ministry to others, we need to have an understanding basically of three things:

- 1.) An understanding of God.
- 2.) An understanding of people that you work with
- 3.) An understanding of who you are

So, you have the first one, understanding who God is. I would suggest that you start in the book of Proverbs. The second one is to understand the people that we work with, and I would start in the book of 2 Kings 4. The third one you have to understand who you are. For that I would run you back to James chapter 1, the looking glass of the Word of God.

One of the biggest issues of God's people will be the sin of self-righteousness. Dr. Ruckman has a great message on the sins of the saints, and one of the biggest issues that God's people fall into is the sin of self-righteousness. Self-righteousness will be in our lives because we forget who we really are, and we do not look at ourselves the way we should. We puff ourselves up, and we lose sight of the fact that, as he says here, "*Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*" You either have the work of the Spirit in your life, or you are going to have the work of the flesh in your life. It is not going to be somewhere in between. Learning, as 1 Corinthians 2:15 tells us, we have to learn to make judgment calls in our life. The Bible says:

*But he that is spiritual judgeth **all things**, yet he himself is judged of no man. 1 Corinthians 2:15*

That is the things that people do in life. I never judge people because I am as bad as they are. I do not have a right to judge anybody, but I do have a right to judge the things that they do if I want to allow them in my life or not. "*He that is spiritual judgeth **all things**,*" but not people. That is how you understand people. You understand God, then you understand the people that you deal with, but through that, you learn how to understand yourself. I have known people that were some of the most self-righteous people on the planet. I mean, they have a whole list of things that they would not do because they are Christians. We had a guy several years ago that came in, and he did not like anything that we did. I mean, this, this, and this, you know, he judged everything we did. He was one of those superficial self-righteous people you ever met in your life. After he left the church, come to find out that during that time, I think he had two or three warrants out for

him for something that he did that wound him up in jail. But that is self-righteousness. "Oh, I am going to judge everything that they do," but you do not look at yourself. You have got a few potholes in your life, you had better fill in. That is self-righteousness.

5.) Verse 12: *What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*

This verse is very important to every child of God anywhere in time. It is our being taught in the direct will of God about God's directive will for our lives. You are going to find that in the Christian life there is a directive will of God, and then there is a permissive will of God. There are things that God wants to direct you to do, but when you will not do it, you go off your way and you do it yourself. You say, "Well, how do you know God permits that?" Because He does not kill you. He allows you to dig the hole because He knows in some cases the only way you are going to learn the directive will of God is to really screw up in the permissive will of God.

With God's directive will, as you grow and as He reveals Himself to you, God, within His way, not your way, on the right path, He will have a course directly laid out for your life, a direction of life of His choosing. "*Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*" That is God, not you. I could look back at my life, as I am sure many of you older Christians could, and I look, here I am in Kansas City, I started out in Canton, Ohio. I could tell you the process that God used to get me from there to here is as direct and a directive as you could ever want in your life. There was never any question. It was so clear because that is the way the directive will of God is. Too many of God's people get off God's path and out of His directive will, and then they start making their own choices in life instead of allowing Him to choose what He wants them to do. This was Israel's problem, and this will be God's people's problem too. The issues of our day.

I told you a couple of weeks ago, we talked about race, and I showed you how that the human race was for the world, and then God's race was for us as we run the race that Paul talks about. The human race goes back to where God told us that He established the bounds of their habitation that they might be happy and find the Lord. He chose where He wanted these nations to live for the purpose of Him revealing Himself to them. The race, the human race, is what? It is a race for a man to get out of those habitational bounds and to overtake the other man. That is what it is all about. It is not complicated. But just as in a physical sense, the human race will get out of bounds of their habitation physically, God's people running His race will continually get out of their bounds spiritually. You come to that place in your life that the directive will of God will no more be in your life. It is now the permissive will. God's leading in His way has gone aside, and now you are leading yourself in your way, even though you are still claiming it's God's way. But just like the Catholic Church not built on the five things that make the church, your life has no evidence in it. You may be a hearer of the word, but you quit being a doer of the word within the structure of the New Testament Church. Do not talk to me about how you witness at work. I do not even want to hear that. That is fine if you do, but it has to come back to the directive will.

6.) Verse 13: *His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.*

Again, this is Israel doctrinally, his seed being the seed of Israel getting the inheritance in the millennium. I get that. Now, I do not know if you have noticed this, I made brief references to it, but as you come through the book of Psalms, you will find the word "Selah" (S-E-L-A-H). In fact, if I remember right, you will find it 71 times in the book of Psalms alone. To understand the word "Selah," you need to realize that back in the day these psalms were sung. You found that in Colossians 3:16-17 that in the hymns, spiritual songs, the things that they sang were psalms. The word "Selah" was put into the manuscript, so to speak, as they sang them because it represents a pause or a rest. If you know music at all, you know that there will be a rest sign in music when you stop playing. But the Holy Spirit of God has seen fit to put the word "Selah" into the passages that deal not only with God's rest for Israel, the millennium, but also the passages that inspirationally will point to our rest in Christ as a believer. So, I am just telling you, you ought to go through your Bible sometime and get your China marker and mark every "Selah" in your Bible. I think it is also in Ezekiel, if I remember right. Because you will find that every time you find the word "Selah," it is a great key showing you doctrinally it is the millennium, inspirationally it is the rest that we should have as a believer. You know, the rest for the child of God will only come through the way of God and the truth of God, and we are to have that rest. The unfortunate side of the ministry is most of God's people will never experience that rest. Their lives are in constant turmoil, issues, problems, many in disaster. You will notice that the rest you have will be an inheritance that you pass on to your children, generation to generation. This too rarely happens. He said there, "*his seed*," that is your children.

The ministry is the greatest job on the planet. A lady told me this morning, we were talking about some things, and she said, "I do not envy you, the job you have to deal with all these issues." I tell you that is the greatest part of this thing. I mean, you have to love people and love the ministry, and when you do, the downside things are just part of it. But I do not want to kid you that there is not a hard side to the ministry if you love people. Now, if you are just a sterile pastor who does not care about people, and you are just a number on a giving record, or you are just somebody out there that I do not even know your name, I get that. But if you love people and you care about people, and you are one with your people, as great as the ministry is, there are some heartbreaks in the ministry, even though you never take it personal because there is nothing you can do. In the ministry to people, if you stay in it long enough, if you deal with people long enough, you are going to run into dysfunctional families. They are the most heartbreaking thing to me because you stand there and you know that you could help them. You stand there and you know that you have the answers that they need, but it is not going to work. Dysfunctional moms and dads will produce dysfunctional children. Those dysfunctional children will produce dysfunctional grandchildren. Those dysfunctional grandchildren will produce dysfunctional great-grandchildren, and on and on. Just like spiritual growth is a process to grow you to the Lord, this is the process to lead your family to destruction. After three or four generations of this, it is hardly ever able to break that cycle. If there is any one thing that breaks my heart in ministry, it will be this one thing: seeing families that I could see God could use greatly, families that could really do a job, but the die is cast, and nothing is going to change it.

I love this about this church and I love this about you, there is from time to time that we will get kids that come in that have no parents. If they have parents, they are very dysfunctional parents. I do not ever say much, but I watch how you people take them in. I have seen you take in kids that never had a Christmas and give them a Christmas. You spend your own money, you do not come to me and say, "Can I have some money?" You give them their first birthday. I have seen you guys take kids in that had nothing and you gave them everything. Many times, they do not make it. I know you and I know your heart, and I know how that hurts you sometimes, but you have got to understand, welcome to the ministry.

We just recently lost a young man that you guys worked with, and it breaks people's hearts. You invested in him, you did everything for him, you gave him the best chance you could, and he walked away from it. How do you deal with that? Great lesson. You take kids that came out of a dysfunctional family, you give them the best shot you can, you put into their life everything that needs to be in that life, you invest in them, and they walk away from it. You say, "Well, Bob, what is the lesson in that?" The lesson in that is, as good as you are and as much as you try to give them, you cannot undo the dysfunctionality of a family in their life for the first 10, 15, 12, 13 years. Every once in a while, you will get one through, and we have that happen. In my mind, when I see 20 people that you guys invest in who just gives you a sharp stick in the eye, never thank you, walked out of your life, and you find one or two who become everything God wants him to be, to me that is God saying, "I have plans for that person." But you need to understand, the ministry has some heartbreaking things to it. I am glad you are all working with people, but in time, you will have to work through these things. **When it comes to the ministry here is your life proverb: no good deed will go unpunished.** You will invest your life in people, you will give them everything, and then they walk out that door like you never existed. If you are not careful, you will let that get you off track.

I had a situation here, I do not know, it has been a while back, we really got hosed, and we got hosed by one of the most dysfunctional families I have ever met in all my life. If you look in the dictionary, the word "dysfunctional," this family portrait is here. I was talking to somebody about it, and they asked me how do you understand these things, and I said, "It is one word." "Well, what is the word?" and I gave him the family name. This family is the most dysfunctional family I have ever met in my life. Everybody in that family is going to be lost and screwed up and messed up. Why? Generation after generation after generation of going their way instead of the Lord's way. After four or five generations, you do not break it. But when you find one that you do, it is special. I have told you before, I understand the times that we live in. If I let every person who did not do what is right, that I invested my life in and you invested your life in, if we let every one of those take us off track, then we miss the boat. We are no better than they are. I have come to the conclusion in the day and age that I live in, in my ministry and my preaching and what God has called me to do, **my goal is simply one: to save as many of them as I can.** But I am not going to get them all, and neither are you. Families like that, they never dwell at ease. It is always some next problem: one of the kids getting a divorce, one of the kids getting pregnant, one of the kids doing this, one of the kids doing that, and it is just that simple. You just must come to the place where you realize that the rest you have will be the inheritance that you pass on to your children. He gives it to you, and then you give it to them. But when the family is dysfunctional, it never happens.

7.) Verse 14: *The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*

This is no great mystery. The secret that he is talking about here is found in Deuteronomy 29:29.

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

When you build the right kind of relationship with God as laid out where we are at in Psalm 25, then there will be some secret things that you will have with God that nobody else will have. Sometimes these will be things that God showed you in your time studying the Bible. Something that He showed only you that changes direction in your life dramatically.

In the Old Testament, when the temple was finally built with Solomon, they had a room that housed all of the treasures that came into Israel. The Bible calls it the place where the holy things were kept. It was a place that they kept all the secret things that God had given them. When they went out to battle and they defeated the enemy, they would take the gold and the spoils and put them in this room as a victory that God gave them. In your life, in my life, it will be when you and I go through some tough time and God gives us the victory, the verses and the principles that He gave us. What do you do with those? You put them in your treasure room. Sometimes it was a place where they kept all the things that had been given to them. Things like the precious things that were brought to the nation of Israel by other nations. You will see this in 1 Kings 10 when the Queen of Sheba comes to see all God's glory. She does not come in empty-handed. She comes in with the abundance of her country, and she gives it to Solomon for God's treasure chest. This house of God's treasures was the secret place of God with Israel. The king would go into that room and look and remember, a room filled to the ceiling. You remember, "Oh yeah, I remember when that came in, I remember when that came in, I remember what God did." He thinks about all that God did to bring those treasures into the treasure house.

Spiritually for you and for me, it will be the spiritual treasure house of our hearts where we keep all the special things that God gives us within our relationship with Him. I know when I was growing up, I do not know how much women change, but I know when I was growing up, every woman had a jewelry box on her dresser. At night, when she went to sleep or whatever, she would take her wedding rings off, her necklace off, and she would put all of the treasured things in there and keep them in her jewelry box. My mom had one, my sister had one, and I guess women maybe still do that today, but they certainly did back in my day. For us, that jewelry box is the jewelry box of our heart where we keep all the special things that God has given to us. As you grow through being on His way, as you grow through all of this, as you grow through the battles of life, the victories that God gives you, as you grow through your spiritual process as I am laying out for you, not only do you grow, but the treasure room grows, and it gets filled to the ceiling. This is the idea of "*your cup runneth over.*" For you and for me, it would be things out of the Book that He gives you. I know that my whole Bible is my treasure chest. You look through my Bible; there are probably 200,000 notes in there over 50-plus years. You go to my Psalms 119:1-176, there is another treasure God gave me on a prayer that He gave me that I could pray that He would teach me the Bible. Sometimes it will be a time of trouble you go through, and the verses that He will give you that you will never forget that came out of nowhere when you

needed them, you put them in your treasure chest. Sometimes it is the promises that He gives you when you really need one.

Sometimes, moms and dads, it is the first time your daughter or son gives a devotion or wins their first person to Christ. You watch them go to camp and really invest in somebody's life. Watching your kid grow to the place where they do not get off on their way, they stay on that path that is God's way. You watch through this church God develop them, you watch them grow and learn. You know what you do as a parent? I know what I did as a parent: put that in my treasure chest. You see, there will be times that come into all of our lives when you feel really defeated, that you feel like the whole world is against you. I know I have in the ministry where people hate you, people do not like you. I mean, I do not care, but I am telling you right now, the greatest comfort for all of that is just getting out of it, going down and looking at treasures in the treasure chest that God has given you. Because nothing people can try to do to you will ever or should ever take the place of what God has done for you. It is all in there, a life of goodness from God that gives rest to your soul.

But I want to show you something that in Israel's day after Solomon dies and he builds that thing up, the greatest time in history, that treasure house was filled to the brim. The Bible says that nations across this planet brought things to the honor and glory of God, and all went into that treasure chest. After Solomon dies, over there in 1 Kings 14:25-27, his son Rehoboam comes to the throne. You know what Rehoboam does? As great as Solomon was, let me tell you about one of his failures: he never brought that treasure into his son's life. Rehoboam never saw the value of that treasure room. So many parents today claim you have treasures in your heart, how come your kids do not have them? So, you know what Rehoboam did? 1 Kings 14:25-27, he took all the treasure out of the house of the Lord and gave it to the king of Egypt, a type of the world.

25. And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

26. And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

27. And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house.

He goes in there and the Bible says all the gold shields from the battles, from the victories, all the gold shields that were hanging on the wall, he took them and gave them to the world, the king of Egypt. Oh, but just like you and me, he replaced them, but he replaced them with shields of brass, cheap imitations. If you know your Bible, this was the beginning of the end of God's people. It may have taken 400 more years, but in 606 BC, they went into captivity. Taking the treasures of God's secret heart and giving them to the world was the beginning of the end of the nation of Israel, and when God's people do it, it is the beginning of the end.

You can see it in some of God's people's lives. I dare say this time next year there will be some of you who will not be in this church. That is a terrible thing, a tragic thing, but you are already on the wrong path. You have already got an attitude about the looking glass. There isn't nothing anybody is going to be able to do about it.

Another great truth of the ministry, all through my years, I have had people come to me that were doing pretty good, and they will say to me, "Bob, if you ever see me get off the track, if you ever see me not doing what is right, will you come and tell me?" And I say, "Absolutely." You know how long that lasts? Until they get off track. None of you want to hear it. You know why? The looking glass. Something has changed. The secret things that God gives us are for you, and you pass them on to your children. I do not know what to tell you. Just like Israel, many of God's people today either have nothing in their secret chamber or they gave all those things to the world, the king of Egypt. As I said, also Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us these secret things that God reveals to us, they belong to us and to our children and should be the spiritual inheritance that you give your children. That we as Christians, "*may do all the words of this law.*" God gives you those secret things to get you through all the tough times in life, and as your kids grow up, they are going to grow through some tough times in life. They are going to be forced to drink, they are going to be forced to drugs, they are going to be forced to marry the wrong people. If you have got those secret things that got you through the tough times in life, then that is their inheritance to keep them from going through the tough times of life.

But God's people today, they have nothing in their spiritual chambers, or they gave all those things to the world. Solomon never passed on to his son all that God did in that chamber. So when Rehoboam comes to the throne, he cares nothing about the spiritual things of God, just like so many God's people's kids when they grow up. Mom and Dad went to church, Mom and Dad went to church every time the doors were open, but their kids care nothing about the things of God. No inheritance. I have known parents that talked to me and I would send them to my financial advisor that has my 401k or my retirement or whatever. They would come into me and they would ask advice, "I want to make sure that when I am gone that I will leave my kids enough to get them through life money-wise, monetary-wise. Can you help me?" So, I send them to this guy, he is a great guy, and he will help them. I will say nothing, but I am thinking, "If you were concerned about leaving your kids a spiritual inheritance as you are the physical, I wonder where they would be."

I know this is not a popular message. I am sorry. This is one of these messages when I am done here, everybody is going to come up and say, "Good job, Bob." What else are you going to say? If you do not say anything, then I am just going to look at you. It is tough looking into that mirror, isn't it? But I am going to tell you this, I do not care where you are at, I do not care what mistakes you have made, I do not care where your family is out there, there is always time to start doing the right thing. One of my counseling appointments on the phone this week is where I have got to tell them to go back and they have got to start to do the right thing. It is everywhere. It is everywhere. When it comes to our children, you as a parent, me as a parent, will do one of two things as they grow: you will show them how to take the pieces of the Bible and put the Bible together, or as they go through life, you will have to pick up the pieces of a disastrous life. As with our children, just like you and me, the path will have to be His way and not your way.

8.) Verse 15: *Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*

At the end of the day, after all is said and done, we can go through all of this stuff when we need to, and you need to get it, and hopefully the Holy Spirit of God can do something with it in your life. **But the Christian life will be about just one thing: it is where our focus is in life.** Our focus in life will define our goals in life. One of the things the Bible does for me is it brings everything into my life into a perfect focus. I may not like it, I may wish that it was still blurry, but the Word of God has a way of just bringing everything into focus. As a child of God, as you grow, you learn to appreciate and love that aspect of God, and then as verse 15, “*mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.*”

I grew up in Amish country, Canton, Ohio, to the north, Hartsville, down to the south, it is all Amish. Every time we go to Ohio, we always hit both Amish countries. You know, in the Amish countries, it is a very different lifestyle. You are driving along in your car, and there is another lane over here, and here comes a horse and buggy down the line. Horses and buggies are everywhere. You go past a church someplace that is an Amish church, their parking lot will just be buggy after buggy with horses pulling the buggy. I mean, they are everywhere. I watched that over the years, and the horses are going right down on the side of the road, and cars are buzzing by them, and I always thought to myself, "Why do these horses not get spooked? I mean, it would be really easy to get scared and run out of the road and everybody get killed. But then I look closely, those horses that are pulling out, they have side blinders on them. The horse cannot see what is on the road over here. All he can see is where he is going. I thought to myself, years after that, that is what the Word of God does for me. It cuts out the peripheral vision of the world and just lets me stay focused on where I am going. That is what the Word of God does for us, should do for us. The Word of God will be what protects my proverbial vision so I can have the singleness of eye. In Matthew 6:22, it says, "*The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*" There it is. If you wanted to define that a little bit more, you go over to the book of Song of Solomon. In Song of Solomon 5:12, it describes the Lord Jesus Christ, and it says that "*His eyes are as the eyes of doves.*" Then when you go to Song of Solomon 1:15, it describes the bride, and her eyes are the eyes of a dove. In other words, you and I ought to see things just like He sees it through the singleness of eye, and our eyes are ever toward the Lord.

IV. Summary

You obviously can see what an incredible chapter this is. This is the book of Psalms, and in the book of Psalms, you are going to find some of the most practical stuff as God deals with Israel, the parallels as He deals with us. I do not know of any place better than Psalms 25. If all I had in my Christian life to grow was Psalms 25, I have within that chapter everything that I need.

Last Thursday night, there was a question asked about in Ezekiel 22:30 when God looks for a man, what does He look for? The answer was in 1 Samuel 2-3. I showed you in 1 Samuel 2:35 the qualities that He looks for in a person: faithful priest, God's heart, God's mind, sure house, walking with God forever. I told you that in 1 Samuel 2:35, this is what He looks for. Then in chapter 3, He begins to build that sure house, and it begins to take Samuel through a process

within God's structure, local church for you and me, and then produces one of the greatest prophets that Israel ever had.

The Christian life is simple; it is not complicated. Your Christian life in the morning starts just like your physical life in the morning, looking in the mirror and seeing what you really look like. When you crawl out of bed into the bathroom and you look into the mirror, there. When you go down and have some time in the Word of God in the morning, then you see it there. That is the key. Then the next part of it: are you a forgetful hearer? **Do you go your way, or do you go God's way?** This will be the determining factor in the day and age that we live in. As I said earlier, we try to reach as many as we can. I do not care how many times we get hosed over, there will never be a kid we will not take in and try to help because you might have to go through 20 to find one nugget of gold. But believe me, that nugget of gold, and we have found a few, there are a few of them sitting right here this morning that are worth it all. You can never make people do what is right. You can never want people to do what is right more than they want to do what is right. You simply put out the Word of God, let the looking glass determine where they go and what they do. **Psalms 25 is an incredible psalm, and I hope out of it, all of us can learn the life-changing things that God wants to put in our world that will make us go His way and not our way, that He can do in our life what He chooses, not what we choose.**