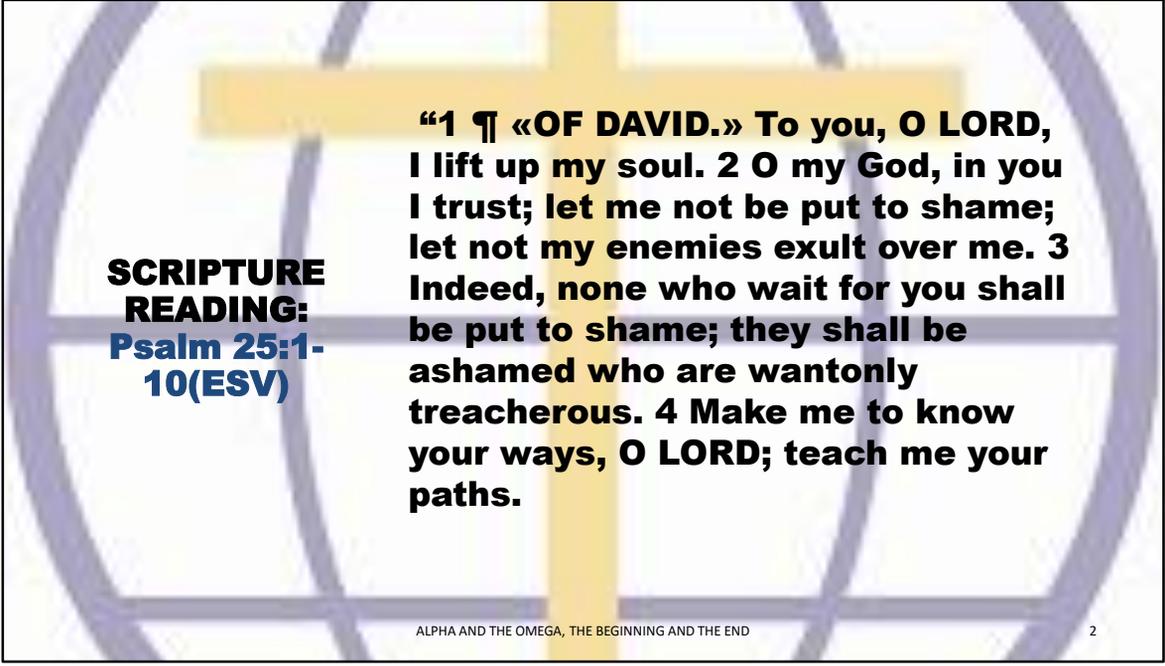


ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

**Grace Communion International
Minister: Eric Vautour**

Date: July 14, 2019



**SCRIPTURE
READING:
Psalm 25:1-
10(ESV)**

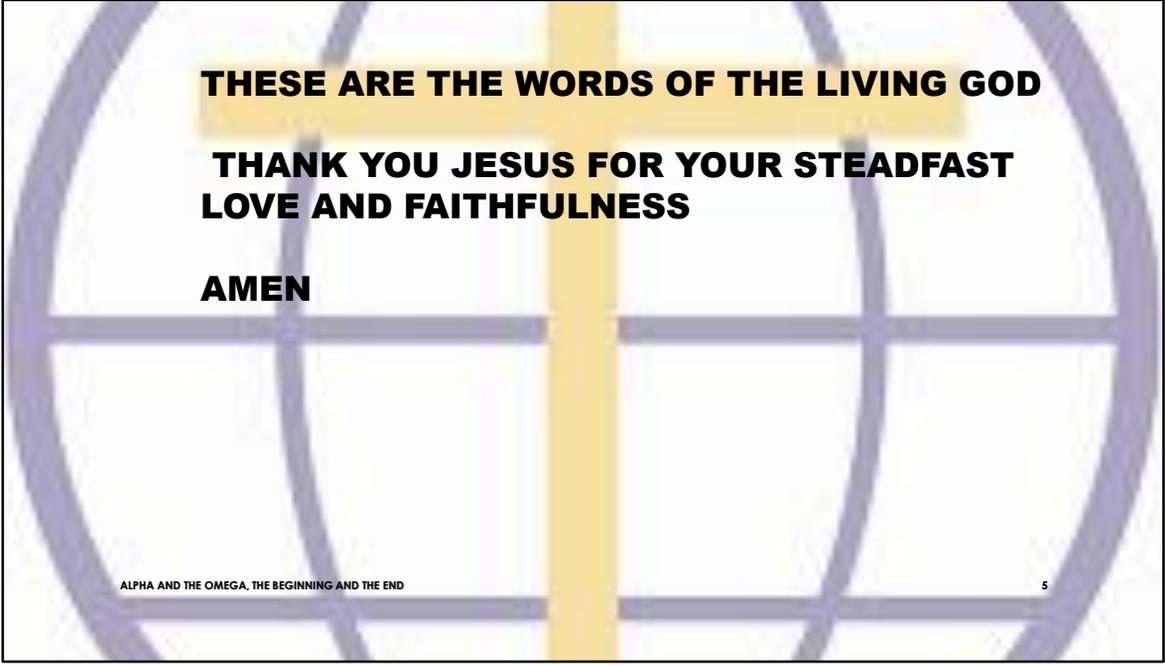
“1 ¶ «OF DAVID.» To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. 3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. 4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.



5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. 6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7 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!



8 ¶ Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. 10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.” (Ps 25:1-10 ESV)



THESE ARE THE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD

**THANK YOU JESUS FOR YOUR STEADFAST
LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS**

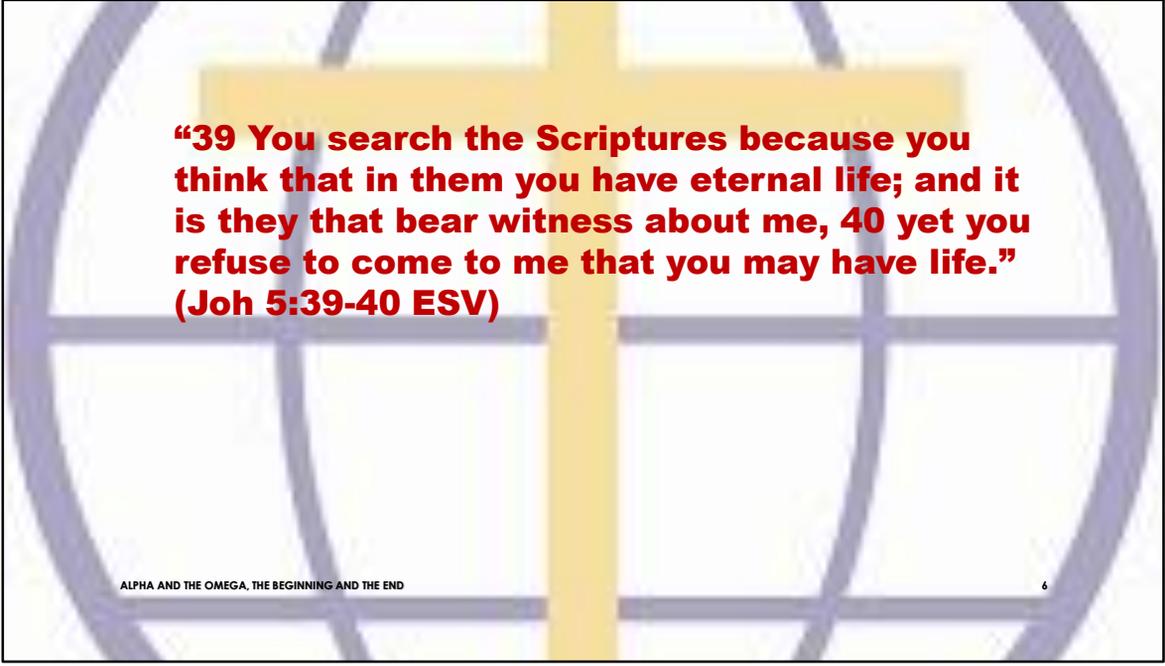
AMEN

ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

5

During today's sermon, we are going to consider Psalm 25 and the response of David to the goodness of God.

As we consider this Psalm, it is important to remember the words of Jesus and what he said about the Old Testament Scriptures. (Next slide)



**“39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.”
(Joh 5:39-40 ESV)**

ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

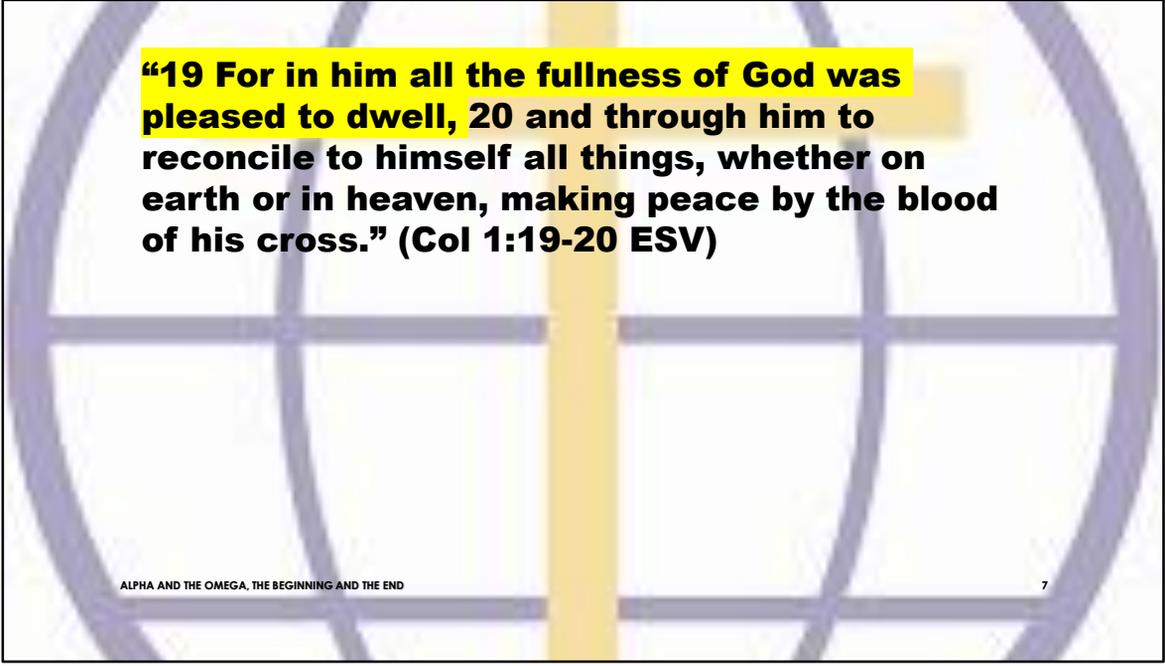
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It is very important to remember that Jesus is God, a member of the one triune God. This means that God is one in three distinct persons.

Jesus God accepted to be incarnate in our flesh to fully live as a human being. Prior to becoming a human being, prior to his incarnation, Jesus was spirit completely different from who we are. Now, after his incarnation, his life on earth, his crucifixion, his resurrection and a his ascension to heaven, he is both God and man in his one person.

From eternity, Jesus lived in complete love with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Words that describes this union is are coinherence or interpenetration. In other words, God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit abide in one another being one yet retaining their distinctness.

The apostle Paul, in Colossians writes the following about Jesus (Next slide)



“19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (Col 1:19-20 ESV)

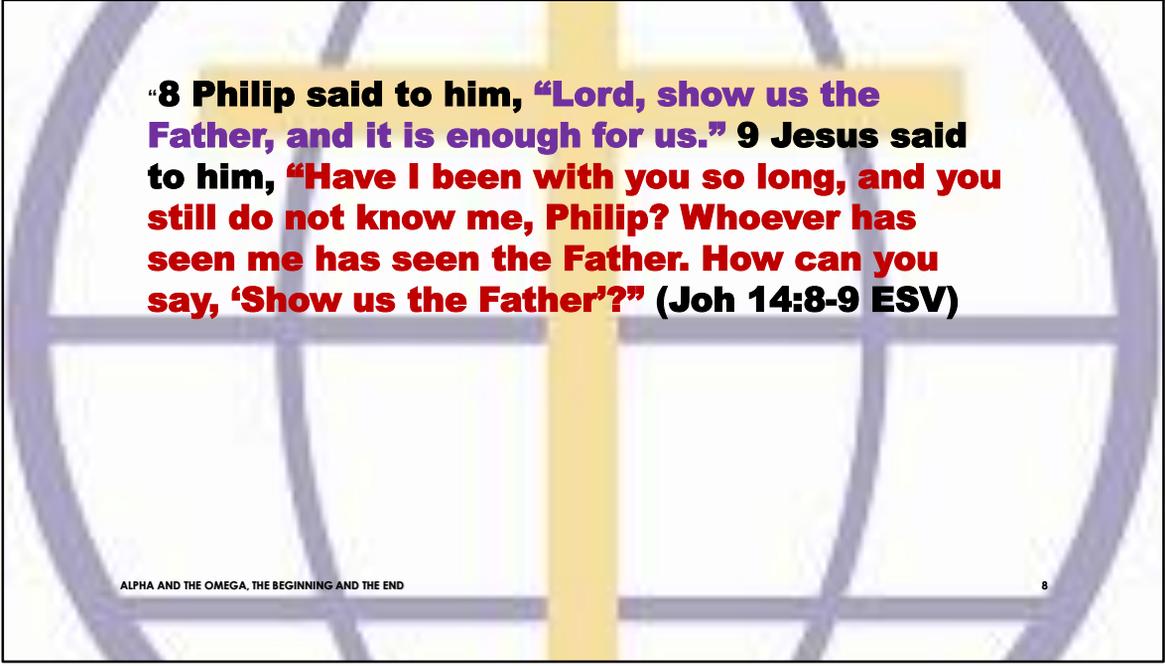
ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

7

The apostle John tells us that he had the Holy Spirit without measure.

It's also important to know that Jesus is our home. He is our life. As member of his church through grace and faith, his body, he dwells in us and we dwell in him. There is a mutual indwelling. (John 15)

God loves us profoundly and unconditionally. He died for us over 2000 years ago when all of humanity was in captivity to sin and death. It is important to remember the words of Jesus when he said, “when we see him, we see the Father.” (next slide)



“8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (Joh 14:8-9 ESV)

Let us now go to Psalm 25.



“1 ¶ «OF DAVID.» To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. 3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.” (Ps 25:1-3 ESV)

ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

9

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters. Each of the 22 verses in the Psalm begins with one letter of the Hebrew alphabet in sequence, the first letter being **alef** and the last letter being **tav**.

David lifts up his soul to God in whom he places his ultimate trust. Jesus is the only one who can save us from eternal death and give us eternal life. We trust in him and in him alone. Just like David, we are to look away from ourselves and look to God who is completely faithful. Our faith is in the faithfulness of Jesus for our salvation.

We realize, as God’s people, that apart from Jesus, we do not have eternal life within us. The only life that all human beings had prior to the coming of Jesus was a physical and terminal life.

When Jesus died and was resurrected, he included all humanity because he died for all and was resurrected for all. Humanity is no longer defined by the first Adam but by the last Adam as we read in **1 Corinthians 15**. We read that in Adam all die so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (**Verse 22**). Obviously, Jesus having died for all, he has also made provision for all to be saved.

Will all be saved? The Bible is clear that those who willingly and knowingly reject Jesus forfeit eternal life because they choose to reject Jesus.

As members of the body of Christ, as part of his church, Christ's life and salvation become reality for us. We come to know God so that we can proclaim his goodness as a church.

Knowing Jesus, like David, we lift up our soul because we trust completely in God, in Jesus. We know God is loving. We know his will is perfect for us.

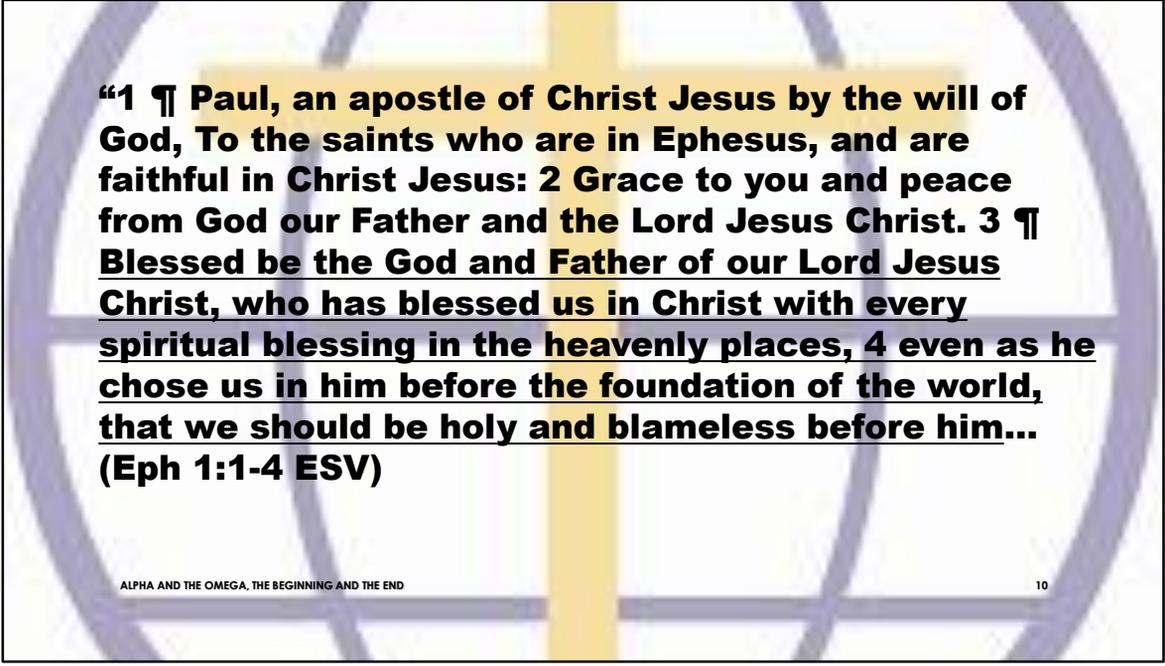
You will notice that David does not ask to be taken out of this world. He asks God to live in this world in a way that glorifies and pleases God.

We have much to learn from David's attitude. David lived in difficult times. He faced many challenges. We face many challenges in our world. There is much anxiety about the state of the world, about its instability, etc. So many things exist that are concerning, climate change, the death of part of great bodies of water, the extinction of thousands upon thousands of animal and insect species, our capacity to destroy ourselves with powerful nuclear and atomic weapons, confusion in religion, moral decay and the list goes on.

God has called people at this time to be his church, to be light and salt to this world, to **"proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light". (1 Peter 2:9)**. In Christ, we are called to love God first and to do good to all people, especially those of the household of God. In Christ, we are to show the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life which is, **"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law"** Gal. 5:22-23.

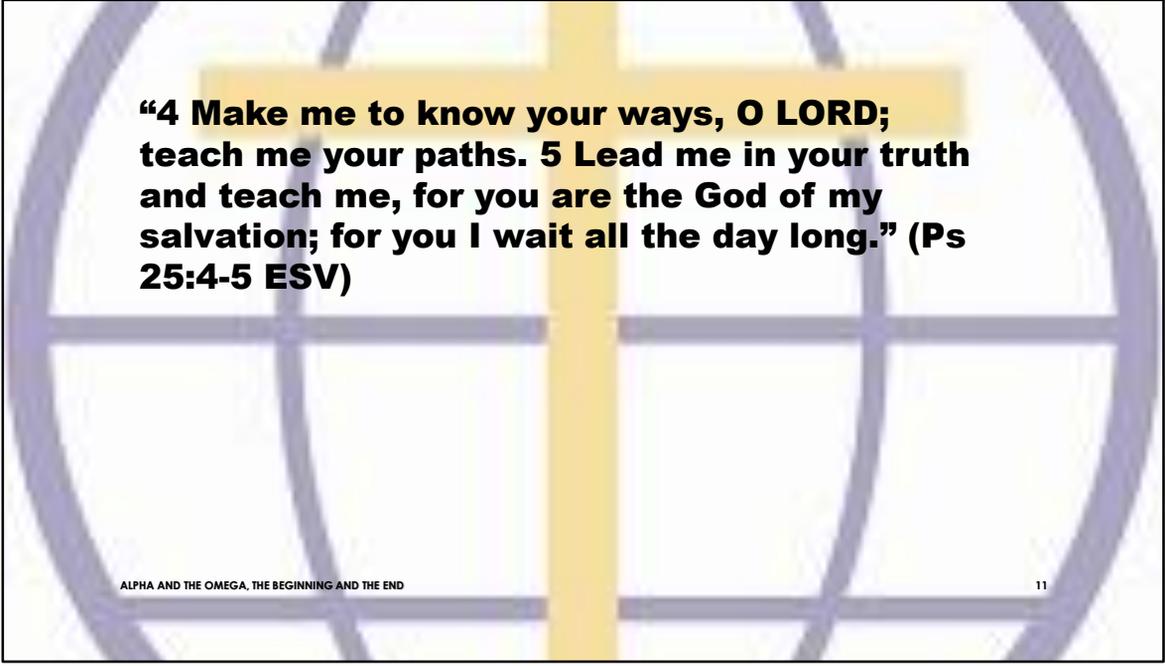
Knowing that God so loved the world that he gave us His only Son not to condemn the world but to save all who will come to faith in him is reassuring and filled with hope.

In **verse 3**, David writes that anyone who waits for him will not be put to shame. The following is what the apostle Paul wrote as he was writing to believers in the first century (new slide).



“1 ¶ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him... (Eph 1:1-4 ESV)

In Christ, united to Christ, there is no shame. We live with the reality that in Christ we are holy and blameless before him. This is not because of ourselves. It is because of Jesus who is the perfect human being in heaven representing all of us. He is the chosen one, the only human being, who has lived perfectly in the Father's will in perfect obedience. Jesus, while living on earth as one of us was always in communion with His Father and our Father.



“4 Make me to know 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; for you I wait all the day long.” (Ps 25:4-5 ESV)

ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

11

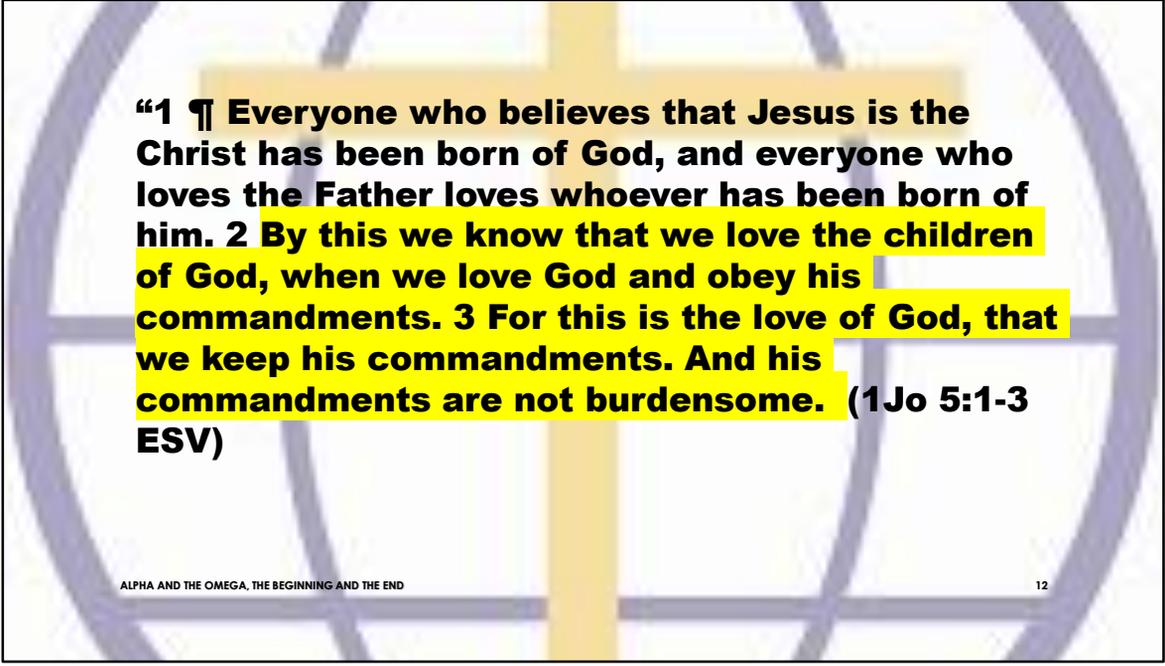
David did not trust in his own knowledge to know how he ought to live. He looked up to God. He asked God to teach him the way he should go.

He realized that he could not go in the way of the Old Covenant on his own. He needed to be led by God in the truth and to be taught.

In the New Covenant, we know that Christianity is more than a way of life. It is a way of life but it is more than that. It is being incorporated, united, living in “The Way”, who is Jesus! It is important to emphasize that “The Way” is a person, that person being Jesus.

We are disciples of Jesus. A disciple is simply one who learns from another. We learn from Jesus. As God calls people to himself, we are to teach others and make disciples by baptizing them and teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. He gives the church the assurance that he will always be with us until the end of the age. (Matt 28.)

When we place our faith in the faithfulness of Jesus, we accept that he is Lord. Things haven't changed. In the New Testament, in the first Epistle of John, we read the following (next verse)



“1 ¶ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1Jo 5:1-3 ESV)

ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

12

We come to know God and we overcome the world by our faith in Christ, living as his children, as he instructs us. His commandments are encapsulated in the two greatest commandment to love God with all our hearts and minds and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

God is teaching his people through the church. **"The church is also rooted and grounded in Christ by being incorporated into him through his Word and Spirit. It is called into fellowship with him and united to him by the baptism of the Spirit so that its members are made to share in Christ's obedient life and are assimilated to his new humanity".** (ATONEMENT The Person and Work of Christ Thomas F Torrance and edited by Robert T Walker page 368)

Being part of the body of God, we cannot grow into Christ apart from belonging and accepting to belong to his church. As the church, we are completely rooted in Jesus.

Jesus works through his church to teach us and to lead us in his truth. **“31 ¶ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.””** (Joh 8:31-32 ESV). The truth is Jesus and His word! What a promise here!



“6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7 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!” (Ps 25:6-7 ESV)

ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END

13

David knows the character of God.

He is asking God not to remember his sins but to remember him.

This is so encouraging when we stop and think about what David is asking. It is very encouraging when we know what Jesus has done for us at the cross.

Having been forgiven means that we have to accept that we were guilty. We have all sinned (Rom 5:12). We have to accept and admit that we were dead in our transgressions. We walked in darkness just like the rest of the world. **“1 ¶ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 ¶ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—” (Eph 2:1-5 ESV)**

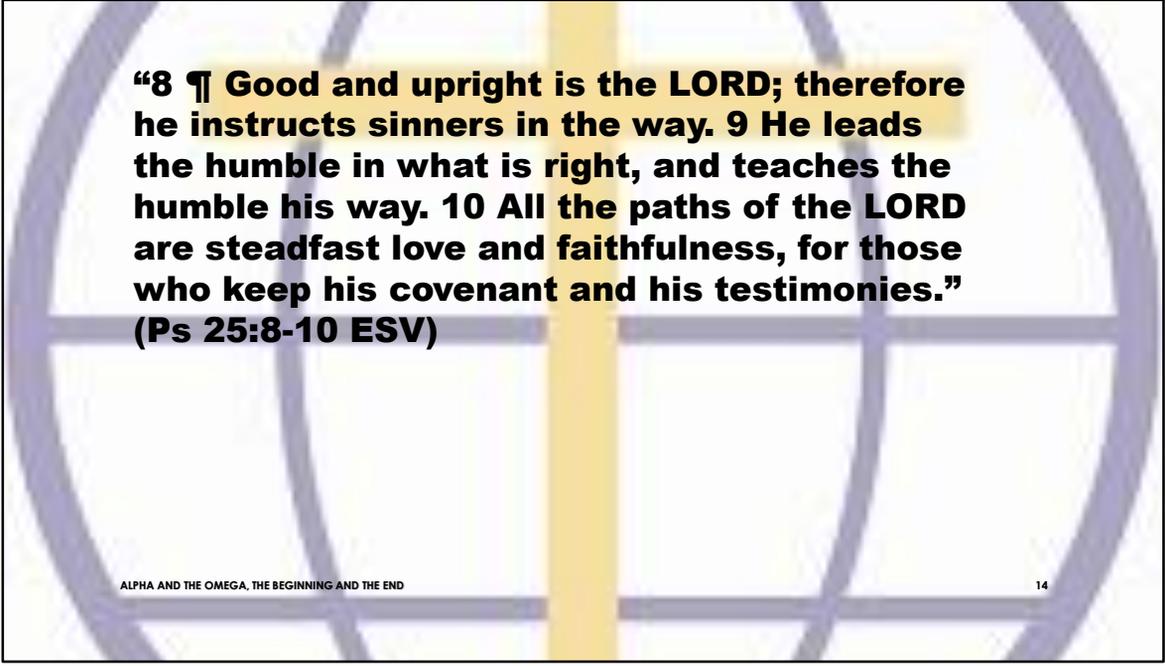
We know what Christ has done for us. We know that our past sins and shame are all forgiven. They are part of our old life. We are not to let our old life define us. We were dead but are alive together with Christ!

Now we have a new life in Christ. David knew God. He knew what he was praying for was in God's will and in accordance God's character.

We see this fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We read later in verse 11 that David realized that his guilt was great. He was able to admit this to God because he knew God's character. David was very transparent. He did not hide anything. He confessed.

He knew that he could be completely honest with God. He knew he would not be rejected by God for doing so.

How much more for as we will live under the New Testament. We know to what length God went to save us and give us life. Jesus was nailed to the cross with all our sins and shame. We died with him. We now are saved and shall be saved by his life as we live with him! (**Rom 5:10**).



**“8 ¶ Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. 10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.”
(Ps 25:8-10 ESV)**

Again, David refers to the character of the Lord. Jesus condescends to us to teach us. We need the humility to be able to stop trusting in ourselves and trusting in God. We realize that Jesus has done completely for us and in him, we share in his righteousness and his perfection. We need humility to accept where he is leading us and how he is guiding us through the Holy Spirit.

Humility is the opposite of pride. A prideful attitude resist God. A humble attitude accept God’s direction. It is the attitude of coming to God as a trusting child knowing that God knows best. Knowing that God knows best, we are going to be sensitive to his instructions. He is the word of life. He is the incarnate Word and he teaches us through the written word, the Bible.

As we submit to his direction, to him in humility, he is going to teach us his way.

The ways of God are steadfast love and faithfulness. That is why we trust in the faithfulness of Jesus for us. We cannot be perfectly faithful like Jesus is faithful. Our own righteousness is not acceptable to God. Only the righteousness of Jesus is acceptable to God and in him, we become acceptable to God.

I encourage you to read the rest of the Psalm which is so encouraging. You will see that David never prayed to be taken out of this world. He prayed to be obedient in the world he lived in. We are to pray to be obedient to God in the world that we live in.

David had troubles but he saw God as his refuge. God is also our refuge. David prayed individually for himself and he also prayed for the whole nation of Israel who was in trouble. Israel is a type of the world. HE prayed to redeem Israel out of all his troubles. The world needs our prayers so much because like Israel, the world is experiencing much trouble.



“1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,” (1Ti 2:1-3 ESV)

We are called to pray for all people as instructed by Paul.

Let us praise God for his steadfast love and faithfulness. Let us thank God that he is the Alpha and the Omega, the Alef and the TaV, the Beginning and the End, that he is our salvation.

Like David, let us lift up our soul to God in confidence for He is trustworthy!

Prayer by Charles De Foucauld

In prayer, in our helplessness we look away to God our Father, to Jesus Christ our high priest, as he intercedes for us, with us and in us, trusting in his grace to hear and answer our prayers, yielding, surrendering our wills to his will. This is beautifully expressed in the prayer of abandonment by Charles de Foucauld:

**Father, I abandoned myself into your hands:
Do with me what you will.
Whatever you will do, I will thank you.
Let only your will be done in me,
As in all your creatures.
In our last nothing else, my Lord.
Into your hands I commend my spirit:
I give it to you with all the love of my heart
For I love you Lord, and so need to give myself,
To surrender myself into your hands
With the trust beyond all measure, because you are my
Father.**

- (From **A PASSION FOR CHRIST, The Vision That Ignites Ministry** by Thomas F Torrance, James B Torrance and David W Torrance edited by Gerrit Dawson and Jock Stein, page 63)