

Psalm 26 • Vindicate me, O Lord!

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Psalm Chapter 26. This is a short Psalm. It is just 12 verses long. It is a Psalm of David, and you can tell by reading through this Psalm that, again, David was in trouble. He needed the Lord's deliverance. But he also believed he was innocent of any wrongdoing. Look what he says. Here's his prayer.

Verse 1: *“Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind. For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness.”* (ESV)

What is David saying here? What he's saying is, regarding this issue, this problem that I am going through right now, I believe myself to be innocent related to any charges or any issues or any accusations that have come up against me.

David is not saying he is sinless by any stretch of the imagination. He's not saying that he had never has any opportunity for sin. He's saying in this situation for which I am praying, I believe myself to be innocent.

Then he goes on to speak of this innocence. Verse 4: *“I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O LORD, proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds. O LORD, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells.”*

He is speaking to the Lord of the ways that he has lived for God during the midst of this situation.

now his, again, he returns to his petition. He says, *“Do not sweep my soul away with sinners, nor my life with bloodthirsty men, in whose hands are evil devices, and whose right hands are full of bribes. But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me.”*

And then David ends, and here's your word of faith. Verse 12: *“My foot stands on level ground; and in the great assembly, I will bless the Lord.”* Basically

what David is saying in that final statement of faith. is, even though the enemy is on rocky ground, unstable territory, my feet are on level ground because my trust is in the Lord, and I will live to once again praise the Lord in the assembly of the saints.

That's what David is saying here. What's interesting about this Psalm is that David— he, as we've seen, approaches the Lord pretty much from the standpoint of deserving the Lord's deliverance. He calls upon the Lord to help him, he cries out to God to deliver him, but in the midst of that, he declares his innocence related to the issue that he is currently going through.

And so he approaches the Lord from that standpoint, declaring that, he is not at fault as it relates to this. And as we saw in verses 4 through 8, he even recounts his godly ways. And he even invites the Lord in earlier in the Psalm to make a thorough examination of his heart and his life to see if in fact he really is living as he said that he did.

And then after asking for God's deliverance, he confidently declares that he will continue to walk in integrity and walk with the Lord. And I want to emphasize that walking uprightly with the Lord is important. And I think that's something God obviously wants us to do. However, it's very important that we don't look at this Psalm and assume from this Psalm that you and I have to attain to some level of personal righteousness before we can cry out to God for deliverance.

That would be a misunderstanding and a misappropriation of this Psalm. I can't even begin to tell you how many times I've come before the Lord and cried out to him for a particular need or issue or thing that I was going through and basically said, Lord, I'm coming to you for help, but I don't deserve it.

And there's something that is really lifting about that, just to lay it out before the Lord right away and just say, I don't deserve Your help. I don't deserve what I'm about to ask for. I just want You to know that. I'm coming to You based on Your mercy and the blood of Jesus Christ that I know has washed my sin away.

And Christians, we have to come before the Lord with that in mind. We have to come before the Lord knowing that our sins have been washed away, you guys. The enemy wants to keep your sins between you and the Lord. You have to know in your prayer time, this has been taken care of. And that you can declare that as you come into the place of prayer.

Again, David is declaring his own innocence coming into this soul, but you and I can declare our innocence based on Jesus Christ. That we have been

exonerated, that we've been justified, that we've been acquitted. I can tell the Lord in prayer, and I love to do this, Lord, You know me, You know that I'm a guilty sinner, but You also know that I have accepted what Your Son did for me on the cross, and You've acquitted me of all wrongdoing.

You've wiped out the stain of sin against me. You've taken that which was the blot against my life and You've eradicated it. And now I stand in the righteousness of Your Son. You know that. I know that. I'm coming to You based on that. Knowing that. Understanding that. Believing that I am innocent in Your sight.

Because when You look at me, You see Your Son who is without sin. And yet gave His life for me.

I have to be honest with you. I think it delights the Father when we come into His presence declaring the right that we have to be there based on Jesus Christ and nothing less. The last thing you and I frankly want to do is to go before the Lord based on our own righteousness. And to come into his presence predicated upon that.

I would rather go in with the words of the apostle Paul that in my flesh dwells no good thing. (Romans 7:18) And I know that I don't deserve to come into Your presence. I know that I don't deserve to have good things done in my life. I know I don't deserve Your love, and yet You give it.

So many of us were raised –and I wasn't– but I know a lot of people who have been raised in a very performance-based background, where your life was made up of parents or whoever took care of you, who demanded things of you.

When you fulfilled those demands, they treated you better than if you didn't. And when you reneged on those demands, or you were you weren't able to fulfill those demands, you received less. And that's just the way you were raised. And now you're an adult, and you've come to know Christ is your Savior.

It is a very common thing to apply that same relationship to our walk with God and to begin to think that we are on a performance track with God. The better I act, the longer I go without saying a nasty word or taking a drink Or going to the bars, or watching a dirty movie, or whatever. The longer I can do that, the better God is going to think of me, and the better He's going to treat me, and the better my life is going to go, and so forth and so on. And again, not to say that we shouldn't attempt to live in the power of Christ, the life that He's called us to

live, but we have to get off that performance track of thinking that somehow God's going to love me more if I do, or if I perform.

We've got to get off that. I am so grateful for the fact that my own parents loved me unconditionally. I gave them a lot of opportunity to love me unconditionally. I gave them a lot of conditions to not love me, let me put it that way. But they loved me anyway, and I'm thankful for that, and they love me to this day.

And it's a wonderful blessing. But I've been in the ministry long enough to know that my situation is not the norm. That many people have been raised with an idea of, you get A's on your report card and here's what's going to happen, and we'll do these good things, and you know life is going to go better.

And if you don't, and if you don't clean your room, and if you don't do your chores, and if you don't, and if you talk back, or you have a bad attitude, you're going to, you're going to walk away with the idea that somehow mom and dad just aren't, they're not just not happy with you, they may not even love you.

They may not even accept you. And that's a horrible way for a child to be raised. I'll be honest with you, horrible, but it's not the way God deals with you. And you and I have to get that out of our minds. The righteous will live by faith. Your relationship with him is predicated upon your faith in Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross.

The beauty of that, the magnificence of what Jesus has accomplished. To allow you and me to come into His presence and to be called children of God, and to be heirs of God. Joint heirs with Christ. Just amazing. Just amazing. Behold what manner of love, the Bible says, that we should be called children of God. (1 John 3:1)

Wow, do I deserve to be a child of God? Oh, good grief. The opposite. But Aren't we happy today? Aren't we full of joy because we've gotten what we didn't deserve?