



Text: Psalm 25<sup>1</sup>  
Series: Songs of God  
Title: To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul  
Date: July 24, 2011  
Place: First Baptist Church, Olds, AB

Graham Kendrick – one of the “fathers” of contemporary Christian music  
- established writer – several of his songs are included in our hymnbook...

Cf. “Shine, Jesus, Shine.” (#431)  
Cf. “Amazing Love” (#351)  
Cf. “Jesus, King of the Nations” (#801)

### **VERSE 1**

**“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul  
In you I trust, O my God  
Do not let me be put to shame  
Nor let my enemies triumph over me**

### **CHORUS**

**No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame  
That’s why my eyes are on you, O Lord  
Surround me, defend me, O how I need you  
To you I lift up my soul  
To you I lift up my soul.”**

Kendrick took Psalm 25 virtually word for word and set it to music  
- two more verses, we’ll sing them later

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission, All rights reserved.



**But there are two themes that catch my eye & ear**

- They both appear in verse 1 and the chorus
- Because the chorus is repeated, these two themes recur throughout the song
  - “I lift up my soul”
  - “put to shame”

David wrote in Psalm 25...

**“To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.”**

**Psalm 25:1-3**

Underlying this psalm is David’s concern that he not be put to shame or ashamed

Shame entered our human experience with sin. Before sin entered the human experience...

**“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:25**

But after sin entered our experience...

**“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.” Genesis 3:7**

shame = our feeling of distress at the exposure of our most intimate selves

- Shame makes us want to hide – to cover ourselves
- We fear not only the exposure of our physical self but also of our moral character



*Human shame is a feeling of distress at our deficiencies, deformities, or absurdities--real or imagined--and especially at the uncovering of these things. It is also a feeling of distress at the uncovering of our mere privacies. As generations of Bible readers have recognized, (Genesis 3) suggests the confluence of these sources of distress with a few words of great sorrow and mystery: after they had sinned, Adam and Eve "knew that they were naked." For the first time in their lives they could not stand scrutiny. It wasn't merely that they flinched when their partner's gaze dipped southward; it was also that they had trouble looking into each other's eyes.<sup>2</sup>*

**Think of the hidden thing about yourself that would most embarrass you if it were known by others...**

- Now imagine that that information fell into the hands of
  - the person who dislikes you the most
  - the person who looks up to you the most
  - the person who loves you the most

The feeling of distress that you experience as you imagine that event is "shame."

We all have "shame" ... at least we should, if we have any awareness of our sin at all.

David had shame because he knew that he was a deficient person...

**"For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt for it is great." Psalm 25:11**

If David's enemies knew what David knew about himself, they would humiliate him, they would tear him down, and they would make him a laugh-stock! David is sure that if he was in the

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<sup>2</sup> © 2011 PreachingToday.com Melvin D. Hugen and Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Books & Culture, Vol. 2, no. 2. | posted 4/01/1998



hands of his enemies his sin would be used to shame him. BUT he is also confident that in the hands of God he would not be humiliated or ridiculed or shamed.

**“To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.”**

We all have shame. We all have shame because we all have sin. The great relief that is offered to us in this psalm of David is that there is at least one Person who knows everything about us ... all our faults and failings ... but he will not shame us or humiliate us or tear us down because of them.

**In our shame, how do we lift up our soul to the Lord?**

**We learn His ways**

**“Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.” Psalm 25:4-5**

Because we're broken and incomplete, we need God's guidance and instruction

We aren't self-sufficient ... we can stop pretending that we know everything.

John Ensor tells the story of how his shame brought him to understand his need for God to be his Teacher, his Guide and his Saviour. Ensor wrote...

*“When I was a teenager, I stole a hat. What is worse, I arrived at the store with a wad of cash in my pocket. Staring at the price tag, I thought, *Hey, why should I spend my money on that hat? I can get it for nothing by pinching it, then save my money for something else.**



“As I headed for the door, the store manager stopped me. I [suddenly] wished I were dead. The manager saw I was not yet a hardened criminal and sent me home with instructions to have my parents call him back with the news or he would call the police. I went home to take my lumps. To this day, I remember what my 18-year-old sister said when she overheard me confessing: "How totally embarrassing. I've got a brother who's a thief!"

“She called me a thief! ...

“[But] becoming ashamed of what we are as a result of what we do is a good thing and a necessary part of getting real about guilt. If you commit adultery, you are an adulterer. If you lie, you become a liar. I stole, and I had become a thief. It led me to my room weeping and ashamed of myself. But that was good! Painful, but good.”<sup>3</sup>

Awareness of our failure to live God’s ways and to be God’s people is intended to bring us to God’s school of learning where he molds us and shapes us according to his Word. We lift our souls up to him and ask him to “teach us your ways, O Lord.”

### **We rest in His mercy**

David wrote...

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

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<sup>3</sup> © 2011 PreachingToday.com Adapted from John Ensor's [The Great Work of the Gospel](#) (Crossway, 2006), for the 5-18-10 entry in Men of Integrity (May/June, 2010) | posted 5/17/2010



David appealed to the mercy of God to forgive his sins because David knew his God! David's Bible told him that he worshipped...

**“The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” Exodus 34:6-7**

David asked the Lord to “remember” His mercy. He appealed to God's character of grace and his desire to forgive sin. But he also asked the Lord to “remember not” his sin because David knew his God. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord declared...

**“I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.” Isaiah 43:25**

Cf. the great “blotting out” – our sin was blotted out with the blood of Jesus Christ!

**“And you, who were dead in your trespasses ...God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” Colossians 2:13-14**

We can lift up our sin and shame to the Lord with complete confidence that he will forgive us and be merciful to us. He doesn't keep reminding us of our sin. He “remembers it no more” against us. Across our record of sin, the Father has written “cancelled” in the blood of His Son.

Matt Woodley was reminded of God's gracious forgetfulness in a series of conversations he had with an unbelieving friend of his. Woodley wrote...



“My friend Emilio owns a tiny pizzeria that makes the best New York pizza on Long Island. Emilio hates "organized religion." Above the stove where he sticks the orders, he also collects small newspaper clippings about flawed and fallen ministers. I call it his "rack of shame." Every time I come in for pizza, he leans over the counter, slides a few clippings on to the counter, and whispers, "Hey, look at this. This padre walked off with \$80,000. This pastor slept with three church members. This guy abused little boys for twenty years. Okay, do you get why I don't need your church?" Then, with a triumphant flair, he sticks the articles back on his "rack of shame."

“A few months ago, fed up with his clergy-bashing, I blurted out, "What does this prove, Emilio? So priests and pastors do despicable things. What if I started a rack of shame for people in your profession and then declared that I will never eat pizza?" Actually, over the next few weeks I tried rummaging through newspapers looking for articles about pizza guys doing nasty things—spitting in the bread dough or using cheap Ragu instead of homemade sauce—but apparently pizza guys live pretty clean lives.

“Finally, after a month or two of bickering back and forth, I came to Emilio and said, "I need to order two slices of [pizza], and I need to ask your forgiveness."

He bristled and shot back, "Is this a joke or a trick?"

"No, really, Emilio, I'm truly sorry for being a jerk and for arguing with you—and I want the [pizza] slices, too. The truth is that ministers do screw up. We can be pretty decent people; but sometimes we're frauds and hypocrites. Sometimes I'm a sham."

“Emilio immediately softened, and we've actually become friends. But I didn't say this as an evangelism strategy. I said it because it's true and it's the gospel. I love the line that summarizes the gospel this way: "We are more flawed than we'd



ever dare to admit; we're more loved than we'd ever dare to imagine." I'm not sure why it's so hard to get this simple truth. I qualify for the cosmic rack of shame, but through God's infinite mercy, Jesus took my place on the rack and set me free."<sup>4</sup>

We lift up our soul to the Lord, we ask him to forgive us our sin and we rest in his mercy.

### **We accept His correction**

David wrote...

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

God's goodness is expressed in the fact that he helps wandering "sinners" to find the way. He doesn't throw us away – he helps us to come to know his ways if we will come in humble repentance.

Gordon McDonald was a prominent pastor, writer and leader when he committed adultery some years ago. He went through a period of discipline from his church, he and his wife rebuilt their marriage and eventually, the church that had first called him to be their pastor asked him to return to serve them as pastor once again.

There was one man who was instrumental in McDonald's restoration. When that friend passed away a few years ago, McDonald spoke of how crucial his gracious correction had been. McDonald wrote...

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<sup>4</sup> © 2011 by the author or Christianity Today International/ PreachingToday.com. Matt Woodley, "Evangelized by the Pizza Man," from his blog "With Us" (8-13-09) | posted 9/14/2009



“He was there when ... my life fell apart because of a failure for which I was totally responsible. In our worst moments of shame and humiliation, he came and lived in our home for a week and helped us do a searing examination of our lives. We will always remember his words: "You are both momentarily in a great darkness. You have a choice to make. You can—as do so many—deny this terrible pain, or blame it on others, or run away from it. Or, you can embrace this pain together and let it do its purifying work as you hear the things God means to whisper into your hearts during the process. If you choose the latter, I expect you will have an adventurous future modeling what true repentance and grace is all about.”<sup>5</sup>

### **We experience His friendship**

David wrote...

**“For your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.”**

**Psalm 25:11-15**

Pardoned sinners become the friends of the Lord. The phrase “the friendship of the LORD” is beautiful expression of intimacy. It literally reads “the secret of the LORD.” These people are the “confidants” of the God; his “inner circle;” (Job 19:19) or most simply, his “friends.” (Gen 18:17)

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<sup>5</sup> © PreachingToday.com Gordon McDonald, in Leadership journal's weekly newsletter (5-13-08) | posted 7/21/2008



A little while ago I did something of which I am ashamed. I was to preside at the funeral of a friend's mother out of town ... and I forgot. Somehow it simply slipped my mind and on the day of the funeral I realized too late what I had to do and there simply wasn't time to get from Olds to the location of the funeral. All I could do was phone and make my abject apologies.

My friend "pardoned my guilt, for it was great" and I experienced his gracious friendship. I say this with great thanks: it was a God-like experience. I had sinned against my friend but he pardoned me and extended his friendship to me. That's what God does for us: pardoned sinners become intimate friends of God ... what a gift of grace.

### **We receive His embrace**

David prayed...

**"Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins." Psalm 25:16-18**

Shame makes us feel alone. We hide. We're afraid to allow others to know us as we really are. As I read David's words I heard running in the background the words of the prodigal in the story of Jesus. Jesus told the story of a young man who took his inheritance and spent it wildly. When the young man finally came to his senses and realized the mess he'd made of his life he said to himself...

**"I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and**



**felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” Luke 15:18-20**

The “father” in Jesus’ story was intended to be understood as a representation of the grace and mercy of God. Our God longs to embrace us and welcome us home.

### **We hope in His deliverance**

David concluded his prayer...

**“Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.” Psalm 25:19-22**

David’s deliverance from shame was still future as he wrote – but he’s confident that it will come. Why? Because he knows his God. Ultimately, his God will not allow his life to end in shame and humiliation.

Our deliverance from shame has come and is coming.

**On the one hand, our deliverance from shame has come** because God has taken our record of failure and nailed it to the cross of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul assures us that...

**“if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” Romans 10:9-11**



**But on the other hand, our deliverance from shame is still to come.** Paul was referring to both our present deliverance and also our future, ultimate, final deliverance from shame when he wrote...

**“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” Philippians 3:20-21**

We are already citizens of heaven ... even while we live on this earth. Christ has cancelled our debt of sin and we are children of God. But we “await” a day when Jesus will return to take us home to heaven. On that day our “lowly,” shame-ridden bodies will be “transformed” to be like His ... for all eternity.

Let me close with a story from pastor and author, Lee Strobel. Strobel wrote...

“We were doing a baptism service. We told people before they came up to the platform to be baptized to take a piece of paper, write down a few of the sins they had committed, and fold the paper. There was a large wooden cross on the stage. As they came past the cross we asked them to take that piece of paper, take a pin, and pin it to the cross, because the Bible says our sins are nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ, and fully paid for by his death. Then they were to turn and come to the pastor to be baptized.

A woman who was baptized in that service wrote me a letter. She said:

*I remember my fear. In fact, it was the most fear I remember in my life. I wrote as tiny as I could on that piece of paper the word*



*'abortion.' I was so scared someone would open the paper and read it and find out it was me. I wanted to get up and walk out of the auditorium during the service, the guilt and fear were that strong.*

*When my turn came, I walked toward the cross, and I pinned the paper there. I was directed to a pastor to be baptized. He looked me straight in the eyes, and I thought for sure that he was going to read this terrible secret I kept from everybody for so long. But instead, I felt like God was telling me, 'I love you. It's okay. You've been forgiven.' I felt so much love for me, a terrible sinner. It's the first time I ever really felt forgiveness and unconditional love. It was unbelievable, indescribable.*

Strobel asks...

“Do you have inside of you a secret sin that you wouldn't even want to write down on a piece of paper out of fear somebody might open it up and find out? Let me tell you something about the Jesus I know. Not only does he want to adopt you as his child, he wants to lift the weight of guilt off your shoulders.”<sup>6</sup>

Jesus wants you to be his friend. He wants you to experience his mercy. He wants to embrace you and welcome you home.

- **Invitation to Prayer Ministry**
- **Final Song:** To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul
- **Benediction**

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<sup>6</sup> © PreachingToday.com Lee Strobel, "Meet the Jesus I Know," Preaching Today tape no. 211 | posted 3/03/2003