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The Life of a Sincere Worshipper; Psalm 26

GPBC

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Introduction - Worship is a central motif in this psalm.

1. We see worship in the private realm when David speaks of what he believes and how he privately addresses God.
2. We see worship in the public, corporate realm when David speaks of going around God's altar, loudly proclaiming thanksgiving and telling of His wondrous deeds. He speaks of loving God's house and of blessing the Lord in the great assembly.
3. We see worship in the inner realm of the heart when David speaks of trusting God and requesting the Lord to test his heart. It is both a joyful and painful process for God to search our hearts. When God shines the light of truth upon our deceptions and blind spots, it is both painful to admit where sin lurks in our hearts and it is difficult to root it out. But oh what joy, what peace, what delight results when sin is uncovered, confessed, and met with repentance! Or when our faith is refreshed and encouraged.
4. We see worship in the outer realm of life when David speaks of how he walks in light of knowing God, resisting the influence of sinners and striving to please God.

Worship of our holy, good, and sovereign Lord will pervade every arena of our lives. The application for today's message is that we might guard against compartmentalizing our faith. We schedule our week for work and family and rest and God, when we should rather view work, family, and rest as a variety of means to worship God. We schedule our day to spend a few minutes with God in the morning and then go about our day, when we should rather spend those precious moments with God as a means to fuel and focus our day as a day spent for His glory.

I. Sincere Worship Involves the Heart and the Life (vv1-3)

A) David calls on the Lord to judge him, to declare him right with God. That's what vindicate means. He knows that everything rises or falls on the judgement of God. Without His vindication, all else fails. God's word is final.

1. David's trust in the Lord's vindication is grounded in his life and faith. "for" Note the connection David makes between his life and his faith. He sees those two as going together, not as separate or one being

independent of the other. They go together. Faith and works. James ch2 "Faith without works is dead." Meaning the necessary evidence of true faith is that it makes a difference in our lives. And not just works, as Paul says in Romans 14:23, "anything done apart from faith is sin."

3. Faith and works go hand in hand for believers. When our faith in Christ is real, our lives walk in accordance with our faith, proving our faith. That and only that provides sure ground for vindication from the Lord.

B) What David requests in v2 reveals his plea for God to make the final assessment, even in the light of his own assessment in v1. I have walked in integrity and I have trusted in You, but I need Your assessment to either verify or correct me. I leave not the final assessment to my own understanding. "I have examined myself, now You examine me."

1. Now that would be terrifying if it were not for what David is relying on in v3, namely that God is not only judge, but He is loving and faithful. "God show me who I really am and make me right with you, and I trust that however you get me there, You will get me there because You are steadfast love and faithfulness."

2. David's confidence in making it through the Lord's examination is that he walks in the Lord's faithfulness.

C) The heart of the sincere worshipper is painstakingly and hopefully laid bare before the Lord, and the resulting life shows it.

II. Sincere Worship Involves a Clear Distinction from the World (vv4-7)

A) Being in the world, not of the world means that we are a shining light of the Gospel to those around us, not that we are like those around us. We compel them to Christ and true life, without adopting their life, lifestyle, worldview, reasoning.

B) David announces what he does not do in vv4-5 and what he does in vv6-7. What he hates in v5 and what he loves in v8. And it becomes increasingly evident that a sincere worshipper of God is a noticeably different creature. The things he resists, the things he embraces, the things he despises, and the things he loves - everything distinguishes him.

C) So walking in God's faithfulness, in v3, produces glaring results, one of which is a clear distinction from the ways and the thinking and the living of unbelievers. That's what sit and consort indicates.

1. David uses rather strong language by saying he has a hatred for the assembly of the evildoers. But wait a minute David, you say, you are to love everybody. To which David might reply, "Oh yes, oh yes, I am to love everybody, but I'm not to love everything about everybody." There arises in me a righteous hatred when the assembly of evildoers assault the people

of God, or boast and celebrate their evil, or sway the masses to join in their evildoing. When the assembly of evildoers harm the church, defy God, or deceive the masses, I hate that about them.

D) Now in contrast to the actions and views of unbelievers, David announces he does what unbelievers do not do, he sincerely worships God among another assembly.

1. It is because he has not adopted the ways of the world that he can confidently assert that he is ready and prepared to worship. "I wash my hands in innocence." Because I have not embraced or have been swayed by the sin around me, I come to worship ready to approach my God.

a. It seems pretty obvious that David is referring to corporate worship and it also is quite obvious that David understands that corporate worship is much, much more than mere religious activity. That when God's people gather in His name, God is present - watching, listening, moving.

E) Now all of this brings up some very pointed, soul-searching questions for us as we apply this text to our own lives.

1. If our corporate worship is approaching our living God together, do we strive to live Mon-Sat as preparation for meeting with God? How does that impact our weekend? Let us be reminded that when we gather in God's name, we come before Him. Let that shape our week and our weekend, so that when we do gather, we come prepared and expectant.

3. Maybe we should just press it just a little further. If we believe when we gather in His name, we approach Him, it will not only shape our week and our weekend, it will shape us when we are here. There is nothing more the Enemy would delight in greater than for our worship to become anything less than approaching and glorifying God. When personal preferences take precedent. Criticism and cynicism grow. Disagreements and dislikes disconnect us from one another. Most, if not all, of which would vanish if when we come together, our hearts would be foremost energized with the thought that we come before God.

III. Sincere Worship Involves a Great Affection for the Lord (vv8-10)

A) In v8, we reach the bottom of David's heart, so to speak, for this is what drives everything else is it not? David confesses out of everything he loves, he loves the Lord foremost, more than anything else.

1. That's why he desires to be right with God in v1. That's why he wants to be sure he's right with God in v2. That's why he resists being overcome by the unbelieving world around him in vv4-5. That's why he comes to worship, ready to worship in vv6-7. V8 tells it all - he loves the Lord. He loves to be with God. He loves His presence.

B) Reflecting over vv8-10, a couple of questions surfaced. In light of David's testimony in vv4-5 that he does not live as unbelievers live, why does he plead to not be swept away with them in vv9-10? How does the request to not be swept away with sinners in vv9-10 fit with his affirmation of love for God and nearness to God in v8?

1. David is requesting to not be swept away with sinners because he wants to be with God. He loves His glory. He loves His presence. And sinners will be swept away. I don't want to be swept away! Vindicate me, prove me, because I want to be with You!

IV. Sincere Worship Involves Both the Individual and the Church (vv11-12)

A) In v11, David declares himself to be separate from the sinners of vv9-10. He is not bloodthirsty. He does not resort to evil means. He does not manipulate others to do his bidding. He walks in his integrity.

1. And then his next statement is so very, very, very critical for the sincere worshipper. As soon as he makes his case, as soon as he makes his defense, he immediately falls back on the mercy and grace of God.

2. David knew that his integrity could only be credited to the mercy and grace of God, and apart from the ongoing mercy and grace of God, he would not maintain it. That's why he immediately prays, "redeem me."

B) "My foot stands on level ground" The level ground is a life of worship and a heart of worship produced by and held up by the mercy and grace of God. By Your grace, my heart desires You, my life pursues You, I am ready to meet with You - "in the great assembly I will bless the Lord." Note how everything David has said culminates right here, worshipping God surrounded by worshippers of God.

C) That indeed is where everything will culminate. Sunday worship should be a taste of heaven not a reflection of culture. Because this great, local, temporary assembly is only pointing to the great, universal, global, eternal assembly, where we will worship the Lord surrounded by all the worshippers of the Lord.