

# What Do You Do When You Don't Know What To Do?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning, brothers and sisters and friends. Do keep that reading open in front of you. It's great to be here with you this morning as we pick up our summer series in the Psalms again.

And if you're new or visiting, let me just add my welcome to Shem's as well. It's great always to have people checking out Christian things perhaps or looking for a new church to join. We're so glad you're here.

So it's great to have visitors as well. So, now the psalm we're looking at this morning is about what to do when you don't know what to do. It's a psalm about fears and anxieties.

It's about confessing your sins and asking for guidance. And it strikes me that at the end of another year, as we turn our minds to the future, well, as we turn our minds to the past, perhaps we are in need of confessing our sins.

And as we turn our minds to the future, perhaps we are in need of guidance. Perhaps you've just finished school. What will 2024 hold for you? Or maybe you've finished your degree.

[ 1 : 03 ] What will 2024 hold for you? And I guess there'll be people here between jobs, people moving away, newlyweds, new homeowners, new babies maybe on the way in 2024.

All sorts of things in the year ahead. And I hope that many of us are feeling optimistic and excited about the adventures in the next year. Perhaps you are looking forward to the decisions and the pathways ahead of you.

But there will be some of us who are feeling nervous about the coming year, daunted by the decisions we have to make, anxious about the pathways ahead.

And that's just at the personal level, the individual level. It's been a big year for our church. What will 2024 hold for SLBC? It's been a big year for our country, even for Western civilization.

I don't know if you followed much of the ARC conference this year that was held in London. But one of the contributors, Os Guinness, who's a very thoughtful and considered Christian scholar, he talked about how the Western world is facing a civilizational moment.

[ 2 : 08 ] We are at a significant crossroads in our history where we have to choose the path ahead. Perhaps the choices we make today will mean the flourishing or the demise of our great civilization.

Pretty scary stuff. So what do we do when we don't know what to do? What do we do as individuals and couples and families? What do we do as a church? What do we do as a society even?

If you're feeling daunted about 2024, for whatever reason, then Psalm 25 is a great passage to focus your attention on this morning. Now, it's an acrostic poem.

So it works from A to Z of the Hebrew alphabet. Although verse 22 isn't included in that. It comes after Z, if you like, as a sort of postscript. But I wonder if that acrostic style is meant to feel almost like a checklist.

It's sort of comforting when you don't know what to do to have a sort of step-by-step guide to work through. Perhaps it's a memory aid. Remember, A is for assurance or something.

[ 3 : 13 ] It was written by King David. You see that in the superscription. And that's worth getting a handle on just before we get too far ahead of ourselves. Because David wasn't just an ordinary Israelite.

He wasn't just one of the people of God. He was the King of Israel. The Anointed One. The Christ of His day. And if you remember the structure of the whole book of Psalms, in the introduction, we got a glorious picture of a great king.

A king who would rule over Jerusalem. In fact, he would rule over all the nations and the whole world forever. A king like God. Anointed by God. That was in Psalm 2. And since then, what the Psalter has been encouraging us to do is basically compare and contrast David with that king.

How does David compare or contrast with that king, that awesome, glorious king we read about in Psalm 2 at the beginning? Because David was a great man. And he ruled over a great kingdom. [ 4 : 17 ] He ruled with justice and wisdom. He ruled under God. And in that way, he starts to look very much like the glorious king of Psalm 2. But he wasn't a perfect man.

There were times when David failed to be the good king he was supposed to be. Sometimes spectacularly. And he had to confess his sin and repent and ask for forgiveness, just like all the rest of us.

So as we read this Psalm, if we want to go with the flow of the argument across the book, and we don't want to rip this Psalm out of context, we still fundamentally need to be engaged in that same question.

Before we get to ourselves, how does David compare or contrast with that great king we read about in Psalm 2? And ultimately, of course, that's how the Psalms push us forward to King Jesus. Because David is foreshadowing Jesus in his successes, and also showing us our need for Jesus, our need for a better king in his failures.

[ 5 : 22 ] So looking back on David's life, we need to keep asking ourselves, how does David compare or contrast with King Jesus? We want to know, how did King David respond in times of crisis when he didn't know what to do?

But then we need to ask ourselves, how did King Jesus respond? Because he did go through times of stress and struggle as well, didn't he? And then lastly, we'll have a think about what that means for us.

What should we do when we don't know what to do? Now apart from the A to Z backbone of this Psalm, it's a bit hard to work out how David organises his material, if he sort of chunks it in any way. If you've got an ESV in front of you, you'll see they've broken it up into several paragraphs. The NIV does the same, except their paragraph breaks are different, and then other translations are different again.

For simplicity's sake, I'm going to work with Matthew Henry's suggestion this morning. He just breaks the Psalm into three sections, seven verses in each section, which is pretty neat, and the first and the last sections match.

[ 6 : 29 ] So I think it's got some things going for it. If you've got an outline in front of you, hopefully you'll be able to see, that's what we're going to work our way through this morning. So first of all, David prays.

And we learn a number of things by examining how he prays and what he prays about. But the most important thing to notice, actually, is who he prays to. He prays, capital L-O-R-D indicates that the Hebrew word there is the word Yahweh.

And that's God's personal name. God is what he is. Yahweh is who he is. Yahweh is how he revealed his personal name to the prophet Moses, so that his people can talk to him as our personal God.

Now, if you just glance back to Psalm 24, verse 4, you'll notice that this was one of the requirements of those who would ascend the hill of the Lord. Pick it up in verse 3.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully.

[ 7 : 42 ] He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. See, that gives us a good picture of what prayer is. Prayer is about approaching God on his throne and making our requests.

We want God to bless us, but who will receive blessing from the Lord? Only those who have clean hands, pure hearts, and who do not lift up their souls to what is false.

That is, they do not worship any false gods. Again, in Psalm 25, verse 3, David refers to those who are treacherous. He's not talking about people who betray others, their fellow man, but those who betray Yahweh, the double-minded.

For this and that, they go to Yahweh. But sometimes they go to other gods as well. They're looking for blessing kind of wherever they can find it. They're hoping that they can get what Yahweh has to offer, and on the side, perhaps a blessing from Baal or Chemosh or whoever it might be.

I don't think those gods are very popular anymore. Now, surely this is the most important thing about prayer, isn't it? It's no good nailing what to pray for if you haven't quite worked out who to pray to.

[ 9 : 00 ] And the Lord is a jealous God, like a jealous husband. He is passionate about His people. He is not indifferent. He doesn't want an open relationship with us, if I can put it like that.

He's not up for sharing us around. So Jesus taught His disciples to address God as our Father in Heaven. First of all, the most important thing to work out about prayer is who we're praying to. Who are we trusting in? Then notice what David is concerned about. And as we'll see, this is how the psalm begins and ends. David is concerned about shame.

Three times he repeats that word. David is worried about being ashamed. So shame is an important concept to get our heads around. It's different to guilt, but the two go hand in hand.

So guilt is when you've done the wrong thing. You need forgiveness and justification. Guilt is the opposite of innocence or righteousness. Shame, on the other hand, is more about social rejection.

[ 10 : 08 ] It's a word that has to do with status, losing respect, degrading yourself, doing something dishonoring to yourself. So when Adam and Eve sinned, for instance, they were immediately guilty.

They'd done the wrong thing. And then they felt guilt in response to that. But they'd also disgraced themselves. They'd sullied themselves.

They hadn't behaved as God's image bearers ought to have behaved. They brought shame upon themselves and their station, if you like. And so, apart from feeling guilt, they also felt ashamed in response to each other and in response to God.

And they tried to hide from each other and hide from God. They felt exposed and vulnerable. So they tried to cover themselves up with fig leaves. So the opposite of guilt is innocence or righteousness.

The opposite of shame is glory and honor. Something glorious is meant to be put on display, shouted about, marveled at, honored and exalted.

[ 11 : 14 ] Something shameful is meant to be covered up, kept quiet. It's ugly. But here David doesn't want to be ashamed. And notice he says the key to avoiding shame is trusting Yahweh.

Idolatry is disgraceful. It brings shame upon those who do it. Not always immediately. But ultimately, David says, those who practice it will be put down by God.

They will be knocked off their perch, as it were. They will be put in their place. They'll be humiliated. But those who trust in the Lord will never be put to shame. Ultimately, they will be exalted.

They will be honored. Now in verse 4, as David continues his prayer, he asks for guidance. Make me to know your ways, O Lord.

Teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me. For you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long. Now you see, he's not asking for guidance in the sense that you might hear some people use that word today.

[ 12 : 24 ] He's not saying who should I marry or what job should I take or what's the next best chess move in this crisis. Now he wants to know how to live by the truth, how to live wisely. Do you remember those famous words in the prophet Isaiah?

Chapter 55, Isaiah says, Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts.

Neither are my ways, sorry, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

See, that is what David wants to know, isn't it? He doesn't want to, as it were, be stuck where he is, merely thinking like a man. Stuck in sin with a small earthly horizon.

[ 13 : 30 ] He wants the Lord of heaven to share his thoughts with him. To show him his ways, to teach him about how he operates, how he sees things, so that David can live according to God's way.

Now, as we move into verses 6 and 7, the theme is mercy or steadfast love. When you don't know what to do, pray. Call out to God, the true and living God, turn to Yahweh, ask him for guidance, and ask for mercy.

Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions.

According to your steadfast love, remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. Now, here's where we see that David is different from King Jesus, isn't he? He knows that he's not the true and ultimate king of glory.

At one level, he deserves to be humiliated and ashamed. David recognizes his own sinfulness, that he fell short of God's standards. Especially, he talks about the sins of his youth.

[ 14 : 42 ] I don't know if you are still haunted by things that you did when you were young. And in times of crisis, it might be easy to give in to fears and anxieties. Is the Lord against me?

Everyone else seems to be against me. Perhaps the Lord is punishing me for some sin in my youth. But in times like that, David cried out to God, remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love.

No excuses. And he doesn't say, well, I was only a boy. It doesn't matter what you do when you're a child. Or, it was such a long time ago.

No, actually, time doesn't erase guilt. But God, in his mercy and in his steadfast love, he can. He can forgive.

And forget our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ. And we just pick up on the last line in verse 7 before we move on. David says, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

[ 15 : 42 ] I don't know if this is where we get for goodness sake from or not, but anyway, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. He's alluding back to Exodus chapter 33 here. And there are several allusions to Exodus 33 in this psalm.

In Exodus 33, Moses asked to see God's glory. I think I've got a slide for you, don't I? Moses said, please show me your glory.

And just notice how the Lord responded to him. I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name, the Lord.

See how God's glory is his goodness. That is what's so splendid and magnificent about God. Not, first and foremost, his strength or his omniscience.

You know, they are glorious. But if you really want to see what makes Yahweh dazzling, what makes him spectacular, the thing to focus on is his goodness. And he goes on to define his goodness.

[ 16 : 46 ] I will be gracious to whom I'll be gracious. I'll show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And skipping down to chapter 34, verse 6, we read that when the Lord did pass before Moses, as he was hiding in a rock, the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord, Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children of the third and fourth generation.

What you're supposed to notice, I take it, is how lopsided that statement is. God keeps steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.

He's a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. He does punish sin, but only to the third and fourth generation. And I'm sorry we can't work through the details of that passage because I know that's a slightly complicated thing to think about in and of itself, but I think you're supposed to get the impression, aren't you, that God really wants to forgive people.

That is His heart. Thousands on the one hand, three or four on the other. Sin will in all ways must have consequences. God cannot let it go unpunished, but what God delights to do is to forgive. And that is right at the heart of what makes Him so good. That's the essence of His goodness. So David shows us the way as he reflects back on the Exodus, on Moses.

[ 18 : 25 ] He is listening to the Word of God in the Torah, like the wise man of Psalm 1. And he is embracing God's revelation for himself. He's embracing God's goodness for himself.

Yahweh is the same. God's forgiveness for him. He's asking for God's forgiveness. So David is asking for God's forgiveness, just as all of God's people have done through the ages. Now, as we start to reflect on God's character, that leads us into the next major section of the psalm.

And in verses 8 to 14, notice David shifts from the second person to the third person. He stops speaking to the Lord for a moment to turn, as it were, and speak directly to us, or perhaps he's speaking to himself, about God's character.

He's reminding himself about God's character, that we can be confident of how we'll be received, as it were, when we come to him, begging for mercy and help. Verse 8, good and upright is the Lord. Therefore, he instructs sinners in the way. You see, that's exactly what David has been asking for. Right? He wants teaching, instruction, he wants to know the way, and he's been confessing his sin. [19:40] Now, he's reminding himself, he's confident, he's reminding us, he's confident that the Lord will show him the way, because the Lord is good and upright. And the key also to receiving God's forgiveness and instruction is there in verse 9.

It's humility. You see, sin is fundamentally arrogant, and self-centered, to ignore the living God who created us, who sustains us, gives us every breath, who has spoken to us throughout the ages, through all the prophets, and then most clearly and finally, in his Son.

That is profoundly arrogant. And when sinners will not admit their sin, one of the problems with sin is that it keeps blinding us to its own presence, when sinners will not admit their sin.

They just add to their troubles. There's really no hope of instructing them. They just will not learn.

Which is why the first step along the path of instruction is to humble ourselves.

Humility is the absolute bedrock foundation of the godly life. The first thing God does in someone when he's calling them to himself is he humbles them.

[21:01] He opens their eyes to humble them. It's a terrible feeling. True humility is when we come to God confessing our sin, seeking his forgiveness and instruction.

I don't want to live my way anymore. Verse 4, make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your path. Lead me in your truth and teach me. That is the prayer of the godly person, the repentant person.

And again, if you're here today and you've never prayed a prayer like that, let me urge you to do so. You can do it today. Come to the Lord and say, teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth. And be assured that he will because the Lord leads the humble in what is right, David says. The Lord teaches the humble his way. He is good and upright.

And in verse 10, look at what the Lord's paths are. Verse 10, all the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

[22:13] In other words, when David is asking to know the Lord's ways, this is what he's asking for, isn't it? He knows that the Lord is full of steadfast love and faithfulness and he wants to know what steadfast love and faithfulness will look like for him and his situation.

Everything the Lord does is governed by these two characteristics. Steadfast love on the one hand, i.e. grace, mercy, kindness, compassion.

It's a big concept. It's hard to capture it in one word. The Hebrew word is chesed. But that's one side of it. Steadfast love, loyal love. And then faithfulness, which has to do with truth, this word.

Trustworthiness, reliability. The Lord is true to his word. Even justice and righteousness might be bundled up under that heading, I think. Everything the Lord does is governed by these two characteristics, steadfast love and faithfulness.

And of course, there is a sense in which God is steadfastly loving and faithful towards all mankind. Behind. But here, notice, David is particularly talking about how God treats those in covenant with him.

[23:27] How does God treat his people? A covenant is a way of defining, it's a way of establishing a relationship and then defining and giving it detail.

It's about making promises and commitments. It's like a contract but much bigger than a contract. Because so often contracts are about kind of minimum requirements, aren't they? Sort of reluctant parties and loopholes, right?

Both parties want something from the other and so they enter into a contract to sort of secure what they want, right? They're hoping they can bind each other with a contract so they can trust each other but they're in it for themselves.

But a covenant is more like a big, broad, open commitment where you're in it for the other. I will be yours and you will be mine. I will be yours and you will be mine.

Marriage is supposed to be like that, isn't it? And that's why it's so sullied when there's a prenup or something ridiculous. Marriage is not about who will do the dishes and how many dishes will they

do and if they don't do the dishes what will the consequences be?

[ 24 : 39 ] Or what will the law courts think about that? It's about wholest, boldest commitment. I will be yours and you will be mine. I will be for you and you will be for me.

That's why the tagline of the covenant in the Bible which is repeated many, many times in all the prophets it's so often I will be your God and you will be my people.

That is the promise that this sort of summary sentence that holds the whole Bible together. It's a story about God's determination, God's commitment to his people to save them so that they might belong to him in a sort of marriage.

I will be your God and you will be my people. And here David is saying that he knows for God's part God will treat his people with steadfast love and faithfulness.

God would never renege on his promises. God will be the perfect husband. Now there is one verse directed to the Lord in this section which is right at the very center of the section.

[ 25 : 48 ] It's verse 11. David says, For your name's sake O Lord pardon my guilt for it is great. And again without wanting to claim too much about the structure because I'm really not sure but I half suspect that this central verse is meant to sum up the major themes of this whole section.

See it's about God's character on the one hand signified here by referring to his name and it's about David and his guilt on the other. And the two are tied together beautifully here you see because David wants the world to know how forgiving how loving how good and upright God is.

David wants the world to know how great God is. David wants God to show off how great he is by forgiving David's great guilt by pardoning his great sin.

Now after this central verse David moves into the subject of fear. Because fear and humility go quite naturally together don't they? In fact I almost wonder if they're sort of two sides of the same coin.

One focused on God God is a consuming fire so we fear him. The other is focused on ourselves we are not so high and mighty and impressive as our sin would have us believe.

[ 27 : 07 ] So we need to humble ourselves. Maybe that's one way of putting it together there might be others but David moves you see from humility to fear. So verse 12 he asks who is the man who fears the Lord?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him and he makes known to them his covenant.

Let me just pick up on that last little bit in verse 14. Just one little detail here. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him. Did that strike you?

You might have a little footnote there saying that friendship could be translated secret counsel. The secret counsel of the Lord is for those who fear him. I think either translation is fine. It sort of helps give us a sense of what David's getting at here.

Do you want to be close to the Lord? Do you want to be in his inner circle? Do you want to be one of his confidants? David has been asking the Lord to teach him to share his thoughts with him thoughts that otherwise would be far too lofty for him to understand.

[ 28 : 28 ] So is that what you want? Do you want to be God's friend? If you want to be God's friend then fear him David says.

Now we might think that sounds a bit strange. What does friendship have to do with fear? How can the two go together? But they do. Intimacy with God is not the same thing as casualness with him. As taking him lightly. I was thinking about it actually during that last song we were singing, Behold our God. Who has given counsel to the Lord? Who can question any of his words?

Quoting from Job I think and God's frightening speech to Job. How dare you talk of me like that or whatever at the end of Job.

I think perhaps C.S. Lewis captured it best with his illustration of Jesus as a lion. The great lion Aslan. God is fierce and strong and untamable.

[ 29 : 33 ] When he speaks you don't interrupt. You listen. And yet he is warm and kind and good. His strength is always under the perfect control of his goodness.

So he doesn't lash out. He's not unpredictable. Fear is not the same as anxiety. I'm not anxious. Because you know like when I'm near a fire.

I'm not anxious of the consuming fire if I know it's kind of controlled. And God's fearsomeness is always controlled by his goodness. I don't need to be freaking out.

Anxious. But I do always take it seriously. I am afraid of it. I'm taking it seriously. So you see he's majestic. In every sense of that word he's kingly and beautiful.

He is awesome. There is something attractive and delightful about that while at the same time it inspires caution and care. Actually it's a bit like the kind of fear that children should have for their fathers.

[ 30 : 39 ] Their bad fathers obviously terrify their children in terrible ways. But then a good father will inspire a sense of fear in that sense of authority. You don't mess around.

You don't mistreat mum because you take dad so seriously. Which brings us to verse 15 and the final section of the psalm. David returns again to prayer and to many of the themes he began with. Now with renewed confidence to pray them. He's reflected on God's character and God's covenant, God's promises. Now David is looking as it were, watching expectantly for the Lord to act.

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. This combination of watching and praying is very important, isn't it?

Knowing God's character, we know that our prayers don't fall on deaf ears. We know that prayer really does change things. So we must look for answers to our prayers. Even as we continue to pray, David is looking for answers.

[ 31 : 50 ] He feels alone, surrounded by enemies. He needs the Lord to be with him and he needs protection. Now whatever David was going through here, it's not just about his sinfulness, is it?

It's also about these hateful enemies who surround him and in that context David wants God to judge his enemies and protect him. David wants God to recognize that he is behaving in integrity and uprightness.

He's not perfect, he's confessed his sins, but he is behaving in integrity and uprightness and he's waiting for salvation. And this is the same with us. God's people in every day and age long for salvation in at least two ways.

We want salvation from sin, but we also want salvation from sinners. And you'll notice in verse 22, David says, redeem Israel O God out of all his troubles.

Redeem Israel O God out of all his troubles. In other words, at the end, in the postscript as it were, David wants to broaden this psalm out to include all Israel and all his troubles.

[ 32 : 55 ] This is a psalm not just for David and his personal crisis, and it's not just about salvation from sin, forgiveness and so on, though that's at the heart of it, but it's about salvation from sinners too.

All enemies who would oppress God's people. It's important to get the order right here. We need salvation from sin first. Perhaps most especially as Gentiles.

We don't automatically get to be included in these kind of prayers of God's people. We would have been the enemies. Quite naturally. We need salvation from sin first, but that's not where salvation ends.

Now, it's just like the paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof. Do you remember him?

Now, when he comes in, Jesus forgives his sins first. But then he fixes his legs.

He healed his body. The great message of salvation in the Bible is about total salvation. Healing that starts within and you can be forgiven today. But ends, when Jesus returns, our bodies will be restored.

[ 34 : 10 ] Our whole world will be restored. We will no longer be plagued by sin in our hearts or sinful rulers over us or sin in those around us. Finally, we will be set free to live God's ways under a good king.

king. So, let's return to those questions we began with. We've had a look now at what King David did when he didn't know what to do. First, we must ask ourselves, what did our king do in times of crisis, in times of stress and struggle?

And at one level, he didn't need to do some of the things in Psalm 25, did he? He didn't need to confess his sin because he never sinned. And yet, he did take on our sin, didn't he?

He took on our guilt and our shame. He stepped into the place of sinners. In a sense, he stepped into this Psalm for us. He stepped into David's shoes. He stepped into our shoes.

And so, he found himself surrounded by enemies, fearing the shame of the cross. He humbled himself. He cried out to God in his loneliness and affliction. You could easily plant, as it were, many of these verses on the lips of Jesus, couldn't you?

[ 35 : 24 ] Didn't he say this in the Garden of Gethsemane? Verse 17, the troubles of my heart are enlarged. Bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive.

No, sorry. Verse 19, you'll have to skip that verse. Consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me. Oh, guard my soul and deliver me. Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. And of course, his integrity and uprightness did preserve him. He was heard.

Because he feared the Lord. He was raised from the dead. It's in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 7. In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death.

death. And he was heard. Because of his reverence. He wasn't asking to skip death, to sort of get around the death, but he was asking to get through it.

[ 36 : 27 ] To be raised on the other side. And he was heard because of his reverence. That is his godly fear. Fear would be a perfectly good translation of that word. So Jesus is the king of glory.

Who took on our sin and our guilt and our shame. only so that he might swallow it up and overcome death forever through his death and resurrection. And now we live on the other side of that mighty victory of King Jesus.

We can walk in newness of life. The kind of newness of life that David is praying for here. So, whatever 2024 holds for you, what do we do when we don't know what to do?

As individuals and couples and families, as a church and society. What we should pray. The first thing. And then we should reflect on God's character and his promises, his covenant with us.

The new covenant, established in the blood of Jesus. And then we should pray again. And watch for God to answer our prayers. David shows us here who to pray to and what to pray.

[ 37 : 38 ] He encourages us to trust Yahweh. Ask for forgiveness and guidance. Ask for mercy and steadfast love.

Let's humble ourselves and fear Yahweh. Ask for salvation and protection. Because when we do, we will find a God who will not let us be put to shame.

who will forgive us and guide us in his ways. Because he is good and upright. Full of steadfast love and faithfulness.

To all those in covenant with him. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we worship and adore you.

We marvel at your majesty. That you are a God so kind and merciful, full of steadfast love and faithfulness. Please impress the truth of your word upon our hearts this morning.

[ 38 : 49 ] Humble us. Forgive us our sins. As we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us in new ways of righteousness and goodness. Teach us your ways.

That we might bring honor to you, our Father. Save us. Save us from our sins. And keep us safe. Until we reach the celestial city and the new world.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, isn't it encouraging to be reminded from the psalms of God's steadfast love and faithfulness so that we can rely on every promise in his word?

So let's sing about that. Please stand. Amen. Amen. From the breaking of the dawn to the setting of the sun, I will stand on every promise of your word.

Words of power strong to say that will never pass away. I will stand on every promise of your word.

[ 40 : 39 ] For your covenant is sure, and on this I am secure. I can stand on every promise from your word.

When I stumble and I sin, condemnation pressing in, I will stand on every promise of your word.

You are faithful to forgive that in freedom I might live.

So I stand on every promise of your word. Built to win, a sense restored, you'll remember sins no more.

So I'll stand on every promise of your word. I will listen for your voice, and I'll stand on every promise of your word. When I'm faced with anguished choice, I will listen for your voice, and I'll stand on every promise of your word.

[ 42 : 04 ] I will listen for your word. I will listen for your word. And you will guide me with your hand, as I stand on every promise of your word.

And you've promised to complete every word. Every word begun in me.

So I'll stand on every promise of your word. Hope that leaves me on despair, hope that casts out every fear, graceful means, grace for all who will believe.

We will stand on every promise of your word. Grace sufficient. Grace sufficient, grace for me, grace for all who will believe.

We will stand on every promise of your word. Please have a seat.

[ 44 : 17 ] It's helpful to have a microphone.