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Psalm 25
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A Teachable Heart

Psalm 40 “I waited patiently for the Lord, he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire, he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.”¹

Psalm 96 “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all people.”²

Psalm 98 “Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.”³

Psalm 144 “I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you, to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword.”⁴

Psalm 149 “Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.”⁵

Isaiah 42 “Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them.”⁶

Revelation 5, the elders and saints around the throne of God “Sang a new song...”⁷

Revelation 15, those who had been victorious over the beast sang both an old Song of Moses and a new song of the Lamb.⁸

Do we hear a common thread woven throughout these scriptures? Sing a new song!

Clearly there is something important to God about our learning to sing a new song. For some of us the worship songs we sing are new songs. For others, it's the

¹ Psalm 40:1-3

² Psalm 96:1-3

³ Psalm 98:1

⁴ Psalm 144:9-10

⁵ Psalm 149:1

⁶ Isaiah 42:10

⁷ Revelation 5:9

⁸ Revelation 15:3

hymns that are new to us. Both are incredibly important aspects of our worship because they provide fresh expressions of our faith.

God expects us, his children, to learn new songs of faith. So this morning, as we look at Psalm 25, I want to talk about one of the most important qualities we as God's people should embody...having teachable hearts as we learn new songs.

Hear now God's Word as I read for us Psalm 25.

Let us pray. Prayer of Illumination.

In this season with new elders and deacons, one of the most important characteristics of a good leader is having a teachable heart. This is what makes or breaks good teams. So as we consider Psalm 25, there are several things that I'd like to lift up that are important both for our personal lives and the church today.

If you remember a couple weeks ago, I talked about our soul...that part of us that is unique, eternal, and belongs to God. Notice in Psalm 25, right off the bat, David says "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul." The image that David paints is that of holding something precious, very valuable, up to God. It's a vulnerable stance as God deals with us as God sees fit.

One commentator wrote, "In Israel, lifting one's hands in an out stretched position was a gesture of entreaty used in prayer." By this we are saying that everything that we are and everything have depends completely and "only on the help of God."⁹

So being teachable requires us to do some soul work. As I posed a couple weeks ago, how is our soul? To answer that, we take inventory of our relationships with God, with others, with ourself, and with creation. As we lift those areas up to the Lord, we allow God to shine his light in our lives and show us how we've hit the mark or not. We then allow the Holy Spirit to guide, direct, or even correct us toward new ways of living.

Why is having a teachable heart important? Well for one, because none of us are experts in this Christian living. We need to trust the Holy Spirit in us and in others to bring us to maturity and give us the mind of Christ. So the psalmist prays...

Show me your ways, O God.

Teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truths and teach me. Because I know that "your thoughts are not my thoughts and your ways are not my ways. They are so much higher."¹⁰

Show me. Teach me. Guide me. Instruct me. Let me know.

These are the cries of a teachable heart.

⁹ James L. Mays, *Interpretation, Psalms. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 124.

¹⁰ Isaiah 55:8-9

But we also know that David though he wrote these psalms was far from perfect. He desired to follow God even though he fell short time and time again. Yet he also prayed...

“Create in me a pure and clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”¹¹

In other words, give me a teachable heart!

Jesus said that if we ask, then we will receive.

And so God shows the humble his ways. Teaches them his paths. Guides them through life. And creates pure and clean hearts within them.

How are we doing at having humble hearts? Are we willing to learn new songs? Or are we already experts in all things?

Before we can be taught, we have to know something about the one who is teaching us. Can we trust them to always have our best interests in mind? With our heavenly Father we certainly can!

Psalms 25 proclaims...and we know in our hearts...that God is loving, faithful, merciful, forgiving, kind, good, upright.

Proverbs says, “Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”¹²

When we have the idea of a God being our friend, we are more open to receive his council, guidance, and correction.

With a teachable heart, we have prosperity, an inheritance and intimacy with the Lord. A knowledge that God is for us and not against us.

Pastor Rick Warren states that with a teachable heart, we will be more likable, wiser, and have less conflict in our lives.¹³ I think we’d all like that! Right?

But those without teachable hearts are often lonely, afflicted, troubled, anguished, distressed, disliked by others, and put to shame.

Now as a pastor, there are occasions when I need to bring something to someone’s attention when they have done something wrong. It could be a gross offense or something as simple as unknowingly hurting someone’s feelings through what was said or done.

Before I can confront that person, the first thing I must do is check my own motives. Jesus said, “to first remove the log from my own eye before attempting to

¹¹ Psalm 51:10-12

¹² Proverbs 27:6

¹³ Rick Warren, “Three Effects of a Teachable Spirit” Daily Hope, as posted on <https://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/daily-hope-with-rick-warren/daily-hope-with-rick-warren-july-16-2017.html>

remove the speck of dust from my brother or sister's eye."¹⁴ If after praying about it, the Holy Spirit gives me the green light to attend to it, my job is to simply bring it to their attention. I try to be gentle. I try not shame or humiliate them. I try to have everyone's best interest in mind. It's not my responsibility how they receive my correction. That's completely up to them. Sometimes it goes well. And sometimes it does not.

If I'm the one being corrected, it's important for me to remain open, to listen, and not become too defensive about what is being said. This is not about having our identities challenged. It is simply correction. My job is to remain teachable.

Now I have to admit, we have some pretty strong willed people around here. And when strong willed people work together, sometimes they collide and it isn't pretty.

Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."¹⁵ My dear friends hear this, God wants us to be humble in heart as we work with one another, not strong willed. A strong will sometimes can become a barrier to receive God's correction when it comes. Because it will come. That is not an option. What is our choice is how we receive it..gently by God's correction or painfully through our stubbornness.

Remember, simple corrections are not about having our identities challenged. If we over react to an offense that someone has brought to our attention, then chances are that there are deeper issues beneath the surface that we need to deal with.

The next thing we have to do is "Trust in the Lord with all of our heart and lean not on our own understanding. But in all of our ways acknowledge him and he will set our footpaths straight."¹⁶

And finally we need to pray in order to keep a proper perspective. Perhaps like David, we need to pray that God would give us more teachable hearts.

The Apostle Paul reminds us, "Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."¹⁷

¹⁴ Matthew 7:3-5

¹⁵ Matthew 11:29

¹⁶ Proverbs 3:5-6

¹⁷ Philippians 4:4-7

So may we know that having a teachable heart is of the utmost important to God. May we be open should someone approach with us with some kind of correction or with a new song that they want to teach us. And may trust that Jesus always has our best interests in mind as he lovingly guides us along new paths.

Let us pray.

“Father,

With outstretched hands, I adore You, here and now.

Your ways soar above my own.

Your timing. It is precise, perfect. It is never one second too soon or too late.

Your presence. It is sweet and strong. It surrounds me, comforts and encourages me.

Sovereignty reigns in You alone. Nothing escapes Your attention, or care.

Even Your instruction—Your discipline—is a display of Your deep love for me. In this, I am confident for You are a good Father.

Obedience is Your love language.

Without You, I am nothing.

Before You, I lay bare every lie I’ve ever believed that I could do anything meaningful without You.

I confess my pride — the idea that I have all of You that I need.

Though these words never leave my lips, this lie latches onto my actions. You see it when I refuse to ask questions for fear of seeming less-than. And when I choose not to listen well to wise counsel, or invest time in reading, studying, and taking notes to become more like Jesus.

I say I need You but I don’t seek You like [a parched person] thirsting for water.

Please forgive me.

Father, this is my heart cry today, and every day:

Create within me a teachable spirit.

One that longs for You, thirsts for You, and finds everything I need in You.

For You alone are worthy.

Cloak me in discernment and wisdom to guard against sin and its disastrous effects,

for sin never leaves its slimy imprint on just one person’s life.

Pry open each finger of resistance to display an open hand and heart desiring only You, Your ways, Your timing. Amen.”¹⁸

¹⁸ <https://www.cathybaker.org/a-prayer-for-those-desiring-a-teachable-spirit/>