

## **A song of hope**

Psalm 25:1-10

December 2, 2012

*To you, O Lord, I offer my prayer,  
in you, my God, I trust ...*

... and in my financial advisor, and in my doctor, and in my lawyer, and in my auto mechanic, and in the continued recovery of the US economy, and in the unwillingness of the President and Congress to let us go over the fiscal cliff, and in the manifest destiny of the free market economy, and in the supremacy of the American military, and in our ability to find and develop new sources of energy, and in my good genes, and in my good habits, and in my good sense, and in my good fortune, and in our good fortune, in our good luck, in fate ...

Do I need to go on? Isn't this what we do? We put our trust in God and a whole host of other things: people and institutions and manifest destiny and our own wisdom and strength, some of which deserve some measure of our trust, some investment of our confidence and reliance, but none of which belong in the same sentence with God!

It's like making plans to travel to the moon, relying on a Saturn rocket booster and a pogo stick. Yeah, the pogo stick will get you on the way -- about 12" on the way! -- but it's not going to get you where you want to go!

Trust in God and trust in anything else or anyone else are two entirely different things, and our trust, your trust, belongs in God.

*To you, O Lord, I offer my prayer,  
in you, my God, I trust ...*

Trust in God is the only true source of hope.

Other people are other people. They make mistakes. They let you down. They get caught up with their own concerns and forget about you. And even when they do prove worthy of your trust, they are limited in what they can promise, they are limited in what they can do.

Institutions, even the best of them -- economic systems, political systems, nations, cultures -- have short and flawed lifespans. They lose their focus. They lose their way. They run out of energy. They get bloated and self-important and out of balance. They run their course. And we make it worse when we expect them to be what they can never be: the saviors of humanity, the hope of this world.

And your self? Of course, you have to trust yourself. Life would be miserable if you could not put any trust in your own character and judgment and ability, but do you want to pin all your hopes on what you can do? On what you can control? Do want to put your own future and the future of those you love and, indeed, the future of this planet into your hands alone? God help us!

Exactly! God help us ...

Trust in God is the only true source of hope. "But," you say, "I have put my trust in God, but look! Look at me. Look at my life. Look at this world. It's not working!"

But that's the point. Trust in God and trust in anything else or anyone else are two entirely different things. Hope that comes from trust in God takes the long view. If you want results right now, try the lottery! And, by the way, how did that work out for you? And if you did win would that give you all you hope for?

Hope takes the long view, and God has the longest view of all. God sees the trajectory of the whole of a person's life ... and more. God sees not just what you are, but what you will be!

God sees the trajectory of a people's entire history ... and more. God sees not just what we are, but what we will be!

God sees the trajectory, the destiny, the destination, of creation as a whole ... and more. God sees what is and what will be!

Hope is about what will be. Hope is about what is becoming of this world and about your place in it. Hope is about where God is going.

Trust in God is the only true source of hope.

When you trust in God, you have real hope, because God teaches you. God teaches you his way. You are not left to guess or to wander aimlessly or to rely just on what you think you know, but God gives you a direction, a purpose, a way to go. That's hopeful because wherever you may be is not where you are going. Whatever you are is not what you will be. God is teaching you. You don't have all the answers. There is more to learn, more to discover, more to see. You're not there yet. You're on the way. And that's hopeful.

When you trust in God, you have real hope, because God forgives your sins. Yes, your sins! Your sins, my sins, our sins! Not just mistakes or lapses of judgment or moments of weakness, but sins, choices we have made, things we

have done, things we have failed to do, that have done injury to other people, brought shame on ourselves, and defaced the image of God in us.

But God is kind and God is loving and God forgives. That's hopeful, not because forgiveness absolves me of any responsibility for my actions, but because it frees me to be able to be responsible again, to start again, to get back on track, to do the right thing, to go the right way, to be on the way.

When you trust in God, you have real hope, because God leads you. God leads the humble in the right way. God shows you the way, God forgives you and sets you back on course when you lose the way, and God leads you ... all the way! God doesn't merely set you off on a quest -- set you along with all of humanity off on a quest -- and watch to see how it all comes out. God says, "Come with me!"

That's hope: "Come with me!" And humility is the key. Humility is the way we say "yes" to God. Humility -- letting God be God and you be ... you, wonderful and beautiful and a delight to God's eyes, but fragile and fallible and helpless and needful, too, needful of a guide, needful of a savior, needful of God. In you, my God, I trust ...

*In you, my God, I trust ...*

That's hope.

That's hope that allows you to risk, to risk doing the right thing because it's the right thing, not because it works, not because it gets you what you want, not because it's easy, not because it comes without cost, but because it's right. You do it, trusting God, whether it works or not, whether it seems to have any chance of success or not, whether you have company or whether you have to go it alone, whether it costs you nothing or costs you everything, whether it takes a moment or a day or years or the rest of your life. You do it because it is God's way and because hope tells you where God's way is going.

Hope allows you to risk, and hope allows you to wait. How long would you be willing to wait if you knew it was not a matter of "if," but "when?"

How long would you be willing to wait to be made whole if you knew it was not a matter of "if," but "when?"

How long would you be willing to wait for love to overcome hate if you knew it was not a matter of "if," but "when?"

How long would you be willing to wait for peace on earth if you knew it was not a matter of “if,” but “when?”

How long would you be willing to wait for Jesus if you knew it was not a matter of “if,” but “when?”