

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
Placerita Baptist Church
2004

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Psalm 26 — Walking in God's Truth

1.0 Introducing Psalm 26

- Psalm 26 has a number of similarities with Psalm 25:
 - ◆ Both begin with declaration of trust in God (25:2; 26:1).
 - ◆ Both contain a prayer for redemption (25:22; 26:11).
 - ◆ Both include a prayer for divine grace (25:16; 26:11).
 - ◆ Both refer to the psalmist's "integrity" (25:21; 26:11).
 - ◆ Both mention the psalmist's relationship to God's "truth" (25:5; 26:3).
 - ◆ Both indicate the significance of the "feet" (25:15; 26:12).
- Psalm 25 refers to the "path" or "way" of the righteous (vv. 4, 8, 9, 10, 12), while Psalm 26 refers to the walking (vv. 1, 3, 11).
- The operative word is "wait" in Psalm 25 (vv. 3, 5, 21), but it is "walk" in Psalm 26 (vv. 1, 3, 11).

2.0 Reading Psalm 26 (NAU)

26:1 *A Psalm of David.*

Vindicate me, O LORD, for **I have walked in my integrity**,
And I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

26:2 **Examine** me, O LORD, and **try** me;
Test my mind and my heart.

26:3 For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,
And **I have walked in Your truth.**

26:4 I do not **sit** with deceitful men,
Nor will I go with pretenders.

26:5 I hate the assembly of evildoers,
And I will not **sit** with the wicked.

26:6 I shall wash my hands in innocence,

- And I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
26:7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving
And declare all Your wonders.
- 26:8** O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house
And the place where Your glory dwells.
- 26:9** Do not take my soul away *along* with sinners,
Nor my life with men of bloodshed,
- 26:10** In whose hands is a wicked scheme,
And whose right hand is full of bribes.
- 26:11** But as for me, **I shall walk in my integrity;**
Redeem me, and be gracious to me.
- 26:12** My foot stands on a level place;
In the congregations I shall bless the LORD.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 26

3.1 Outline

- I. Prayer for Vindication (vv. 1-3)
- II. Proclamation of Innocence (vv. 4-7)
- III. Plea for Justice (vv. 8-10)
- IV. Promise of Faithfulness (vv. 11-12)



3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** “Vindicate me”
 - Is a prayer for personal vindication consistent with New Testament teaching?
 - “At first glance the word *vindicate* suggests a desire to be shown to be right over against other people: ‘I have been falsely accused; show everybody that I am really innocent.’ But as I read this psalm I sense that it is not David’s reputation in the eyes of other people that concerns him but rather God’s vindication of the rightness of a devout and moral life. In other words, it is not his own reputation but God’s reputation that he covets.”—James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994), 1:231.
 - Compare with the prayer of the widow in Luke 18:1-8.
 - God is the highest source of justice.
 - The prayer is not in regard to judgment in the final day, but for justice and right now.
 - Such a prayer involves divine examination of the petitioner.
- **v. 1** “without wavering”
 - Literally, “without slipping” or “without sliding.”
 - Psalm 18:36
 - Psalm 37:31
 - Cf. verse 12.



- **v. 2** “Examine ... try ... Test”
 - Three different words (see C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 1/1:416).
 - Trial by touch.
 - Trial by smell(?).
 - Trial by fire.
 - See notes on Psalms 12:7 and 17:3.

- **v. 4** “I do not sit with deceitful men”
 - “Such sitting down with them would imply prolonged association and greater intimacy and responsibility for companionship, than walking with them or standing with them.”—Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (reprint; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 1:232.
 - Cf. Psalm 1:1.

- **vv. 6-7**
 - All of these actions appear to be related to the House of the LORD.
 - Washing the hands was a ceremony of purification. It is also a declaration of innocence (Deut 21:6-7).
 - Walking in procession around the altar was perhaps the form worship took while the priests were making the sacrifice.

- **v. 8** “the place where Your glory dwells”
 - Tabernacle: Exodus 40:34-35
 - Temple: 1 Kings 8:11
 - Note the emphasis on loving attendance in the place of worship (see, also, Psalms 23:6; Hebrews 10:25).
 - “‘I have in my congregation,’ said a venerable minister of the gospel, ‘a worthy, aged woman, who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound, and yet she is always one of the first in the meeting. On asking the reason of her constant attendance (as it was impossible for her to hear my voice), she answered, “Though I cannot hear you, I come to God’s house because I love it, and would be found in his ways; and he gives me many a sweet thought upon the text when it is pointed out to me: another reason is, because there I am in the best company, in the more immediate presence of God, and among his saints, the honourable of the earth. I am not satisfied with serving God in private; it is my duty and privilege to honour him regularly in public.”’ What a reproof this is to those who have their hearing, and yet always come to a place of worship late, or not at all!” — K. Arvine (1859) as cited in C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprinted; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 1/1:425.

- **v. 9** “Do not take my soul away”
 - The phraseology speaks of divine favor.

- David prays that he might not be condemned and judged along with the wicked.
- **vv. 11-12**
 - There are several plays on word in these verses:
 - “And be gracious to me” at the end of verse 11 is one word in Hebrew (*wehonnani*) that sounds like “Examine me” (*behanani*) in verse 2.
 - The Hebrew word for “a level place” (*mishor*) also brings to mind the word for “upright” (*yashar*, from the same root). This would call to mind the psalmist’s claim regarding his “integrity.”
 - See note on verse 1.

4.0 Singing Psalm 26

Tune: “Amazing Grace” or “Joy to the World”



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| <p>1 Be Thou my Judge, O righteous Lord,
Try Thou mine inmost heart;
I walk with steadfast trust in Thee,
Nor from Thy ways depart.</p> <p>2 O search me, Lord, and prove me now;
Thy mercy I adore;
I choose Thy truth to be my guide,
And sinful ways abhor.</p> <p>3 My hands I wash in innocence
And seek Thine altar, Lord,
That there I may with thankful voice
Thy wondrous ways record.</p> <p>4 The habitation of Thy house
Is ever my delight;
The place where dwells Thy glory,
 Lord,
Is lovely in my sight.</p> | <p>5 Let not the judgment fall on me
For evil men decreed,
For cruel men and violent,
Inspired by bribes and greed.</p> <p>6 But I in mine integrity
Will humbly walk with Thee;
O my Redeemer and my Lord,
Be merciful to me.</p> <p>7 Redeemed by Thee, I stand secure
In peace and happiness;
And in the Church, among Thy
 saints,
Jehovah I will bless.</p> |
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— Author unknown

Self-examination or Evidences of Grace (Tune: “He Leadeth Me”)

Judge me, O Lord, and prove my ways,
And try my reins, and try my heart.
My faith upon thy promise stays,
Nor from thy law my feet depart.

I hate to walk, I hate to sit,
With men of vanity and lies.
The scoffer and the hypocrite

Are the abhorrence of mine eyes.
Amongst thy saints will I appear
With frauds well washed in innocence;
But when I stand before thy bar,
The blood of Christ is my defence.

I love thy habitation, Lord,
The temple where thine honors dwell;
There shall I hear thine holy word,
And there thy works of wonder tell.

Let not my soul be joined at last
With men of treachery and blood,
Since I my days on earth have passed
Among the saints, and near my God.

— Isaac Watts

5.0 **Praying Psalm 26**

- Father, help me to live for You with integrity. (vv. 1, 11)
- Examine my heart and test my faith, Lord. (v. 2)
- Lead me so that I walk in Your truth. (v. 3)
- O God, create in my heart a hatred for sin. (vv. 4-5)
- Lord, give me an ever deepening love for the assembly of Your people. (v. 8)
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6.0 **Applying Psalm 26**

- Our only vindication is what God Himself provides when He says, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).
- The company we keep speaks louder than our words (cp. 1 Corinthians 15:33).
- Self-examination is a godly occupation (cp. 2 Corinthians 13:5).

There cannot be attachment without detachment.

W. Graham Scroggie, *The Psalms*
(Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1973),
161.