

LOST IN THE WOODS

Pastor Matthew Ude

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Psalms 25:1-10 To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me. ³ Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. ⁴ Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. ⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You *are* the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day. ⁶ Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they *are* from of old. ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD. ⁸ Good and upright *is* the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way. ⁹ The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way. ¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.

*Lost in the Woods — Jesus is the Way Out
The Path of Law, Love, and Life*

I was once lost in the woods. I had taken my sister's kids to the playground. To get there, you had to follow a path through a small, wooded area. As it began to get dark, I tried to take the kids back home, but I couldn't find the path again. We ended up back at the playground repeatedly. Ethan, in particular, was scared and very upset. Finally, I had to call my sister, who drove over to pick us all up.

Without God in our lives, this world can feel just as confusing. We can easily get lost in the woods—trying to find our way through, but ending up at the same place. We keep repeating the same sins and mistakes.

This is why the Psalmist prays that the Lord would reveal His path—the right path. Without the light of the Lord's Word, we have no hope of making it through or of finding the correct way. Lost in the woods, unable to see the path, he prays that the Lord would light the way.

This prayer is repeated throughout the Psalms. The very first Psalm contrasts two paths—the path of the righteous and the path of the ungodly. Jesus also repeats that He is the Way and the Light. This prayer should be a daily part of our lives: "*Show me Your ways; teach me Your path.*"

But what does the Psalmist truly mean? What is he really asking to see? When we pray this simple prayer, what are we asking for? And what does the Lord promise to show us?

We often think this phrase means asking for help to better understand God's law. However, it is clear that the Psalmist has something deeper and more important in mind than just understanding God's law.

When we pray, "Show me Your ways," we are asking the Lord to help us understand His law, His love, and His plan for our lives.

His Law

The first and most obvious meaning is that the Lord would teach us His law. He would guide us in what is right and wrong, what to do and not to do, what to say and not to say.

Psalm 25:9:

"The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way."

We won't reach heaven merely by learning to keep God's law, but we can avoid shame here on earth.

"Let me not be ashamed," the Psalmist says in verse 2.

When we sin against God's law, we are filled with shame—or at least we should be. Out of shame, we often try to hide our sins, which leads to more sin. We become easy targets for blackmail or manipulation. Our relationships are damaged, even if no one else finds out. The guilt creates a divide between us and those we've wronged.

Remember what happened to Adam and Eve: when they sinned, they were filled with shame. Their relationship with God was broken, and they hid from Him. They also turned against each other.

The only way to break this cycle is to admit our guilt and rejoice in Jesus' forgiveness.

Learn to follow the Lord's path, and you won't need to be ashamed in the first place. When you do fail, instead of covering it up, trust in the Lord's forgiveness.

His Love

The Lord's path isn't only the path He wants us to walk; it is also the path He Himself walks. To be shown the Lord's way is to see more clearly who He is. It means walking with Him, just as the Emmaus disciples and Enoch did. In doing so, we learn that the Lord embodies mercy and truth. This is something the Psalmist speaks about:

Psalm 25:6:

"Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses."

Being shown the Lord's path means knowing how He Himself walks—to understand His mercy and kindness better.

In Exodus 33, Moses prays that the Lord might "make known to me Your way, so that I may know You." The Lord responds by promising, *"My goodness will pass before you."*

Learning the Lord's path isn't only about His law but also about understanding the path of Jesus. His path lead to Jerusalem, to the cross, to the grave, and out again. The path of the Lord is the path of His goodness. To know His way is to understand His love that He walked for us.

Psalm 25:10:

"All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth."

The Psalmist admits that "all His paths are mercy." Sometimes God's actions are clearly merciful and good. Other times, it's more challenging for us to see how they are merciful—for example, what God did with Job, or when we suffer, or when a loved one dies. We might question God's punishment of the wicked or His decision not to punish others. We might wonder how it can be merciful for God to send someone to hell. How can these things be merciful?

The Psalmist holds to the faith that even these things are manifestations of God's goodness and mercy, even if we don't immediately understand how. We see Jesus, who went to the cross for our sins—His sacrifice reveals the depth of God's mercy and love. That is why we trust that even when we can't comprehend God's actions, they are ultimately rooted in His mercy and goodness.

My Life

Finally, to be shown the Lord's way could also mean understanding His plans for our lives—seeing the path He has laid out for us. Of course, God usually does not reveal this in detail.

After a game, you can watch highlights online—big plays, key moments. We might wish for a similar highlight reel of our lives. But God doesn't give us a play-by-play. Instead, He tells us where our journey will end. We may not know the path, but we do know the destination. He offers certain promises about our future, and knowing these promises can help us face the future with confidence, trusting in His plan.

The Psalmist says:

Verse 3: *"No one who waits on You will be ashamed."*

Verse 5: *"You are the God of my salvation."*

The tone of the Psalm suggests the Psalmist is suffering. He may be praying for understanding, asking why the Lord allows certain trials, and when they will end. While God might not reveal all the reasons, He does promise that the end result is love and life.

1 Corinthians 2:9 reminds us:

"But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'"

Genesis 50:20 also encourages us:

"You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good—in order to bring it about, as it is this day, to save many people alive."

We don't always know what lies ahead around the bend of our life, but we know what is at the end:

Psalm 23:6: *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

It's easy to get lost in the woods. But Jesus has revealed the way through. When we walk in His commandments, we will not be ashamed. Even when we are ashamed of our sins, walking with Him calms our fears and assures us of His love. His path for us leads through death into eternal life.