"Trust in the Lord"
(Psalm 4)

I. Introduction.
  A. Orientation.
    1. The Lord tells us that there is a blessing to those who walk with Him in righteousness. The psalms are full of this teaching.
      a. The book of Psalms was the worship book of Israel.
        (i) The inspired writers wanted to express this.
        (ii) This was the message the Spirit put on their hearts.
        (iii) This is what He communicated through them.

      b. It begins with the clearest statement of this truth: How blessed is the man who:
        (i) Doesn't accept the world's ways or do the things they do.
        (ii) But who loves/delights in the Law of the Lord.
        (iii) Meditates on that Law all the time.
        (iv) This man will be blessed at all times, will be filled with the Spirit, will prosper in what he does.

    2. Psalm 2 reminds us that this blessing is attached to submission to the King.
      a. Those who do not submit to Him will be destroyed.
      b. But those who worship/obey Him, who honor Him, who take refuge in Him, will be blessed.

    3. Psalm 3 reminds us of what some of these blessings are:
      a. Protection against our adversaries.
      b. Exaltation over them.
      c. Victory over them.
      d. Peace in the middle of conflict; even if it increases.
      e. Assurance that the Lord will bring retribution on His enemies:
        (i) Either by redeeming them in Christ, if He paid for their sins.
        (ii) Or by casting them into hell to pay for their own.

      f. The psalms are also very good at reminding us of God's wrath.
        (i) The psalmist didn't shrink from it or try to hide it.
        (ii) He rejoiced in it and took comfort in it.
        (iii) If you're a Christian, if you've trusted in Jesus, God's wrath is a blessing, not a curse.
        (iv) It reminds us that all wrongs will be righted – either on the cross or in the lake of fire.
        (v) We should rejoice in this.

  B. Preview.
    1. Each Psalm reveals more of the blessings for the one who sets his heart to follow God.

a. They remind us that even though it is God alone who can turn our hearts to Him, each of us is not a puppet.
   (i) Regeneration/the new birth is a sovereign act of God.
   (ii) But sanctification/growth in grace, is a cooperative act: we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but it is God who is at work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13).

b. We must seek Him.
   (i) He is our source of good, our help, our righteousness, our protection, our Sustainer.
   (ii) He alone is all of these things.
   (iii) Therefore, He must be our trust, our hope, the One we look to for our good.

c. For the psalmist and the people of God, they often looked to Him for help against their physical enemies:
   (i) Against foreign armies.
   (ii) Even against those within the covenant community.

d. But they also looked to Him for help against their spiritual enemies.
   (i) The enemy of their souls: Satan and his fallen angels.
   (ii) Their own sins.
   (iii) The things of the world.

e. Since we have these same enemies, we need the same help, therefore we must look to the same source: We must look to God.

2. This morning, the psalmist looks again to the Lord for His help and finds it.
   a. He looks to the past to express his trust in God, since God has helped him before (v. 1).
   b. He proclaims to his enemy that God is his trust now (vv. 2-3).
   c. He calls upon the people of God to make God their trust (vv. 4-5).
   d. He looks to God again in faith to act upon His promises (v. 6).
   e. And he settles down in the hope this gives him (vv. 7-8).

II. Sermon.
   A. He looks to the past to express his trust in God: God has helped him before.
      1. "Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; be gracious to me and hear my prayer" (v. 1).
         a. The psalms were used for singing in worship, but they are many things:
            (i) Confessions/declarations of faith/truth: Psalm 1.
            (ii) Expressions of thanks to God.
            (iii) Exhortations to God's people to praise, thank and worship the Lord.
            (iv) Confessions of sin.
            (v) Many of them are prayers for help.

         b. This psalm is a prayer for God's help.
            (i) There is some danger: perhaps a particular danger, perhaps general.

(ii) As long as there are sinners in the world, believers will have enemies.
(iii) As long as there are enemies, we will need to pray for God's help.

c. And He promises to give it.
(i) The Lord had helped him before: "You relieved me in my distress."
(ii) He would help him again.
(iii) And so he cries out: Be gracious – I don't deserve it – and hear me.

2. This is our confidence in our prayers as well.
a. How many times have we looked to the Lord in the past?
b. How many times has He answered us?
c. Why did He?
(i) Because He is gracious.
(ii) Because He has promised.
(iii) To encourage us to ask again and to trust in Him.

d. We must trust in the Lord, in His grace, in His mercy, in His promise.
e. He will not let us down.

B. He proclaims to his enemy that God is his trust now.
1. "O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? *How long* will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? But know that the Lord has set apart the godly man for Himself; the Lord hears when I call to Him" (vv. 2-3).
a. He chides the evil for their mocking God.
(i) David's honor could be referring to that honor given him by God.
(ii) Or it could refer to God Himself.
(iii) Either way, they were reproaching/criticizing God.

b. In doing so, they were showing their evil and deceptive hearts.
(i) They loved worthless things: mocking the righteous, mocking God, they set aside what is really precious for what has no value.
(ii) They were trying to trick David and God's people that what they trusted in really couldn't help them.

c. But David makes the good confession of faith:
(i) The Lord sets those who are godly apart to Himself: He is their shield.
(ii) And He comes to the aid of such as trust in Him, as they shall shortly find out for themselves.

2. This is the kind of confidence we can have in the face of our enemies.
a. Those who are of the world are the ones in danger, not us.
(i) When they reject us, hate us, make fun of us for following Christ, they're not hurting us, but themselves.
(ii) What they're holding onto will destroy them.
(iii) What they're rejecting is life.
(iv) In trying to deceive us into not trusting God, they are deceiving themselves to their own destruction.

b. God has set us apart to Himself, if we are trusting in Christ this morning.
(i) He is our shield, our protector, our King.
(ii) When we call out to Him, He hears; before we call, He knows.
(iii) We don't need to be ashamed or fearful: We will stand; they will fall.

C. On this basis, David calls upon the people of God to make Him their trust.
1. "Tremble, and do not sin; meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the Lord" (vv. 4-5).
a. When David tells them to tremble, he must not mean because of the enemy, but in the presence of God.
(i) Those who fear the Lord have nothing else to fear.
(ii) They were to fear His retribution.
(iii) They were not to sin by fearing the enemy and doing something to compromise their relationship with Him.
(iv) To fear the enemy would be sin.

b. Rather, they were to:
(i) Meditate on their bed: continue to focus on God's Word, think about His promises, resolve to follow His ways, throughout the day, when they rise in the morning and lay down at night.
(ii) They were to do this in their hearts: let it affect them.
(iii) "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deu. 6:6-9).
(iv) They were to be still: not become fearful, but rest in Him.
(v) Offer the sacrifices of righteousness: not just the animal sacrifices, but the sacrifices of their lips and lives.
(vi) And they were to trust Him.

2. Fear is our greatest enemy; but the antidote for fear is fear: the fear of the Lord.
a. Those who have attempted great things for the Lord are those who have feared Him the most.
b. We know that He doesn't lie; He is trustworthy. Not to trust Him is to think He is insincere.
c. Whatever the obstacle, whatever the enemy, nothing can withstand us, if we trust in the Lord.
d. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matt. 16:18).
e. Nothing can stop us when we walk in God's will.
f. And so let's meditate on His Word, set our hearts to obey it, believe what He said, and fear Him, then we will not need to fear the enemy.

D. He looks to God again to act upon His promises.

1. "Many are saying, 'Who will show us *any* good?' Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O Lord" (v. 6)!
   a. There were those who doubted.
      (i) Either God's people who didn't trust in God's goodness.
      (ii) Or the enemies of God who were taunting God's people.

   b. But David prays and asks for God's blessing.
      (i) He asked for God's face of blessing again to point in their direction.
      (ii) That would be their greatest good and their deliverance.

   c. He indicates that the Lord answered this prayer for him.
      (i) "You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound" (v. 7).
      (ii) He found the hidden manna, the spiritual feast greater than any material feast.
      (iii) He found the blessing of the fullness of God's Spirit, the answer to His prayer.

2. This is where we must find it.
   a. When David fled to Gath to escape Saul, the Philistines recognized him and tried to arrest him.
      (i) He escaped by pretending he was mad.
      (ii) Deception is a lawful part of warfare.
      (iii) But he wrote these words in a psalm because of this, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You" (56:3).

   b. What do we do when we are afraid?
      (i) If the answer isn't, "I look to the Lord in faith and rest in Him," then it's a wrong answer.
      (ii) He alone is our source of strength, protection, blessing, everything we need.
      (iii) Only He can fill our hearts with the peace and joy of His Spirit.
      (iv) This is where we must look.
      (v) We can have a spiritual feast in the middle of our difficult situations, if we will only learn to trust Him.

E. Finally, David settles down in the hope this gives him.
   1. "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety" (v. 8).
   2. We can have peace in this world; we can find rest for our souls, but it must be in God.
      a. Jesus says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).
      b. He is asking us to trust Him, with our lives, with our souls.
      c. Those who hope in the Lord will never be ashamed (Psalm 34:5).
      d. Trust in the Lord for the good of your immortal soul.
      e. Trust in Him now for the strength to make it through this life to the next.
      f. The psalmist writes, "Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken" (Psalm 55:22). Amen.