

Psalm 26

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When we are falsely accused, let us set before ourselves the LORD as all our confidence and all our desire, so that we will walk with integrity from the assemblies of the godly in this life to that great assembly of the godly in that to come.

A Psalm of David.

¹ Vindicate me, O LORD,
For I have walked in my integrity.
I have also trusted in the LORD;
I shall not slip.
² Examine me, O LORD, and prove me;
Try my mind and my heart.
³ For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,
And I have walked in Your truth.
⁴ I have not sat with idolatrous mortals,
Nor will I go in with hypocrites.
⁵ I have hated the assembly of evildoers,
And will not sit with the wicked.

⁶ I will wash my hands in innocence;
So I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
⁷ That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,
And tell of all Your wondrous works.
⁸ LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house,
And the place where Your glory dwells.
⁹ Do not gather my soul with sinners,
Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,
¹⁰ In whose hands is a sinister scheme,
And whose right hand is full of bribes.
¹¹ But as for me, I will walk in my integrity;
Redeem me and be merciful to me.
¹² My foot stands in an even place;
In the congregations I will bless the LORD.

A plea for commendation, v1–2. If David and the Lord Jesus were falsely accused, let us not be surprised when we are as well. Neither let us despair. For the Lord sees all and vindicates His servants. Before the bar of His own justice, we must plead for mercy (v11b), but good men are often innocent of accusations made against them, and it is not wrong for them to desire from God that He would clear their name. This will be done at the judgment, but the Lord sometimes does it in time as well, and we can ask Him to do so.

A principle for companionship, v3–5. If we are crying to God for vindication, let us be careful not to fall into the trap of seeking it by means of acceptance with the wicked. We must have God’s own steadfast love and faithfulness as the setting of our life: the main thing that we see wherever we are (v3a), the main factor determining wherever we go and whatever we do (v3b). The temptation will be to figure out how to make the wicked accept our innocence, but that is a path to doing sinful and dishonest things in order to manipulate what they see. Rather, if our hope is in God, then let our eyes also be upon Him, and let our consideration be for what He sees.

Indeed, living this way in v3 is a means by which David’s desire for the acceptance of the ungodly is neutralized. He doesn’t care to sit with them (v4a, 5b) or to be part of their assembly (v4b, 5a). N.b. the location of their final assembly (v9), and you will be glad to studiously avoid even now their companionship, and the kinds of things that members of this group do to pump up their reputations (v10)!

A plan for corporate worship, v6–8. No, the man who is hoping in the Lord and walking with the Lord prefers an altogether opposite group of companions: the assembly of the public worship of God. The washing in v6a isn’t just a symbolic claim of innocence, but a commitment to stay clean, because it is a preparation for public worship. We know that less than in at most six days we will again be at the public worship, and we wish to have as clean as possible a conscience and as prepared as possible a heart for it. If this was true for gathering to an altar upon which a bull would be sacrificed (v6b), how much more true for us who gather to the assembly of the firstborn, which is led by Risen Lamb!

That assembly is not a place of murmuring or grumbling, but of thanksgiving (v7a) and praise (v7b), for it is there that the details of our current circumstances in God’s plan of redemption are swallowed up in the whole of that glorious plan by our glorious Redeemer. When we think what that praise will be like, we consider His house a refuge (v8a), a place to see His glory tabernacling among us (v8b). It is this language of the tabernacling of God’s glory among us that John picks up in 1:14 of his gospel. The Lord Jesus Himself is the ultimate fulfillment of the holy desire expressed in v8. The falsely accused believer does well to look forward to that day when we shall see Him face to face; and, this practice will help him to value corporate worship now in a way that neuters any desire to be accepted in the assemblies of the wicked of this age.

A preview of completion, v9–12. As already mentioned above, the condemnation of the wicked will soon come to its completion (v9–10), and this is the accusation and condemnation which we must avoid at all costs. But the vindication and blessing of the righteous will also soon come to completion (v11–12). He who hopes in God’s mercy (v11b) seeks to walk according to God’s morality (v11a). Note that though he asks the Lord for just declarations in the beginning of the Psalm, his hope and ours must never be in an exact justness but in the mercy of God. Like Job, who was not wrong in desiring to be vindicated against his “friends” false accusations, when we turn to God Himself, we know that if He deals with us according to our sin and His holiness without a Redeemer, we shall perish. But at the last there will be a gathered congregation of those who praise Yahweh (v12b), and the one walking there is on the safe highway (v12a), regardless of how precarious things seem at the present moment.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

All right, we're going to have some 26 tonight. So, let's pray before we start.

Our father in heaven. How we? Thank you and praise you for Christ's perfect righteousness that we can come through him. That when we come to you, we have good confidence to plead for mercy. We thank you for not only counting us righteous in him. But the work that your spirit does graciously applying Christ to us growing us by his grace and knowledge, conforming us to his image and pray that you would get much glory in this work that you are.

I'm doing in our lives and we thank you for giving us the psalm and the situation that it treats that we would rather not go through. But we entrust ourselves to your wisdom. And we thank you for being honest with us and telling us what our lives will be like that we would not be caught by surprise or unaware we ask for the help of your spirit.

Now that he would give clarity to our thoughts and warmth to our affections and promptness submission to our wills, that we might assimilate, that which is in your word here. For if and when we should come under false accusation, we pray Lord that you would use the study of your word to set yourself before us that a glimpse of your glory and of your goodness.

What you have done for us. What you have promised to us that these things might be useful to us for the purpose of the evening and warming us up unto prayer and preparing us to come to you. We ask these things through Christ. I'm in Psalm 26. A psalm of David vindicate me owe Yahweh for I have walked in my integrity.

I have also trusted in Yahweh, I shall not slip, examine me of Yahweh. And proved me, try my mind, and my heart for your loving. Kindness as before my eyes and I have walked in your truth. I've not sat with idolatrous mortals, nor will I go in with hypocrites.

I've hated the assembly of evildoers and will not sit with the wicked. I will wash my hands in innocence. So I will go about your altar of y'all way that I may proclaim with a voice of thanksgiving and tell of all your wondrous works y'all. Hey I have loved the habitation of your house and the place where you're glory.

Dwells, do not gather my soul with sinners, nor my life with blood thirsty. Men in his hands is a sinister scheme and his right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I will walk in my integrity redeem me and be merciful to me. My foot stands in an even place and the congregation.

I will bless y'all way so far the reading of God's inspired and errant word main theme of the psalm being that when we are falsely accused we are to set before ourselves. The Lord, as all our confidence and the Lord is all our desire. That mean, we might walk with integrity moving from gathering with the godly in this life and refusing to gather with the wicked in this life to when we leave this life to be gathered into the great assembly of the godly and glory.

So that we might not be gathered with the wicked who go to destruction. So, the situation is that David has been falsely accused. He repeats a few times that he's walked in his integrity. He begins by asking God to pronounce a judgment to give his judicial opinion as it were.

And he's pleading that God would commend him because others are condemning him and accusing him. We'll see that in the first two verses. And then in verses, three through five, there is a principle that determines whom he will have as his companions and he, he has the Lord himself and especially the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord before him and wanting to walk in response to the Lord that diffuses or neutralizes a desire to be accepted with the wicked.

In fact, he decides that he doesn't want to to be in the assembly of the wicked at all. So, principle for companionship and versus three through five, and then that principle on the negative side, is not wanting to be in the assemblies of the wicked and the principle for companionship turns into a plan for corporate worship.

Whom does the one whose heart and mind are set upon the Lord with whom does he want to gather? He wants to gather with God's people, and what does he want to gather for? He wants to gather for worship and the praise and giving of God. And so if we're doing the choosing our friends thing, right?

Then we're not going to be the kind of people who miss corporate worship easily. We are going to be those who love the habitation of the Lord's house and so forth. So a plan for corporate worship and verses 6 through 8 and then a preview of completion that this work of grace that God does.

And a man giving us hope in him alone. Making us live in fellowship with him and in view of his steadfast love and faithfulness. This trust in and focus on the Lord, that determines for us, or shapes the choices that we make about whom who we will have as our companions.

That that has it's completion and not only in this life but in the next that rejecting God and wanting to be in the assembly of evildoers. As characteristic of those who go to the fate of those who die without Christ and who have loved rather the acceptance and approval of the world rather than God's complete acceptance and the Lord Jesus, what a dreadful thing to get to hang out with the wicked forever.

And then the completion of the other, of course, is exactly the opposite that that, which we long to see matured and increase in our lives as far as trusting in the Lord, and walking with him, and loving his people and loving his workshop. That when we move from this life, into the next, those in whom, the Lord has done a work of grace, like that, we'll find all of those things perfected that our trust in him will be perfect.

Our focus on him will be perfect. Our love for his glory will be perfect and it is just in that moment that we will be in that glorious assembly. And so that's the shape of the psalm first. Plead for commendation asking God to vindicate him. He says, vindicate me away for, I've walked in my integrity, I've also trusted in the hallway.

I shall not slip. Examine me. Oh you always and prove me, try my mind and my heart. So in verse one, he he has a clear conscience and the Lord grant to us not only to keep short accounts with him but to live honestly and uprightly in our dealings with others.

So that we may pray a prayer like this with a good conscience to indicate me. Oh, you always for I have walked in my integrity but you notice that his trust is not in his walking is trust. Is in the Lord. I have trusted in Yahweh. I shall not slip and he's not satisfied with the level of integrity, although he's been accused falsely and he wants God to make others find out that he's been accused falsely and sometimes were in situations where the Lord alone can do that.

No, you know, we'd have to gossip to clear our own name and we're unwilling to break God's law to do that. But the fact that he's innocent of that which others have accused him of is not as not. Therefore reason to think that he's arrived or that he is perfect in himself.

He still wants to grow holiness. Examine me of y'all way, improve me. Try my mind and and my heart. You see that for instance at the end of Psalm 19 in the asking the Lord to test and see exposed whatever unclean ways are left in him, you see it and the apostle Paul when he is defending himself and his own innocence.

And and he says, you know, I have a clear conscience before God but that does not necessarily mean that I'm innocent, we should want. Not only that, God would declare us innocent of what others of falsely accused us of, but that God would show us what we are guilty of so that we might yet grow in in godliness.

I do think it's important here to notice that it's not wrong to desire. That God would clear our name? Yeah, David prays for it here. The apostle Paul, although he says things, like I speak like a madman. You look what you drove me to, but for the sake of the ministry, that is being harmed by the false accusations against fall.

He does defend his name for the sake of the ministry. That's been entrusted to him. One historical example that I think of is George Whitfield the first great. Awakening Wesley leveled, a number of accusations, false accusations again to him because Wesley was trying to steer the first great awakening in a narmanian direction and Whitfield was unwilling to defend himself publicly.

And it's hard to know. Yeah, obviously, you are impressed with the humility and the willingness not to be publicly contentious, but I do think the ministry suffered and the first great awakening did end up with a very methodist England. Instead of a very reformed England, things were a little bit better over here because Wesley wasn't over here but it wasn't for a couple hundred years until the Lord vindicated his servants name and the history is still in the process actually of being set straight anyway.

If David and the Lord Jesus were falsely accused, do not be surprised when you are as well. Just go ahead and expect it because God has given you something to pray and sing for when you're falsely accused. So if God's given that to you, don't be surprised when it happens.

In fact, if you've never been slandered, huge, thank God and say, thank you. For being gentle with me and your providence that I have not had this very unpleasant experience that many of your servants have. And if you should do and help me to remember that, there is a manual for dealing with it in Psalm 26 and let me follow your word.

So there's a plea for commendation. Then there's this principle for companionship. He's trusted in Yahweh verse 1. He's wanting the Lord to sanctify him verse 2 for your loving, kindness as before my eyes and I have walked in your truth. Now, when whenever in many places were God, declares his character and scripture, he uses the words that are translated loving kindness and truth here tested and emit as kind of a summary for all of his characteristics.

What? But David is saying here is, yeah, he does want to be vindicated before men, but it's not really men for whom. He's living or in. Who's presence. He's living. He says, you're loving kindness is before my eyes and it's not really men him. David wants to determine what he does.

He says, and I have walked in your truth. We ought to be if we are trusting in the Lord and it's confidence in him. The our confidence that we will not slip as in him and our confidence of being vindicated and cleared at last is in him. Then we ought to live our lives first and foremost in fellowship with him.

If you want to work on getting things right, in your relationships with men, then your primary relationship and your your primary focus needs to be how you are relating to God, let's be careful not to fall into the trap of seeking vindication by means of acceptance. With the wicked.

When you have been falsely, accused one of the temptations is to start to have your internal thoughts consumed. With how can I get people to see that? I'm not. Like, I've been accused of being but God can already see what you are like, that's why he gave Christ for you and he can see what work.

He's already done in you by his grace and he delights in all of those little reflections of Christ that he's been been growing in in, you has plan was to his predestining plan was to conform you to the image of of his son. And so it's much more appealing, isn't it to have God's loving kindness, and God's faithfulness, to his covenant, commitments and promises always before your eyes always shaping how you walk knowing that he has decided to have pleasure in you for Jesus sake and he's making you more pleasant making your character and your walk more pleasant in his sight.

Well, if that's your focus, then the last thing you actually want to be accepted by the world because you don't want want to be in the company of evildoers and associated with and sucked into the kinds of things that offend, the God who has saved you, the one who you love.

Because he first loved you, you want to testify in his behalf and you want to minister in his behalf and you want to appeal to them to be saved and not to perish, but you don't want to have them as your companions. You don't want to have them. As the ones who's acceptance, you're seeing, you don't want to be consumed with the feeling.

Like you just need to get there approval. This is something that you know, we I think have seen on a macro scale on a big scale in the churches for several generations. Now but it's something that's real temptation to every one of our own hearts and seeing the law of and faithfulness of God to us and the gospel and knowing the pleasantness of walking with the one who gave Christ for us and is not going to stop his work and us until we are made like Christ walking in that fellowship is a wonderful antidote to desiring the acceptance and approval of the ungodly.

And says, I have not sat with idolatrous mortals, nor will I go in with hypocrites. I have hated the assembly of evildoers and will not sit with the wicked is okay. If they don't let me sit at their lunch table you know think all of you children in here could just be glad that you never had to go through either private or public school and walk into the lunchroom and look around.

And figure out at which table, you might be tolerated with the least amount of humiliation and abuse. I mean, the closer experience you have to that is probably, you know, walking, you know, getting to the end of the food table here and turning around and knowing that you will be accepted and have good fellowship, no matter where you sit in the whole room, what, what a difference.

But knowing the favor of God in Christ, as the remedy is the oh we won't use the word vaccine, but it's the cure for for wanting the approval of the wicked. And that's why instead of wanting the approval of the wicked, what he really wants, is to go to worship.

So when he says, I will wash my hands in innocence, he's not just making a claim to or repeating. The idea that he's innocent of what he's been accused of he's telling us why he's been walking up. Rightly, he's been walking up rightly because he wants to be ready to go to worship when he says, I will wash my hands and innocence, he is using a word picture from what they would do.

Yeah, we could go to Deuteronomy, we obviously won't take the time to do that in a prayer meeting lesson. And, but we could go to Deuteronomy and look at the ceremonial washings that are commanded. And he's saying, I'm staying away from the wicked and I maintaining my integrity because it's worship readiness, it's worship prep.

I will wash my hands in innocence. So I will go about your altar of y'all way that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and tell of all your wondrous works, y'all way. I have loved the habitation of your house then the place where your glory dwells how little we need the pleasure of having wicked men saying, yeah, we like that guy.

If you have the anticipation of the pleasure of gathering unto the Lord, with his people, not to be approved of and liked by his other people. Although, the godly have a wonderful fellowship, but so that you can sing his praise. So, you can tell proclaim with a voice of thanksgiving to him and tell of all is wondrous works and see his glory.

Verse 8, there's something thereof of that transition in in thought that we have referred to often in Psalm 73 with ASAP that going to work up and seeing the glory of God and seeing the end of the wicked and seeing the end of the righteous. That's what takes over all of this jealousy and anxiety.

And and unthankfulness that the psalmist in the first half of Psalm 73 says when I thought that way I was like, East towards God and have had open my mouth of it with it. I would have betrayed a generation of your people and then he goes to worship sees, God's glory realizes who God is, and what God has done for him and whom God has made him to be to himself and himself to be to him and he says, whom have I in heaven, but you and there's nothing else I desire on earth beside you.

So we have something similar to that a second half of verse 6. And then on into verse 7 and verse 8 that the surpassing pleasure of the idea of getting to gather to God in worship and praise him and thank him and see his and consider his glory. Suddenly it's not that they could deal the.

That men are thinking ill of him. When you have your thoughts full of the Lord, you can be self-forgetful and when you're when things aren't going so well with you and how people think of you self-forgetfulness is a great blessing because then you get to forget how miserable you feel in your relationships.

And in how people think of you because you're consumed with how God has made you rightly to think of him. So that is the plan for corporate worship and this companionship and corporate worship. As we said in the preceding, six verses is really a preview of what it'll be like when it's completed says, do not gather my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloodthirsty men and other words, he's avoiding the gatherings of the wicked in this life.

With good reason. He would really, really not like to be gathered with them when this life is over. He says don't take my soul where their souls go, don't take my life, where they're life goes in their hands is the sinner sinister scheme, and their right hand is full of brides and you can you can hear in verse 10 that, you know, some of the things that he might have been tempted to.

If he wanted the approval of the wicked, he could have come up with a way to look better, that evil scheme, he would intent it, even to sin. And in order to look better and certainly he would have tried with with presence or gifts or whatever whatever manipulation he could to swing their opinion but instead of trying to swing their opinion and being obsessed with them.

And instead he's asked God to do the vindicating verse one. And so being beware of a desire for the approval of and fellowship with the wicked in this life, less you receive what you asked for eternally preview of completion. But as for me, he says, I will walk in my integrity redeem me and notice his desire to walk an integrity, his desire to walk in a manner that pleases God again is not his hope.

He doesn't say redeem me and be just with me. No, his hope is in God's mercy. It's knowing that that God has called us his children and behold what manner of love the followers and us that we would be called the children of God, knowing that God has adopted us as his children knowing that they're still a lot of work to do love.

You know, what we shall be has not yet appeared. We certainly aren't what we ought to be yet, but that work will be done, but know that when he appears, we will be like him for. We will see him as he is, and the one who hopes thus purifies himself as God as the Lord Jesus himself is pure.

So he says, as for me, I will walk in my integrity, I'm one who hopes thus I am purifying myself and committed to sanctification growing and holiness, but it comes out of a hope for God's mercy. Redeem me and be merciful to me. Yeah, the godliest, man, the godliest mere man on earth in this life.

Still cries out to God. For mercy, my footstands in an evil in an even place in the congregation's. I will bless y'all who so our hope with God is as mercy and we look forward to at last being in the gathered congregation of those who are blessing. The name of the Lord, the safe path verse to the first part of verse 12.

My footstands and an even place. The safe path is the one of trusting in the Lord, loving him walking with him and looking forward to being in the congregation of the blessed at last. So my, my dear brothers and sisters, I hope you do not have the miserable experience of being falsely, accused and slandered, but should the Lord bring you into such a season?

He has given you a really sturdy and helpful. Psalm, for bringing the gospel to bear on that season in your life. And may God, the spirit bless his word to us. Let's come together to our time of prayer.