

Psalm 26

[A Psalm] of David.

Psalm 26: From the statements of the psalm itself we may easily deduce that David was being falsely accused. In light of this fact, his protestations of innocence are not pride, but the just complaint of a man of God (verses 2-8). In addition to his self-defense, he petitions God for deliverance (verses 1, 9-12a), and promises a public acknowledgement when it is accomplished (verse 12b).

Verses 1-12: Psalms 26, 27 and 28 mention the house, or sanctuary, of the Lord because public worship is the central interest. The form (of Psalm 26), is mixed, i.e., containing elements of declarations of innocence, prayer, and confidence (compare verse 1 as a paradigm). Structurally, 4 intermingling prayers and proofs reveal the psalmist's passion to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

- I. His Situation (26:1).
 - A. His Prayer for Justice (26:1a);
 - B. His Proofs of Commitment (26:1b).
- II. His Transparency (26:2-8).
 - A. His Prayer for Scrutiny (26:2);
 - B. His Proofs of Loyalty (26:3-8).
- III. His Eschatological Outlook (26:9-11a).
 - A. His Prayers for Final Favor (26:9);
 - B. His proofs of Measurable Difference (26:10-11a).
- IV. His Confidence (26:11b-12).
 - A. His Prayers Show Confidence in the Person of God (26:11b);
 - B. His Proofs Show Confidence in the Provision of God (26:12).

Verses 1-5: David's words reveal long-term integrity and worship ("walked, trusted, not sit, have hated"), a lifestyle of faith and obedience. Because David had consistently lived with "integrity" and "trusted" in God, he could call upon the Lord to deal with him according to God's faithfulness, which is true vindication. The Lord will do the same for those who trust in Him (26:11).

Psalm 26:1 "Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; [therefore] I shall not slide."

"Judge me": Literally "Vindicate me". This refers to exoneration of some false accusations and/or charges under the protection of the covenant stipulations of the theocratic law (compare Psalms 7:8; 35:24; 43:1).

“Mine integrity”: Again, this is not a claim to perfection, but of innocence, particularly as viewed within the context of ungrounded “legal” charges (compare Psalm 7:8; Prov. 10:9; 19:1; 20:7; 28:6).

“I shall not slide” (compare Psalms 18:36; 37:31; 73:18-20).

The slide here, is similar to what we would call backslide. Integrity could mean unblemished. I am so glad that Jesus is the Judge of the world. I believe this is what David is saying for himself and others here. We know we will be judged fairly, if Jesus is the Judge. Notice also, that he put his trust in the Lord. When we put our trust in the Lord, it means that He has already paid the price in full for our sin. Our sin has been done away with, if we put our trust in Jesus. Notice also, that David has walked in the salvation he received. We must walk in our salvation, as well. We must not go back to the old life style. When you back slide, it means you have gone back to your sinful way of life. We must all say with David, God I trust your judgement.

Psalm 26:2 "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart."

“Examine me ... prove ... try”: Theses 3 invitations to divine scrutiny are essentially synonymous ways of testing, refining, and purifying (compare Psalms 11:4-5; 12:6; 17:3; 66:10; see Jer. 17:9-10).

God looks upon the heart of man, and not at the outward appearances. David is explaining here, that he wants God to look into his heart and see that it is not evil. This prayer that David prayed in the verse above, is like us saying purge me Lord. My prayer and your prayer should be like this, that God would judge us now and burn out all of the evil left in us. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalm 26:3 "For thy lovingkindness [is] before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth."

The psalmist now enters upon an enumeration of the points of conduct on which his confidence in his integrity rests. They are six points, three positive and three negative. First of all, he keeps God's lovingkindness, or mercy, ever before his eyes; reflects on it, meditates on it, presents it to his thoughts continually.

And I have walked in thy truth. By faith in Christ, who is the truth of all promises, prophecies, types, and figures. In the word of truth, by abiding by it, and walking according to it. And in the truth of worship, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. And to walk herein he used himself, and was constant in, as the word signifies. And nothing more engages one to walk in Christ, as he has been received and to walk as becomes his Gospel. And in all holy conversation and godliness, than the love of God manifested to the soul. This being set continually before our eyes encourages faith and hope, and influences a holy life and cheerful obedience to the will of God.

The love of God (Agape), is so far above even the knowledge of mankind. Try to explain to me how God could love you and me enough to send His Son to be crucified that we might be saved. God's lovingkindness is everywhere I look. Along with David I can say, I could not live without

the truth of God to guide me. Man (who does not know God and His truth), lives like no more than an animal. It is the morality that we live by through God that makes us better.

Verses 4-5: This language suggests that David is making a personal application of the characteristics of Psalm 1:1.

Psalm 26:4 "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers."

That is, chosen or used to converse with them. I have been so far from an approbation or imitation of their wicked courses, that I have avoided even their company. And, if I accidentally came into it, yet I would not continue in it.

"Neither will I go in with dissemblers": Neither will I walk with them or be found in their company. The word here rendered "dissemblers" means those who are "hidden" or "concealed." Those who hide their purposes or designs from others, or who conceal their real character and intentions. Thus used, the word denotes hypocrites, whose real character is "concealed" or "hidden" from the world. The psalmist says that he had not associated with such people, but that His companionship had been with the open, frank, and sincere. On this he relied as one evidence of his piety; and this is always an evidence of true religion (see the notes at Psalm 1:1).

Vain in the verse above, means untruth or deceitful. Dissemblers means evil people. David is saying here that he does not associate with evil, deceitful people. We also, have been warned over and over not to fellowship with those of unbelief.

2 Corinthians 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

This does not mean that you cannot go and witness to the lost. It does mean not to partake of their evil deeds to witness to them. Witness and go home. Don't stay and get involved in their sinful way of life.

Psalm 26:5 "I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked."

That do harm to the persons, characters, or properties of men. And who meet together in bodies, to consult and form schemes to do mischief, and have their assemblies to encourage each other in it. These, their works and actions, the psalmist hated, though not their persons. And showed his dissatisfaction of them, and dislike and disapprobation of them, by absenting from them (see Jer. 15:17).

"And will not sit with the wicked": That is, I will not be associated with them. This was the fixed purpose of his soul; and this was then, as it is now, an evidence of true piety. This moreover is an "indispensable" evidence of piety. He who does sit with the wicked and who makes them his companions and friends; who unites with them in their plans and purposes; or who partakes with them in their special amusements and pursuits, cannot possibly be a pious man. If he mingles

with such people at all, it must be only as demanded by the necessities of social or civil life. Or in the transactions of business. Or for the purpose of doing them good. If it is for other purposes such as making them his chosen companions and friends, he gives the clearest evidence that his heart is with them, and that it is not with God.

David was very smart in the fact that he stayed away from evildoers. I have said before, many times someone goes along just for a ride and gets arrested with the person they are with by association. To sit with the wicked shows fellowship. If we do not hate evil, we are apt to get involved in it. We have to make a decision which side we are on. Are we godly people, or have we chosen to sit with the ungodly?

Psalm 26:6 "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:"

Personal cleansing is a necessary prerequisite for acceptable worship (compare Psalm 24:3-4).

We know that Pilate washed his hands of the matter of crucifying Jesus. It was as if he was saying, this is innocent blood you are shedding. I wash my hands of the whole matter. In other words, I am innocent. This is what David is saying here. I am innocent of wrong doing. Compass means to revolve around. This then, means that David walked near and around the altar. Notice, also, that David realizes the altar is God's. This washing of David's hands was very similar to Pilate. They were both saying to those around, I am innocent, I wash my hands of the matter.

Psalm 26:7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

Literally, "that I may cause to be heard;" that is, that I may make known to others. The idea is, that he would make known to others what he had learned from God. Or that He would make known to them the delights of His service, and seek to win them to His worship. This he would do with a thankful remembrance of the favors which he had himself enjoyed, or as an expression of his gratitude for the mercies which had been conferred on him. As expressive of his gratitude to God, he would endeavor to win others also to His service.

"And tell of all thy wondrous works": Of creation and providence; and especially of grace and redemption. This is the business of saints in God's house below, and will be their employment in heaven to all eternity. Jarchi on the place says, that this song of praise has in it what relates to future times. To Gog, to the days of the Messiah, and to the world to come.

We should be constantly giving the sacrifice of praise to God. Even the disciples were told of Jesus to go out and spread the good news of the gospel. We know that in the gospels, we are told that those who are ashamed of Jesus on this earth, Jesus will be ashamed of them in heaven. Those who give Him praise here, He will exalt before His Father and the angels.

Revelation 3:5 "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

To tell anything at all about God would be telling of His wondrous works.

John 21:25 "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

We would be telling of His wondrous work from now to the end of time, if we told of all His wondrous works.

Psalm 26:8 "LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth."

"Thine Honor": God's "honor" most frequently refers to His self-manifestation, e.g., His attributes revealed and exhibited (see note on Lev. 9:23).

We are told how important it is to gather at the Lord's house. Jesus said, My house shall be called a house of prayer. It troubles me greatly in our society today, how little respect we show God in His house. Of course, He dwells in us, but the church where you go to church is also His habitation. Do you love to go to church? Why do you go to church? If we go for any other reason than to fellowship with God in and through His Word, we are going for the wrong reason. We need to get back to where the house of God is a place of worship, not a place of entertainment. Everything in the church should be dedicated to holy work. We are standing on holy ground, when we go to church. We should go to church to commune with God.

Verses 9-12: "Gather not my soul with sinners" is David's request to not be grouped with the ungodly (28:3). Sinners are those who live contrary to the will of God, who betray their distaste for God through their love of violence, "mischief", and "bribes" (1 Sam 8:3).

"My foot standeth in an even place" speaks of stability, integrity, and firm footing.

Verses 9-11: This is another sharp contrast between the injurious and the innocent.

Psalm 26:9 "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:"

Unite me not in one doom with open sinners. That is, my life, as it is explained in the next clause. With sinners, profligate and obstinate sinners, as the following words describe them, such being often called sinners by way of eminence. Do not bind me up in the same bundle, nor put me in the same accursed and miserable condition with them. Seeing I have loved thy house and worship, and endeavored to serve thee acceptably. Not only with ceremonial cleanness, but with moral purity of heart and life. Do not deal with me as thou wilt with those that are filled with ungodliness and unrighteousness. Do not destroy me with them.

“Nor my life with bloody men”: That thirst after blood, lie in wait for it, shed it, and are drunk with it, as the antichristian party. These God abhors and detests. Nor shall they live out half their days, and their end is miserable.

We know that in this world we live in the midst of sinners. We also know when harvest time for the reaping of the earth comes, the wheat and the chaff are gathered together. Then comes the separation. The wheat will be carried off into God's barn (heaven), and the chaff shall be burned. David is saying, let me be the wheat. I do not want to go the way of the sinner. David is saying, whatever you do, don't put me with these evil men. Bloody men were repulsive to David, and they should be repulsive to us as well.

Psalm 26:10 "In whose hands [is] mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes."

The word here rendered "mischief," means properly "purpose, counsel, plan;" and then an evil purpose, "mischief, wickedness, crime." The idea is, either that they intended to do mischief, and that they employed their hands to accomplish it, or that the fruit or result of their wicked plans was in their hands. That is, they had in their possession what they had secured by robbery, plunder, or dishonesty.

"And their right hand is full of bribes": Whereby the eyes of judges are blinded, the words of the righteous perverted, men's persons respected, and judgment wrested (Deut. 16:19).

David goes into detail here, about the evil that these sinners are doing. The right hand has to do with spiritual blessing. This really just means all kinds of evil dealings.

Psalm 26:11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

In which he had hitherto walked (Psalm 26:1). Or it may express his faith, that after he was gathered by death he should walk in uprightness and righteousness. In purity and perfection, with Christ dressed in white, and behold the face of God in righteousness (see Isa. 57:1).

"Redeem me": From the vain conversation of the wicked, from all troubles, and out of the hands of all enemies.

"And be merciful unto me": Who was now in distress, being persecuted by Saul, and at a distance from the house of God. This shows that mercy is the source and spring of redemption, both temporal and spiritual. And that the psalmist did not trust in and depend upon his present upright walk and conversation. But in redemption by Christ, and upon the mercy of God in Christ.

David is saying, as for me and my house, we will serve God. David knows his redemption lies in the mercy of God. Our redemption depends upon the mercy of God toward us. Our cry should be: be merciful to me Lord, for I am a sinner. Redeem my soul from everlasting torment. I do not deserve it, but give me life everlasting in heaven with Jesus. Count my faith in Jesus Christ my Lord as righteousness for me.

Psalm 26:12 "My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD."

Or "in a plain"; in a sure place. On Christ the sure foundation, and who is the plain way and path to eternal life (see Psalm 27:11; compare verse 1 "without wavering"). Or in the ways and worship of God, prescribed by his word. And so, denotes steadfastness and continuance in them.

"In the congregations will I bless the Lord": In the assemblies of the saints, in the churches of Christ below, and in the great congregation above, in the general assembly and church of the firstborn. Where it is the work of saints now, and will be hereafter, to praise the Lord, for all his mercies temporal and spiritual.

I have planted my feet on the solid Rock, which cannot be moved. We are told not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together. We should sing praises to God. We should praise Him from our very inner being. We should shout praises of His wonderful works. Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name. We should stand like the oak tree that cannot be moved. We should stand for God.

Psalm 26 Questions

1. What is slide, in verse 1, similar to in our day?
2. What is David saying when he asks God to judge him?
3. What does backsliding mean?
4. What does purge mean?
5. What does Agape mean?
6. I could not live without the _____ of _____ to guide me.
7. A man, who does not know God, lives like no more than an _____.
8. What does vain mean, in verse 4?
9. What does dissemblers mean?
10. Who are Christians not to be unequally yoked with?
11. What does sit with the wicked show?
12. What is likely to happen to us, if we do not hate evil?
13. Who washed his hands to show his innocence in crucifying Jesus?

14. What does it mean when we say, I wash my hands of the whole matter?
15. What does compass mean?
16. What type sacrifice should we be constantly giving God?
17. Is it possible to have your name blotted out of the book of life?
18. How many miracles did Jesus do?
19. What is the habitation of God?
20. Do you love to go to church?
21. Why do you go to church?
22. The house of God should be a place of _____, not _____.
23. At harvest time, what happens to the wheat and the chaff?
24. As for me and my house, _____.
25. What should we ask God to count as righteousness for us?
26. I have planted my feet on the solid _____.