

If you have a Bible with you, go ahead and turn to chapter 125 of the book of Psalms. We are going to take a break from Esther this morning and we will return to Esther 7 next Sunday. I just got back yesterday from celebrating my wife and I ten year anniversary. We went a cruise without the children which was great. Our first time really being with out them since Calvin was born. The only downside of this trip was sea sickness. I'd heard about it, but I don't normally get motion sickness so I was not terribly worried about it. But experiencing it was weird.

And it is a bizarre feeling on a boat that big. Because you feel normal. We were watching shows, eating a lot, and relaxing in the sun. But you could feel the subtle movements of the boat under your feet. And it just made it feel strange and uneasy. And because I am me, I did not just want to take some medication I wanted to study it and figure out how it works. What happens is that your eyes, ears, and body are sending conflicting messages to your brain. Part of your body thinks you are sitting still eating lots of donuts. Another part can tell that you are hurtling through the ocean. And your mind does not know how to handle it. Those conflicting messages make it freak out and you start to get sick.

Now what does any of that have to do with Psalms 125? Well as I read about sea sickness it reminded me a lot about life as a Christian. We have what we believe and know to be true about God and His goodness. But then when we look out at the world it can feel uneasy and we can feel shaky. Like the ground is not level under our feet. Things do not quite seem to match up.

Our Psalm this morning is here to teach us how we can stay steady. How we can keep our feet sure in an unsure world. How we can stay rooted in Jesus. If you have your Bible, turn with me to Psalm 125.

### **I. Trusting God keeps our feet (secure) (v. 1-2).**

By keeping our feet secure I mean it holds us firm in place.

He keeps our feet from slipping.

He holds us up when life threatens to knock us down.

It is the image of God holding us up and life shifts around us.

When it tries to knock us down.

And the only way to have this security is by trusting in God.

**"Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever."**

First, the Psalm describes what trusting in God is like.

Those who do this.

Those who continue to put their trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion.

Those who are trusting in the Lord now not just in the past.

Because this does not refer to those who trust God once.

It is not just those who became Jewish and were circumcised.

**"Those who trust"** means those who are continually trusting.

Who were still children of God by faith and heart not just heritage.

Trust is more than a one time thing.

Trusting in God is not a decision we make when we become Christians and then never do it again.

We make a decision in Baptism to publicly become a Christian.

And then daily we live out our baptismal vows and our profession of faith.

Trusting in God is a daily decision.

It is something we continue to have to do.

We do not just trust Christ with our salvation and what will happen to us after we die.

We have to decide to trust Him with this morning.

We have to decide to trust Him with our day today.

At every moment of each day we have a choice.

Will we continue to trust God or not?

It may help to not think of it as a decision made moment by moment.

Maybe that will only fill you with shame as you see all the times you failed.

When you look at the totality of your day and your life,

Could you be described as someone who is trusting in the Lord?

Our lives should be categorized by trust and faith.

That we could be called those who trust in the Lord.

And when we make this choice.  
When we daily and hourly trust and keep our faith in Jesus,  
When we are people who trust in the Lord.  
He keeps our feet secure.

Mount Zion here is a symbolic reference to Jerusalem.  
It is the place where God dwells.  
It is a more general reference to the temple and God's presence.  
This is why Mt. Zion and Jerusalem are parallel to each other in these two verses.

Remember as well that this is an ascent Psalm.  
It is a song and a prayer pilgrims would sing and pray as they journeyed towards Jerusalem during the year.  
On their way to the temple this Psalm would be on their lips.  
They would sing it as they saw Jerusalem in the distance and as they climbed Mt. Zion itself.

When we trust in God, He keeps us secure.  
**"which cannot be shaken but endures forever."**  
We are like a mountain.  
A mountain that cannot be moved.

Have you ever tried to move a mountain?  
You ever went out to the Wichita Mountains and tried to push one over?  
Maybe just scoot it a little bit so you could have a better view.  
You could try all you would like.  
Maybe go try it this afternoon if you want.

There is no mountain you could move.  
The mountains are right where God made them.  
And they will stay there until Jesus returns.  
They endure.

Especially to the Israelites, mountains were symbolic of permanence and power.

What God is telling His people.  
What God is telling us,  
is that He will keep our feet sure.  
Nothing will be able to move us.

He will keep us on solid ground the same way He holds the mountains in place.

He will hold you in place as firm as the Rocky Mountains or the Himalayans.

No matter what troubles come.

No matter what circumstances you find yourself in.

No matter how hard things are.

No matter the suffering you find yourself in.

If you continue to trust God, He will keep your feet sure.

Unfortunately, some of us are less like mountains and more like grass.

We are blown too and fro by the wind.

It does not take much to move us.

As soon as we face difficulties in life.

As soon as the ground gets a little wobbly under our feet,

We panic.

We stop praying and think God has abandoned us.

Some people get blown off as soon as they read the news that day.

Or as soon as some minor suffering comes into their life.

But it does not have to be this way.

If we trust.

If we have faith, He will keep our feet.

He will allow us to stand strong in our faith.

We can be like the house built on a firm foundation.

Instead of the house built on sand.

**"As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore."**

As the pilgrims would sing this Psalm ascending towards Jerusalem, They would see the mountains and hills surrounding the city. They could look with their own eyes and see them in front of them. They could repeat and know, God surrounded like just like those mountains.

Because the mountains were symbols of safety.  
You built a city on top of mountains.  
You built it surrounded by mountains.  
Because it made it harder for your enemies to come attack you.  
It was a natural barrier and form of protection.  
But God is telling them, He surrounds them.

And does not just surround them in this moment.  
God will surround His people from that moment on and forever more.  
God would surround and protect His people even when they journeyed home away from the city.  
God would protect His people even when they went into exile as the city burned.  
God would protect his people even as they are now the church and the gentiles.  
God still surrounds us.  
God still keeps our feet sure.

When it says God surrounds you, it means everywhere you go God is.  
He is before you and behind you.  
Whatever decision you make in your life, whether you go this way or that way, God is already there.  
Nothing can get past Him that He doesn't know about.  
He watches over you.  
He can keep your feet secure.

We are not shaken because of the strength of our faith, but the strength of our God.

He holds us still.

He holds us safe.

We are not held fast by our incredible faith.

We are not held fast by the strength of our legs.

Nor by how long we have walked with Jesus.

The only thing that holds us safe, is Christ.

## **II. Even when (evil) tries to shake us (v. 3).**

My children love this Psalm.

It is one of their favorites and both Grant and Calvin have it memorized.

Most nights they want to recite this chapter again together.

I have lost count of how many times I have said this Psalm.

But this is one of the verses I have had to meditate the most on.

Most nights it is the verse that stands out to me.

It almost seems out of place at first.

It took me several months of repetition before I could start to place it.

Before I could understand what God was getting at and why it was included.

Because the second part of the verse sounded strange to me.

At its heart, this verse means the presence of wickedness in our world shakes us.

It causes us to doubt and it challenges us.

And if we are not careful, it will lead our hands to do evil.

God is faithful all the time.

God is good, all the time.

God is worthy of our trust and our faith, all of the time.

But a lot of the time it might feel like it.

We are tempted to believe God has stepped out.

The enemy whispers in our ears that the inmates are running the asylum.

This is when we are tempted to not trust.

When the wickedness of the world comes to shake us.

Verse 3, **"The scepter of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the righteous, for then the righteous might use their hands to do evil."**

This is our primary temptation.

We see the wickedness in the world and it makes us want to sin.

The scepter of the wicked is not just the presence of evil.

It actually refers to the reign of evil.

It means that wickedness is in charge of the land.

The rulers and leaders are sinful.

They are no longer the righteous, but wicked.

Remember part of motion sickness is that your brain can't process the conflicting signals that are being sent.

So it makes you sick as your body can't handle it.

This happens to us spiritually.

Our bodies and hearts feel conflicting messages.

We believe God is in control.

We are told and promised God will keep us from being shaken.

But when we look at the horizon, all we see is sin.

We see wickedness running rampant.

We see churches giving way to the culture.

We see churches compromising from their mission.

We see churches abandon the gospel for hate or their favorite side issue.

We see the world give greater way to sin.

What is evil is now celebrated and the way of Christ is old news.

**"for then the righteous might use their hands to do evil."**

We are tempted to do this.

The triumph of evil tempts us to sin.

Part of it is that we are tempted to go along with the evil we see.

Everyone is doing it so it must be right.

Maybe the gospel and the Bible need updating.

Maybe the Bible really is not trust worthy.

Maybe we should let the morality of today hold sway instead of all those old ideas.

The wickedness of the world makes our hands want to do evil.

But it also tempts us another way.

We see the wickedness reign so much, that we want to do something.

We start to think we need to take matters into our own hands.

We think that we need to do whatever it takes to bring God's kingdom into the world.

Maybe even if those things require sin.

This is the same thing that motivated the crusades.

Jerusalem and the holy land were conquered by Muslims.

People who worshipped a different god.

They claimed the holy city for themselves and their god.

And the temptation many in the church gave into was that the proper response was to try to kill them all.

All throughout the Old Testament, failure and defeat meant the people of God needed to repent.

But instead they wanted to do evil.

We fall into that same temptation.

You see it when nations, denominations, churches, or any place falls into wickedness.

The temptation is to give up.

To stop doing the right thing the right way because it "isn't working."

Christians resort to unChristian tactics.

To unChristian ways.

And they act in ways contrary to the gospel.

And contrary to what Jesus teaches us.

I see this especially in churches and denominations.



A pastor sees a church has been doing things the wrong way.  
Maybe they even have had ungodly leaders.  
So instead of preaching boldly and trying to pastor.  
Instead of calling people towards the way they should go.  
He starts to politic, or manipulate and fight.  
Because it's too important.  
So a little sin is okay.

Or denominations.  
Just watch during almost any national denominational meeting.  
There will always be at least some sin.  
Someone will believe their issue is so important, and sometimes it is.  
And they will begin slandering, lying, and doing whatever it takes to save  
their denomination.  
Because the scepter of the wicked has tempted their hands to do evil.

I read an article recently from a prominent Christian journal.  
And this is an orthodox, theologically and politically conservative journal.  
And this conservative Christian author was arguing that because our  
political climate has become so wicked,  
The power of evil has run unchecked,  
the sermon on the mount no longer applies.  
The internet is too sinful we cannot abide by God's commands for how we  
speak.  
We don't need to love our enemies anymore and we can say whatever we  
want about them.

I couldn't believe what I was reading.  
What foolishness.  
But we can all understand it.  
Because we have all slipped and fallen here.  
We see wickedness and our hands are tempted to evil.  
But we cannot allow it.  
We cannot normalize it.

We cannot say that sin is fine as long as you are sinning against someone really sinful.

Or at least more sinful than we are.

Ultimately, what evil does is tempt us not to trust.

Instead of trusting in God, we trust in ourselves.

We put our faith in chariots and horses instead of God to deliver.

We put our faith in politicians or sinful characters, instead of the kingdom of heaven.

But remember what this verse is.

It is a reminder that we should trust God.

Trust Him even when we feel faint.

Because evil will come, but it will not remain forever.

Look at the beginning again.

The power of the wicked will not remain.

It will not rest here forever.

It is here.

It is here now.

It will probably be here a while.

It may even stay during most of our lifetimes.

But it will not stay here forever.

And its presence now does not have to shake us.

Sometimes I get tired, angry, or just feel like I am losing my mind when I am parenting my children.

And there are times I just have to walk away because I need a break.

That way I can come back and be a better parent.

God never has to do that.

God never needs a break from you.

God never steps away from the world because we are all acting crazy and He needs to blow off some steam.

God does not take sick days.

God does not take a break.  
Evil is not here because God has gone.  
He is still in control.  
He is still here.  
We don't need to take vengeance into our own hands.  
We can trust Him.

### **III. Because we can trust God's (justice) (v. 4-5).**

Now these verses are a prayer.  
It is clear and verses four and five that they are not simply praises but prayers.  
It is asking God to fulfill his promises.  
It is asking God to act according to his character.

One thing they tell you do when you are experiencing motion sickness.  
You need to find something in the distance or horizon.  
You find something constant and unmoving, and you focus on it.

We can do something similar here.  
As the world pushes us.  
As the ground feels unstable under your feet.  
Look to the heavens.  
Fix your eyes on Jesus.  
And your beholding of Him will hold you.

And one part of Christ will keep us secure.  
We can look and trust in God's justice.  
Verse 4, **"Lord, do good to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart."**

At first, you could read this as if it was an arrogant prayer.  
As if it was asking God to give the holy and everything that they deserve which is me.  
But that's not what this is.

Because we know the only way to be truly good is Jesus.  
The Scriptures remind us none of us can be good.  
Our hearts are infected and tainted by sin.  
The only way to escape is Jesus.  
We have to accept and trust in Him.  
And if we do this, then His goodness and His uprightness is credited to our account.  
Then we can be made righteous and good.  
Not because of what we have done, but because of Christ's death and resurrection.

You can see the gospel here.  
But really this is a prayer would help the righteous.  
It is just generally referring to believers.  
Those were faithfully trying to follow after God.  
Those who were doing the good and the righteous thing.  
Those who have trust in the Lord with all of their heart and strength would be rewarded.

God would do good to them.  
All of us can look around and see that God has done good and God has blessed those who are not good.  
This is a part of the temptation that we just talked about.  
This is a prayer of faith that God would reward those who are trying to follow Him.  
The prayer is that God would see them.

Not just those who go through the motions or who have the appearance of goodness.  
But God would do good for those who are upright and heart.  
Those whose hearts are following after God.  
The true believers not just the pretenders.  
Not just those who are going through the motions.

Verse 5, **"But those who turn to crooked ways the Lord will banish with the evildoers."**

It is also a warning in the prayer judgment and verse five  
The warning is that those who are turning to crooked ways.  
Those who have been following after God.  
Those who have been walking on the path of righteousness.  
Those who have been heading towards Jerusalem.  
But they saw the wicked and the evil and were shaken.  
And they turned and repented of their unrighteousness, but of their  
righteousness.

Those who turn away from God.  
Those who abandon the way of Christ, for the way of death.  
They will face the same consequences as the wicked.  
They will be cast out with the unbelievers.

This is my children's favorite part of the Psalm.  
They get super into it and it's probably how I read it.  
I start getting quiet in verse 5 and read it slowly.

**"But those who turn to crooked ways..."**

Then I slow down further.

**"The Lord... Will....."**

And then I yell banish as loud as I can.

It always makes them laugh and delight.  
And it might sound strange.  
I wondered if it was right to delight in the banishment of the wicked.  
There is certainly a wrong way to celebrate the wicked being punished.  
But I think there is something good and pure.  
Not just because I am hilarious and make them laugh.  
Because whether they know it or not, they are delighting in God's justice.  
In the hope that He will make all things right.  
The evil will be cast away.  
And this brings them comfort.

It should comfort us to.

Because it means every act of wickedness and evil will be answered for.

From the largest,

Like the man who abused my father, who never faced a second of justice.

The murderer who was never caught.

Or the rapist who got off easy because no one believed the woman.

The terrorists, the war criminals, and the tyrants.

They will all stand before God one day and face justice.

Not only the large acts, but the small as well.

The small acts of wickedness and evil people think they get away with daily.

Like when people wait until the last second to merge in traffic.

So they don't have to wait long, but it makes it worse for everyone else.

The people who used God's name as a curse.

Those who curse and lied about others and nothing seemed to happen.

Every act of sin will be dealt with when Jesus returns.

When I find myself in these moments,

When I see someone sinning, even when it is small and it angers me.

Or it tempts me to do sin myself in order to make them face justice.

In those moments, I remind myself.

God sees.

God knows what is happening.

God is keeping account.

And God will banish the evildoers.

Every moment will be answered for.

And this should bring us comfort when we think we see wickedness triumph.

But the reverse is true as well.

Our faith in Jesus will be rewarded.

From the largest acts of faith.

The time you shared the gospel with someone.

When you sold what you had and gave sacrificially to the poor and needy.

To the very small.

When you held your tongue, even though you wanted to gossip.

When you read God's Word, even though you didn't want to.

When you sang a song of worship, even though you don't like it much.

Every single moment of ordinary obedience in faith will be rewarded by God.

This should keep our feet secure.

It should help us to trust.

Even when we want to do anything but.

**"Peace be on Israel."**

This is a prayer for peace.

Not just a prayer for a lack of war.

This is a prayer for the return of shalom.

The return of the peace mankind had in the garden of Eden.

The peace that comes from an absence of sin.

The kind of peace only Jesus can bring us.

We all are tempted and fall.

But the beauty is that Jesus picks us up again.

The gospel offers us grace upon grace.

You can escape all the punishment that is coming for the wicked.

All the justice you and I deserve for our every act of sin and rebellion.

We can escape and find forgiveness, if we throw ourselves at the foot of the cross and ask for mercy.

Because Jesus nailed our every sin to the cross.

He bore the weight of it on His shoulders.

Come to Him now for grace, before He comes later in judgment.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. [Summary] Trusting God keeps our feet secure even when evil tries to shake us because we can trust God's justice.
2. [Challenge] We can have sure feet in an unsure world. No matter how much the storm rages around us. Because Christ holds us. Christ sustains us. One of the earliest images of the church in Christian art was a boat. Early churches were even designed and built to resemble ships. Because in the storms and unsureness of life, Christ is the one who keeps us safe. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Keep your feet rooted in Jesus. Continue to trust in Jesus every day. And He will keep your feet sure in an unsure world.