

September 30, 2018 In God We Trust Pt. 6 Psalm 27:11-12

It has always made absolute sense to me, that Presbyterian Christians have a special place in their hearts, their minds and their souls, for the Old Testament writings we call the Book of Psalms. We believe very strongly that word of wisdom that all Scripture is inspired by God. We also know, and knowledge is a different thing from belief, that the Psalms were written by a believer, to be shared with believers, that they might praise God no matter what their circumstances might be. Most of the Psalms (if not all of them) were written by David the King of Israel, the slayer of Goliath. We remember David as both, a man of faith, and as God's balladeer. The Psalms are praise songs first of all, a tradition of Israel that struck a keen note in the hearts of "reformed Christians".

"Teach me your way O Lord," begins verse 11. This is the Christian experience: that our spiritual development, our growth in faith occurs at the hand of none other than the Lord our God who has redeemed us. As disciples of Jesus, a son of David's line, the faithful confess our dependence on the continuing work of God the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us and to teach us. The life of faith is a course in understanding the when, where, who and how of things that happen. We anticipate and plead our dependence on God's gifts of insight, learning by way of the word and whispering of the Holy Spirit as we walk and often stumble through life.

In fact for us as believers it is almost impossible to understand how people without the gift of faith manage. Some people criticize that faith in the living God is a crutch, insinuating that we are weak. My reply, is that I am very weak. I need a pair of crutches. If faith is weakness, I am very lame. And grateful for the reality. I refuse to deny the fact. With the words of the great hymn I sing, "I need thee every hour/ most gracious Lord/ I need thee, O I need thee!" My only regret is that it took me so long to come to my senses and accept the grace of God for the whole of my life.

"Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path." The highways of Ontario are a lesson in dealing with a roadway that continually twists and turns, that rises and falls. I find that driving the 401 in the darkness is a challenge. There are few if any long straight stretches. The driver, especially after dark, must continually concentrate on the road ahead in order to adjust to the ever changing route. And that is the sentiment of David here. If there is one thing of which he grows weary it is the work of attending to the path before him so that he does not lose his way or come to everlasting harm. The temptation to let the mind wander. To fail to continually pay attention to the details of what is happening. His prayer for a straight path, is a prayer for mercy. It is not a great leap to see here something of our resistance to constant change. "Relief, O Lord give me relief from the endless need to adjust and change." And yet with God's help, aware of God's presence what change cannot be borne?

In verse 12, David prays that the Lord God not turn him over to the will of his enemies, the people and forces that sap his energy and threaten his survival. One of the insights I see in this 12th verse is that we are indeed kin to David. The last thing we want to have happen, is that we tumble through life at the whim of others, or the invisible forces of chance. "I need thee every hour;/ Teach me Thy will/And Thy rich promises/ In me, fulfill./ I need Thee, O I need Thee." This is the cry, this is the prayer of people who trust in the Lord who redeems.

Let us pray;

O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter in the stormy blast, and our eternal home. So many of the hymns we sing Lord are inspired by phrases and words we find in the Psalms. We confess our need of YOUR Spirit's continued presence in our lives. Help us to face all that comes our way, in the awareness that your grace is the umbrella over all of our days and all of our times. In Jesus name we pray. Amen