

## Psalm 26 Virtual Bible Study Transcript

Hello, and welcome to our online devotion for the Psalms. Today we will be discussing Psalm 26 and Psalm 26 is really a Psalm of prayer and lament for the false saints that are out there who do not do works that God desires. As we read this, you will notice if you've been part of the Lutheran Church for a long time, you might notice a phrase that we use in our liturgy, in the old liturgy in Matins. When we get to that we'll talk about that a little bit as well.

Let's hear what Luther has to say on Psalm 26:

The 26th psalm is a psalm of prayer that laments the false saints who want to be godly through the works of the Law and who condemn the saints who are godly only through God's goodness and grace. This psalm accuses the false saints of willingly accepting bribes. For such saints are certainly pure servants of greed, whose God is their stomach, as St. Paul says (Philippians 3:19). But with all their spiritual hypocrisy and their worldly glory, they are destructive saints. Therefore, it is good to pray that they may not deceive us. This psalm belongs in the Third Commandment and in the First and Second Petitions, for it speaks of the worship of God and of His kingdom.

Let's read Psalm 26.

<sup>1</sup> Vindicate me, O LORD,  
for I have walked in my integrity,  
and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

<sup>2</sup> Prove me, O LORD, and try me;  
test my heart and my mind.

<sup>3</sup> For your steadfast love is before my eyes,  
and I walk in your faithfulness.

<sup>4</sup> I do not sit with men of falsehood,  
nor do I consort with hypocrites.

<sup>5</sup> I hate the assembly of evildoers,  
and I will not sit with the wicked.

<sup>6</sup> I wash my hands in innocence  
and go around your altar, O LORD,

<sup>7</sup> proclaiming thanksgiving aloud,  
and telling all your wondrous deeds.

<sup>8</sup> O LORD, I love the habitation of your house  
and the place where your glory dwells.

<sup>9</sup> Do not sweep my soul away with sinners,  
nor my life with bloodthirsty men,

<sup>10</sup> in whose hands are evil devices,  
and whose right hands are full of bribes.

<sup>11</sup> But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity;  
redeem me, and be gracious to me.

<sup>12</sup> My foot stands on level ground;  
in the great assembly I will bless the LORD.

So there in Verse 8, "O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells." In the response after the readings this is, [Singing] O Lord I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. I didn't sing that very well, but that's roughly what it sounds like. Anyway, this is part of what we use in our Matins service or what used to be page 15 in the Lutheran Hymnal, the old, old, old

hymnal. But here we have, if you listened carefully and if you remember all the way back to Psalm 1, you will hear some very similar things. Verse 5. "I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked." And then it says I will walk with the righteous. In Psalm 1 it talks about sitting with the unrighteous and walking with them and standing firm in the faith. Here we have some of those similar themes going on. He will not sit with the wicked, but he will stand. For "I will walk in my integrity and redeem me and be gracious to me. My foot stands on level ground; In the great assembly I will bless the Lord." So again, it has those similar themes that we have going on. Now in Verse 1 it says, vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Now, again, this is King David talking about his trust in God, but it's also a prophecy that the only way that David was vindicated and you and me are vindicated and the church at large is vindicated, is because Christ, Jesus Christ has walked in integrity and he has trusted in his Father without wavering. Only Jesus Christ was able to be proved, tested, and tried and found innocent and pure. Now David claims that for himself because he has faith in the promise of the coming Messiah. And in that faith, he knows that through the actions of the future Messiah, David himself will be justified. Not by his own deeds or his own acts, but by his faith that Jesus has done it all for us. Because as you remember, David was not always perfect. If he were, then he would be the Messiah and we wouldn't be talking about Jesus. David was a sinner. He fell into many pretty grandiose sins at times, but always his faith was in his Savior to forgive him. He knew that he could not justify himself when he was caught in sin by Nathan, when God sent Nathan to talk to him about Bathsheba. As he knew that he could not justify himself with the murder of Uriah and various other sins, of course, that he did. But he trusted in the Word of God and that is what vindicated him. That is where he put his trust. And so he does not sit with men of falsehood and he does not consort with hypocrites. Now that does not mean that we don't reach out to people, but we also don't dwell with them or take their counsel. There's a lot of people that seem to have authority and power but we know that they are not speaking the truth. And so we do not listen to them or trust them. We may befriend them but we don't trust in anyone except our Lord in Jesus Christ. We should hate the assembly of the evildoers and not sit with the wicked. Again, not go to the places where we might be tempted to fall into sin. And again, I washed my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord.

That whole going around your altar, O Lord, is symbolic of praise and listening to the Word of God and trusting in the sacrifice that is offered on the altar. The sacrifice is then pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And then of course, proclaiming thanksgiving aloud and letting all Your wondrous deeds be known. That's what we're called to do while we're here on earth, to give thanksgiving to God and let everyone know the wondrous deeds that God has done. Most importantly that He has saved us from our sin. To love the habitation of His house and the place where His glory dwells. God promised to be especially present in the Temple in the Old Testament. You know, His presence descended upon it and filled the Holy of Holies.

We don't see that dramatically every Sunday in our churches but the presence of God is indeed here. This is the habitation of His house and the place where His glory dwells because this, the congregation, the church, the assembly, is where His gifts are given, where the assurance of the forgiveness of sins from God are spoken by the pastor. Where the remembrance of our baptism is the means that we begin each and every worship service. And the reception of the body and blood of Christ, where we receive a tangible taste of the forgiveness of sins given to us by God to strengthen our faith and our trust in Him. So this is the place where His glory dwells and that's why we can sing with the psalmist, we love this place because this is where we are fed and nourished and prepared for our journey.

So that we might also, as he says in the last verse. "My foot stands on level ground. In the great assembly, I will bless the Lord." This reminds me of when Jesus is talking to the disciples and He asks, "Who do people say that I am?" Everybody says Elijah and Moses and all these other different ideas, and He asked the disciples directly, "Who do you say that I am?" And Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus turns to Peter and He says, "Upon this rock I will build my church." And that is not the rock of Peter himself as an individual because as we know, Peter was a sinner and failed many times to trust Jesus, denying Him three

times. No, it's not Peter that is the rock upon which the church will be built or stand firm upon. It is his confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." That is level ground. That is ground that we can stand on. That is the grounds upon which our whole assembly, the whole church of God in Christ Jesus stands firm on that confession of faith. Let us hold firm to that confession and never deny it and trust that God will give us the strength in season and out, to bear witness to the hope that we have in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, abide with us in these latter evil days. Grant to Your Church true shepherds and faithful pastors who preach Your Word in its purity, and who lead us in the way of truth. Preserve our souls from being deluded by worldly wisdom and the teaching of men who walk after their own thoughts, and keep us steadfast in Your Word to our end. Amen.