

“How Shall We Live?”
Psalm 26
(Preached at Trinity, May 16, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Psalm 26** we find a familiar theme that runs through many of the psalms. David once again sets his personal integrity before God as he prays for God’s mighty deliverance.
Psalm 26:1 – “Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* I shall not slide.”
 - A. David made this same statement in **Psalm 7**
Psalm 7:8 – “judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that is* in me.”
 - B. The context finds David under assault from enemies railing upon him with false accusations. David is praying for vindication.
2. The word translated in the KJV “judge” is translated in most versions, “vindicate.”
 - A. David was being falsely accused. He was crying out for vindication
 - B. Most often when we think of vindication we have in mind that someone has been falsely accused and vindication means they are proven innocent after all.
 - C. While it includes this, for the Christian our chief interest should not be our own reputation but the glory of God. Vindication for David was a desire to prove to the world that the way of holiness and a life following God is best way to live. It is the reason for our existence. It is all about God.
4. Remember, Christianity is not a religion based upon just following certain rules. It is a life lived in a manner that glorifies God. Yes, it is true we glorify God through obedience to His Law, but a person can obey the Law of God from a wrong motive.
5. David was captivated by a desire to exalt God before the wicked people of this world – that his life would both glorify God and be for the good of those looking on.
6. Far too often we see our Christian witness only in terms of what we say – as long as we have the Gospel right, as long as we use the right words we’ve been a faithful witness. Our Christian witness involves more than words. It demands a life of holiness. It demands a visible testimony that a life lived to the glory of God is truly the best life a person can live.
7. In **Psalm 26** we find such a life described. How shall we live to the glory of God? What does such a life look like?
 - I. It is a life always lived before God
Psalm 26:2 – “Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.”
Psalm 26:11 – “But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.”
 - A. The Godly man lives each moment in the presence of God
 1. David held his life before God – “Examine me, O LORD, and prove me. . .”
 2. The reason David could ask God to examine him is because He knew that God had already witnessed every detail.

3. This reality was painted clearly after he sinned with Bathsheba
2 Samuel 12:7-9 And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; ⁸ And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. ⁹ Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

B. The Godly man is a man who lives in the presence of God

1. God sees all, knows all
2. For the Godly man the only thing that matters is God's glory. He knows that God stands as his witness.
 - a. The Godly man knows that every deed, every thought, every decision is before God – under Divine scrutiny
Proverbs 15:3 – “The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”
1 Peter 3:12 – “For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.”
 - b. God sees all, remembers all
 - c. All of us will be called to give account
3. Most people live with men as their witness. This is not the emphasis of a Godly man's life
 - a. The Godly man seeks to please God rather than men
Acts 5:29 – “Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”
 - b. The Godly man doesn't need to seek the honor of men
Matthew 6:3-4 – “But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: ⁴ That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”
4. Let the world see that your greatest concern is what God thinks of you
 Listen to Paul:
1 Corinthians 4:3-4 – “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. ⁴ For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.”

- II. The Godly man's life is a life lived in thanksgiving for God's love
Psalm 26:3 – “For thy lovingkindness *is* before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.”
- A. David never ceased to be amazed at God's love
 1. It was always before David's eyes. This means he was always thinking about it, always mindful of it.
 2. It created a gratitude that resulted in obedience
 “and I have walked in thy truth.”
 - B. Our election should always cause us to stand in awe and wonder
 1. The word for “lovingkindness” is **חַסֵּד**
 2. Paul calls the knowledge of the love of Christ the greatest knowledge and equates it with being filled with the fullness of God.
 3. Why would God choose someone as vile as me?
 4. The love of God overwhelms us. We respond by returning our love
1 John 4:19 – “We love him, because he first loved us.”
 5. Most people have no gratitude, express no love because they've never experienced His covenantal love
 6. Let the world see our gratitude to Christ demonstrated in how we love
 And let us tell them often of the love of God that we have experienced.
- III. It is a steadfast life –
Psalm 26:1 – “Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* I shall not slide.”
Psalm 26:12 – “My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.”
- A. David walked with God continually
 1. In Psalm 8 David referred to God as his Rock. In Psalm 1 he referred his life as a “tree planted by the rivers of water”
 2. Now he says in **Verse 1** that he will not slide. The picture is of standing on slippery ground. David's feet were fixed.
 3. In **Verse 12** he says, “My foot standeth in an even place”
 Here the picture is standing upon level ground – he will not slide. He will not retreat. It is a picture of perseverance.
 4. David faced severe trials, terrible times of adversity, yet his life was firmly planted in God.
 - B. The true believer presses on through every circumstance of life.
 Perseverance does not grow cold during trials
 1. The stony heart professor
Matthew 13:20-21 – “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”
 2. Trials are the very things sent to try and test our faith to prove it genuine
1 Peter 1:7 – “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”

3. With Christ as our Rock we stand firm. We shall not be moved.
Psalm 16:8 – I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*'
4. As the world seems to be crumbling may those without Christ see that we are planted upon a Rock.

IV. It is a consecrated life – that is, a life lived apart from evil

Psalm 26:4-5 – “I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. ⁵ I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.”

Psalm 26:9-10 – “Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: ¹⁰ In whose hands *is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.*”

- A. David knew the importance of keeping a distance from the ungodly
 1. This bears similarity with **Psalm 1**
Psalm 1:1 – “Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”
 2. David was concerned with living a consistent life of holiness before God.
^{NAU} **Psalm 18:21-23** – “For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. ²² For all His ordinances were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. ²³ I was also blameless with Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.”
- B. This must stand as a continual warning to us
 1. Paul expressed this in his letter to the Corinthians
^{NAS} **1 Corinthians 15:33** – “Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."
2 Corinthians 6:14 – “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”
 2. We are entirely of a different type than unbelievers
Scripture describes it in various ways to describe the contrast
 - Darkness and light
 - Sheep and goats
 - Wheat and tares
 - Righteousness and lawlessness
 - Alive and dead
 - Lost and found
 - Wise and foolish
 4. We are in two different worlds – two different kingdoms.
Our attitudes, beliefs, goals, motives – all are different
 5. We are so different from unbelievers God commands a separation from them – not because we are better than them but because we are not good enough. We too are sinners and too susceptible to their sin.
 6. This doesn't mean we have nothing to do with the lost. We owe them the Gospel and we owe them our love. May they see our holiness as we seek to reach them with the Gospel

- V. It is a life lived in worship before the throne of God
Psalm 26:6 – “I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:”
Psalm 26:8 – “LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.”
- A. This is the first of three consecutive psalms where David focuses on seeking God in the house of God.
1. Nothing brought David greater pleasure
Psalm 84:10 – “For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”
Psalm 27:4 – “One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.”
 2. Above all else David wanted to be in the presence of God. He wanted to praise God.
 3. And David wanted to worship in the presence of the congregation in corporate worship.
Psalm 34:3 – “O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.”
- B. Worship is a great characteristic of the believer
1. If our worship flows from our gratitude to God and our awe of His majesty then Christians are naturally drawn to worship
 2. When visitors come to our worship services they should see a people awe stricken by the glory of God.
This is why it is so terrible when churches try to make their worship services “seeker friendly”
- VI. It is a life testified before others
Psalm 26:7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.”
- A. David never remained silent about God
1. He says here that he proclaimed the wondrous works of God with the voice of thanksgiving.
 2. He wanted all men to know the glory of God
- B. This should be our chief work
1. Spurgeon: “To sound abroad the worthy praises of the God of all grace should be the every-day business of a pardoned sinner. Let men slander us as they will, let us not defraud the Lord of his praises; let dogs bark, but let us like the moon shine on.”

Conclusion:

1. This bring us to where we began
Our Christian witness involves more than words. It demands a life of holiness. The life lived is surely the best life a person can live. This life should be demonstrated to the world.
2. It is a life always lived before God always mindful of the presence of God
It is a life lived in thanksgiving for God's love – let the world see this glorious love
It is a steadfast life – The true believer presses on through every circumstance.
It is a consecrated life – that is, a life lived apart from evil
It is a life lived in worship before the throne of God
3. May God grant us to live such a life before our generation.