

# Sunday, 24 October 2021

## Announcements

Hi everyone!

Well you might have seen the email that went out earlier this week. The session met and decided that we would keep our reopening to Sunday, 31 October. It gives us time to prepare ourselves for reopening including for me, Sunday school, Music and morning tea. So thanks for your understanding, we'll be back in person from next week onwards! 9:30am in the Church.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact either me or one of the elders. Hope to see you real soon!

## Psalm 1

I was reflecting on Psalm 1 during the week. What does it look like to be blessed?

*Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man*

*who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,*

*nor stands in the way of sinners,*

*nor sits in the seat of scoffers;*

*2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD,*

*and on his law he meditates day and night.*

*Psa. 1:3 He is like a tree*

*planted by streams of water*

*that yields its fruit in its season,*

*and its leaf does not wither.*

*In all that he does, he prospers.*

*4 The wicked are not so,*

*but are like chaff that the wind drives away.*

*Psa. 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,*

*nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;*

*6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,*

*but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Psalm 1 (ESV)

What does it look like to be blessed? To be blessed is to walk closely with the LORD. To be in a close relationship with the LORD rather than walking with the world, with the sinner, the scoffer, the wicked. How is your relationship with the LORD?

Let me be more specific, are you meditating on the Word? The LORD has promised that we will see him in the Word. One of the things that I want us as a church is to be growing in reading the Word. You don't need to do much, I want to encourage you to read the Word at least 5 minutes a day. Pick up a Psalm, read it. Or maybe you're already reading, perhaps memorising a Scripture passage during the Week. This last week, I've been trying to memorise Psalm 1.

## **Prayer**

Let's pray, and then I'm going to invite you to say the Lord's prayer at the end.

*Heavenly Father,*

*Thank you that we are coming out of lockdown and we will be able to see each other in person very very soon. Thank you for keeping us safe for the last 3 or so months. Please continue to keep us safe as we come out of lockdown.*

*We give you praise for the way that you continue to be our Father in Heaven. We give you praise today for salvation through your son Jesus Christ. We ask for your forgiveness for the times when we have strayed. When our thoughts haven't been in line with your will, when we have coveted things that you have not given us, when we have been quick to speak and slow to listen. When we have put ourselves first, and not put you at the center of our lives. Thank you that you are just and faithful, that through your son we have the forgiveness of our sins. That our union with you will never be torn apart. Help us to walk closely with you, just like the man in Psalm 1. Help us to follow your ways, to be obedient to your word.*

*Now we'll say the Lord's prayer,*

*Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

## **Scripture**

*We're going to read Psalm 26,*

*Psa. 26:0 Of David.*

*Psa. 26:1 Vindicate me, O LORD,*

*for I have walked in my integrity,*

*and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.*

*2 Prove me, O LORD, and try me;*

*test my heart and my mind.*

*3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes,*

*and I walk in your faithfulness.*

*Psa. 26:4 I do not sit with men of falsehood,  
nor do I consort with hypocrites.*

*5 I hate the assembly of evildoers,  
and I will not sit with the wicked.*

*Psa. 26:6 I wash my hands in innocence  
and go around your altar, O LORD,*

*7 proclaiming thanksgiving aloud,  
and telling all your wondrous deeds.*

*Psa. 26:8 O LORD, I love the habitation of your house  
and the place where your glory dwells.*

*9 Do not sweep my soul away with sinners,  
nor my life with bloodthirsty men,*

*10 in whose hands are evil devices,  
and whose right hands are full of bribes.*

*Psa. 26:11 But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity;  
redeem me, and be gracious to me.*

*12 My foot stands on level ground;  
in the great assembly I will bless the LORD.*

Psalm 26 (ESV)

## Devotional

Have you ever been in a situation where you have been treated unjustly? Where you have been mistreated, where you have done nothing wrong? Merely because you are Christian?

Maybe not in Australia, but there are stories of Christians being mistreated in other countries. Take North Korea. In the early 1900s, it was known as the Jerusalem of the East with thousands of churches. But today, with the North Korean government today means there is no religious freedom. If discovered, Christians face harsh persecution. Just for the fact that they are Christians. And there are other countries around the world where being Christian gets you killed. Tens of thousands of Christians are killed each and every year.

As Christians, Jesus warns us that we may face persecution from the world. He says, blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (Matthew 5:11 ESV). And whilst we may not face persecution today in Australia, that may easily change. We are no longer the "home team", we are now the minority, Australia is no longer a Christian nation. So how do you handle persecution? How do you handle when you are blamed for things that you are innocent in? When people accuse you falsely because you follow Jesus? It's important for us to be ready for it.

Psalm 26 is a Psalm of David which addresses this. Where do you look to when life gets unfair because you're a Christian? In this Psalm, we're not told exactly what David is going through. But it seems like David is being blamed for something that he has not actually done. He's been falsely accused. And we know that David in his life was persecuted by his enemies. I can think of Saul, who was jealous of David and sought to kill him.

What does he do? Have a look at it, because it's a lesson for us

*Psa. 26:1 Vindicate me, O LORD,*

Psalm 26:1 (ESV)

David cries out, doesn't he? That's the theme. Vindicate me. Give me justice. Right the wrongs that I'm going through. That's David's cry when his enemies are chasing him. David claims that he is innocent of the charges that his enemies were accusing

him of. So David prays to the LORD for vindication. That's what David's prayer here in this Psalm.

Have you ever felt that you want to take revenge on those who might have treated you terribly? Have you ever been accused of something that you didn't do? When you haven't done anything wrong? This Psalm encourages us to pray. To speak to God. To cry out to Him, and ask for Justice! This Psalm encourages us to speak to the LORD, to seek help from Him. Asking him to make things right.

Now, maybe when you read this Psalm, you're really confronted by what David says. Because David is really confident in his cry to the LORD. Have a look,

*Psa. 26:1 Vindicate me, O LORD,  
for I have walked in my integrity,  
and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.*

*2 Prove me, O LORD, and try me;  
test my heart and my mind.*

*3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes,  
and I walk in your faithfulness.*

Psalm 26:1-3 (ESV)

David cries out to the LORD, give me justice. But it looks like his confidence is in himself. What he has done. In fact, it sounds like David is suggesting that he hasn't sinned. But David isn't saying that he is sinless. When you think about what David did in his life, he was an adulterer, he saw Bathsheba bathing, and got her pregnant. When she was married to Uriah. David was also a murderer. He ordered Uriah to the part of the battle where it was most fierce so that he would be killed in war. David had some very serious sins, he definitely was not sinless. Even in this Psalm, David acknowledges that he is a sinner. In verse 11, David cries out to the LORD asking for mercy from the LORD. And in other Psalms, David acknowledges his sin, and he even says that no one is righteous before God (Psalm 143:2).

David isn't saying he's sinless. But rather David in this Psalm is saying that he is blameless. And when David talks about being blameless, David is comparing himself with the world. On the one hand, he sees himself as godly. He saw himself as a devoted, persevering follower of God despite committing serious sin. He trusted in God. And on the other hand, there's the world. The wicked, those who hated God and the king. Those who choose not to trust in the LORD. That's the comparison he's making. There's the godly, faithful, those who sought to be obedient to God. Willing to repent for his sins and seek to live a godly life. And on the other hand, the wicked who hate the LORD.

For those of us who put our trust in God, we are like David. We may be sinners, but we are also godly because we trust in the LORD. We have a dual identity. Sinners but saved. Sinners and godly. I can think of another example in the Scripture, Job. Job wasn't a sinless perfect man. But we are told that he is blameless and upright. Job was a righteous man, and when he suffers it's not because of any sin that he suffers. It's because Satan makes a wager with the LORD. In the suffering that Job faced, he was blameless. His friends were wrong, they thought that Job had sinned and that's why he was suffering, but Job lived a godly life.

And that's the confidence that David has. David has a confidence that he would be vindicated, not because he is worthy, not because he has no sin, but because of his deep personal relationship with God. Because of his faith in God. Because he has continued to have trust in the LORD. It's in the fact that he walked with the LORD. Steven Lawson puts it like this,

*David was confident that such a thorough investigation by God would clear him of his enemies' charges because the Lord's love was always before him, motivating him to walk continually in the truth of God's Word.*

Perhaps, you're struggling because you're being falsely accused. You're being attacked by others because you're a Christian. This Psalm is an encouragement for us to get deeper with Jesus. Perhaps, it's an opportunity for you to draw closer to Jesus. To walk more closely with him. How? I want to suggest a couple of things,

Firstly, persevere in prayer. Don't give up praying. Cry out to Jesus and ask him to vindicate you. Like the parable that he tells in Luke 18, of the widow who continues to pester the corrupt judge demanding justice. Jesus ends with, "And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son

of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Will Jesus find faith on earth as we cry out for justice? Persevere in prayer.

Secondly, live lives of integrity.

*Psa. 26:4 I do not sit with men of falsehood,  
nor do I consort with hypocrites.*

*5 I hate the assembly of evildoers,  
and I will not sit with the wicked.*

Psalm 26:4-5 (ESV)

David declares he is living a life of integrity. Do people see you have integrity? It's what Peter says, "For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God." 1 Peter 2:20 (ESV). Your life should be different, it should look different from the world around you. There is a difference between the godly, and the ungodly. Our actions will speak loudly in this generation. We need to be above reproach. Just like David in this Psalm, we should look different from the men of falsehood (verse 4). We should be known as people who are honest, who do not lie on our tax returns, to our neighbours. We should be known as people who speak the truth in love (Ephesians 5). We do not consort, we are not influenced by the hypocrites. Our inner life is consistent with our outer life, we don't pretend to be Christians when we're out in public, but then beat and abuse our spouses in private. As the godly, we don't celebrate when evildoers get away with things. We abhor corruption when we see it occur around us.

Live with integrity.

Third, remember the goodness of God. Give thanks to the LORD for all the wonderful deeds he has done for you.

*Psa. 26:6 I wash my hands in innocence  
and go around your altar, O LORD,  
7 proclaiming thanksgiving aloud,  
and telling all your wondrous deeds.*

*Psa. 26:8 O LORD, I love the habitation of your house  
and the place where your glory dwells.*

Psalm 26:6-8 (ESV)

And

*Psa. 26:11 But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity;  
redeem me, and be gracious to me.*

*12 My foot stands on level ground;  
in the great assembly I will bless the LORD.*

Psalm 26:11-12 (ESV)

See the goodness of God as you look to Jesus, the temple, the holy habitation of the LORD. He is gracious. Perhaps, you doubt the goodness of God. We all have doubted. Perhaps you need to create space in order to remember the goodness of God. Perhaps you need to quieten your life so that you can remember his goodness. So that you can see that God himself is your judge. Just as Jesus entrusted himself to the LORD as he went to the cross, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23). There is a day when the LORD will judge the world. He will judge every single person who has lived. There will be a day when that which is said in the darkness will be revealed in the light. When the things that are done in the dark will be exposed.

Remember the goodness of God. Hold onto it, give thanks for it.

Let me end it here by talking about why we can have confidence that God will hear our prayers for vindications. When we look at this Psalm, it's a Psalm of David. But more importantly, it's really a Psalm of Jesus. Jesus prays this Psalm, because he was the One who was unfairly accused, by the Pharisees, the Sandhedrin, the Israelites. And yet he was the One who was blameless, and sinless. He went to the cross unfairly, dying and yet, he was vindicated by the LORD. Three days later, he was vindicated. He was resurrected from the grave. He was the one who drew near to sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, us, to offer us salvation from God's judgement. He was vindicated so that we may be vindicated.

This is a Jesus Psalm. And because it's a Jesus Psalm, we can pray this Psalm. We can have confidence that as we put our trust in Jesus Christ, we are in Him, and we too will be vindicated on that last day. Jesus was vindicated so that we too may be vindicated. That's the gospel, right there. What amazing news, just like the lyrics to that song, Cornerstone.

*I dare not trust the sweetest frame*

*But wholly lean on Jesus' name*

*My hope is built on nothing less*

*Than Jesus' blood and righteousness*

Let's pray,

## **Church Family Prayer**

*Lord Jesus,*

*You are the Word. You were there when creation was made by your Father. And yet, despite being God, you decided that you would humble yourself by becoming a man. And humbling yourself even to death on a cross. That we would be saved from our sins, that we would be saved from the wrath of God. Even when you were unfairly accused, you went to the cross. And you were vindicated by your Father. Your Father exalted you, far above every name, that every knee would bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that you Jesus are LORD over all.*

*Help us to persevere in our prayers. To live lives of integrity. And help us to give thanks for the goodness of God. Help us to deepen our relationship with you each and every day.*

*Father, help us to entrust us to you to vindicate us, to exalt us at the proper time. Just as we are told that Jesus himself waited patiently for you to vindicate him. Thank you that we do not need to take revenge into our own hands, but to trust in*

*your goodness to us. Remind us too that there are times when we have caused wrong towards others and help us to reconcile if you desire that for us.*

*Thank you that we are closer to seeing one another in person again. Please help us to persevere, to be patient for that day. Help us to do good whilst we wait whether that is to show love to those around us. We continue to pray for our government leaders, our new premier, please continue to give our leaders the humility, the strength and the wisdom to make decisions that are for the good of all people. But also, that we may lead quiet and godly lives.*

*In Jesus name,*

*Amen*

## **Closing**

As a reminder, this is the last week we're having an online service. We'll be back in person next week! 9:30am in the church. For those who aren't able to make it, I'll be live streaming the service. Let me give the blessing this week,

*The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26 (ESV)

See you soon! Bye.

Holy, Holy, Holy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgHrNNM23p8>

Blessed Assurance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDeiy9-t2GE>

It is Well: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0>