

“To You, Lord, I Will Lift up my Soul”

Psalm 25:1-11

September 27, 2026 (Pen. 18-A)

St. Paul's Lutheran, North Freedom

To you, O LORD, I will lift up my soul. In you I have trusted, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame. Do not let my enemies triumph over me. All who hope in you will never be put to shame, but those who are treacherous for no reason will be put to shame.

Make known to me your ways, O LORD. Teach me your paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, because you are the God who saves me. In you I hope all day long. Remember, O LORD, your compassion and your mercy, for they are from eternity. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways. According to your mercy remember me, because of your goodness, O LORD.

Good and upright is the LORD. Therefore, he instructs sinners in the right way. He directs the humble to what is just, and he teaches the humble his way. All the ways of the LORD are mercy and truth for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

For the sake of your name, O LORD, you forgive my guilt, although it is great. (Ps. 25:1-11 EHV)

In the name of Jesus Christ, dear members of God's family:

“Need a lift?” Those are welcome words if your car's broken down and you're left stranded on the road. A neighbor or a friend comes by to pick you up; a mechanic with a tow truck arrives to lift your car and take it to where it can get repaired.

“Need a lift?” All of us need an emotional and a spiritual lift from time to time. It happens when we're down in the dumps, or when we're persecuted and harassed by enemies of Christ. It happens when we feel stuck in the quicksand of sin. There's only one place our souls can turn to get lifted up: To the Lord God. With David, let us also pray, **“To you, Lord, I Will Lift up my Soul.”**

King David of Israel faced many enemies in his lifetime: The Philistine giant Goliath and Philistine armies. Israel's King Saul who persecuted David. After David became king, there were numerous tribes and kingdoms who battled Israel and plotted against him. Even within his own family, David's son Absalom rebelled and usurped his kingdom. Is it any wonder that David prayed, “Do not let my enemies triumph over me”? “In you I have trusted, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame.” In other words, “Deliver me, Lord, and don't let me down when I trust in you!”

There are many enemies as well that we face in this world who try to get us down and keep us down. It starts with Satan, the old evil foe who tries everything he can to separate us from God and his love. There are Satan's allies in this world, enemies of the church that include modern philosophy and anti-Christian teachings, those who promote immoral, ungodly lifestyles, those who tempt us with worldly treasures and pleasures and want to get us to follow the world instead of following the Lord. Lord, do not let those enemies triumph over us! Deliver us, and don't let us be put to shame!

But David knew that all “who hope in you will never be put to shame.” Rather, it is “those who are treacherous for no reason” who will be “put to shame.” So when we're tested severely by Satan, when we're persecuted and ridiculed by the world, lift your soul up to the Lord. He is there to deliver you from all enemies. Though we may have to endure trials for a time, though we will still be wrestling with Satan and his worldly followers, continue to trust in the Lord to lift you up and deliver you from all enemies, in his own time, and in his own way.

But another thing that has us down is the enemy within ourselves, our own sinful nature. This too was on David's mind. He prayed, "Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways." We too think back to past sins we've done, sometimes back when we were kids, and we still kick ourselves: How could I have done such a foolish thing, when I got in with the wrong crowd and broke God's laws, when I cheated on a test or hurt people with hateful words? And sometimes it's not just the sins of our youth, but recent rebellious ways that plague our consciences. We know that any sin, intentional or not, counts against us and must be punished by God. "The soul who sins is the one who will die" we heard God say today in Ezekiel 18:4. No wonder we pray, "Don't remember my sins, my rebellious ways! Erase them from your memory, Lord; forgive, and forget my sins!"

Instead of remembering our sins, we pray, "Remember, O LORD, your compassion and your mercy, for they are from eternity." The Lord's compassion is his deep, heart-felt love for the creatures he made in his image, for us human beings. From eternity he had a plan to rescue and redeem us from sin. It stems from his mercy, his love that pities us in our lost, sinful state, his faithful love that shows grace, his undeserved love. Though the Lord is a holy, just God who must punish sin, he is also a God who loves the sinner and is moved to lift us up and wipe away our sins.

David wrote confidently, "For the sake of your name, O LORD, you forgive my guilt, although it is great." After David committed the great sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah, he confessed his sin and repented, and was told by the prophet Nathan, "The Lord himself has put away your sin. You will not die" (2 Sam. 12:13). How that lifted David up! The Lord also lifts up our souls by forgiving us our sins. How do we know they're forgiven? Look to David's great descendant, Jesus. The apostle John declared, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin...If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:7b,9). Jesus paid for all your sins with his blood shed on the cross. That's a fact! You are forgiven!

Now that the Lord has lifted up our souls, we pray that he will keep us lifted up. This led David to pray, "Make known to me your ways, O LORD. Teach me your paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, because you are the God who saves me." We know that if we kept walking our own ways, we'd go right back down to the mire and quicksand of sin that leads to eternal death. How we need to know God's ways and paths that are marked out for us! Lord, teach us in the ways we should go, for your ways are what's best for us.

Yes, "Good and upright is the LORD. Therefore he instructs sinners in the right way. He directs the humble to what is just, and he teaches the humble his way." You and I are sinners who've been humbled by his Word, the law that points out our sin, the gospel that shows us our Savior. We humble ourselves, but the Lord lifts us up with his Word. He instructs us to do what is just and right so that we can thank him for forgiving us, with new, Christ-filled lives. What motivation Jesus gives us and teaches us! We're like the student that got a passing grade, even though he deserves an F. He loves his teacher who gives him a second chance and learns more. So, dear Lord, teach us to learn from our mistakes and live in love and mercy toward others.

Still down in the dumps? Lift up your soul! The Lord has delivered you, forgiven you, and now teaches you, in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.