



PRAYER SERVICE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17TH, 2021

Join us at 7pm in the Sanctuary or on [Facebook](#) and use this guide to pray along with us.

• INTRO

Welcome to Prayer Service! We're already on our 26th week of praying through the Psalms, with plenty more to go! It's been such a rich journey to pray and worship through this "prayer book" God gave us in the Scriptures. There are so many ways that studying and praying the Psalms can enrich our life of prayer, but one thing in particular that might stand out is this: the Psalms remind us that it's *OK* for a believer to have bad days. It's *OK* to *not be OK*. It's a normal part of this journey of life with God, even for the greatest heroes of faith, to encounter obstacles, trials, battles, and valleys. And yet, joy is never far away; faith, hope, and love are right here, because the Lord is with us. Be encouraged today, whether you're struggling with a heavy burden, or running down the path with joy: *God is here with us. God hears us. God wants to meet with us.* Are we ready to meet with Him today? Let's pray and press in together.

• PAUSE

"As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God." (Lectio365) *Pause and pray.*

As we read **Psalm 26** together, be open with the parts that confuse or challenge you; meditate on the parts that stand out to you:

"¹ Vindicate me, LORD, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the LORD and have not faltered. ² Test me, LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; ³ for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness. ⁴ I do not sit with the deceitful, nor do I associate with hypocrites. ⁵ I abhor the assembly of evildoers and refuse to sit with the wicked. ⁶ I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, LORD, ⁷ proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds. ⁸ LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells. ⁹ Do not take away my soul along with sinners, my life with those who are bloodthirsty, ¹⁰ in whose hands are wicked schemes, whose right hands are full of bribes. ¹¹ I lead a blameless life; deliver me and be merciful to me. ¹² My feet stand on level ground; in the great congregation I will praise the LORD."

• SONGS

"Touch the Sky"

VERSE 1

What fortune lies beyond the stars
Those dazzling heights too vast to climb
I got so high to fall so far
But I found heaven as love swept low

CHORUS

My heart beating my soul breathing
I found my life when I laid it down
Upward falling spirit soaring
I touch the sky when my knees hit the ground

VERSE 2

What treasure waits within Your scars
This gift of freedom gold can't buy
I bought the world and sold my heart
You traded heaven to have me again

BRIDGE

Find me here at Your feet again
Ev'rything I am reaching out I surrender
Come sweep me up in Your love again
And my soul will dance on the wings of forever

CCLI Song # 7033417 Dylan Thomas | Joel Houston | Michael Guy Chislett © 2015 Hillsong MP Music CCLI License # 870332

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

VERSE 1

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God Almighty
Early in the morning
Our song shall rise to Thee
Holy, holy, holy
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons
Blessed Trinity

Only Thou art holy
There is none beside Thee
Perfect in power
In love and purity

VERSE 4

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God Almighty
All Thy works shall praise Thy name
In earth and sky and sea
Holy, holy, holy
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons
Blessed Trinity

VERSE 3

Holy, holy, holy
Though the darkness hide Thee
Though the eye of sinful man
Thy glory may not see

CCLI Song # 7118356 John Bacchus Dykes | Reginald Heber | Shane Barnard © 2018 Tent Peg Music

• **PSALM 26:1-2**

“1 Vindicate me, LORD, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the LORD and have not faltered. 2 Test me, LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind...”

“I have led a blameless life...” Really? Maybe this prayer is hard to resonate with at first. It might seem to be a bit conflicted with what other Scriptures say about the human heart. For example, in Psalm 51:5 David himself says, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” And we’ve already read in Psalm 14, another prayer of David, “The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.” In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul affirms, “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” (Romans 3:23).

So, what's going on? Are we dealing with "holy hyperbole," was the Psalmist just in a particularly sanctimonious mood during this prayer? One way to resolve and make sense of this is simply to look at the context of this prayer and the surrounding Psalms: what's being dealt with here isn't so much God's ultimate judgement and our universal need for mercy, but rather issues of *false accusation* and *integrity*. The Psalmist is basically saying, "LORD, you be the judge, clear my name! My enemies accuse me of *being* someone I'm not and of *doing* things I haven't done. You know my heart." And that's something we can relate to. Have you ever been falsely accused? Unfairly labeled? Misunderstood? It's a terrible experience. That's the heart of this prayer.

Jesus said his followers would be mocked, persecuted, and hated. Not for being *jerks* or culturally tone-deaf (that's another issue entirely), but for faithfully following his way in a world that, to put it bluntly, worships other "gods." How are you doing with other people's view of you? Are you willing at times to be misunderstood or falsely accused for walking with God? Christian Hip-hop artist Lecrae says, "If you live for others' approval you'll die from their rejection." Let's reflect on verse 2 as we pray into this: "Test me LORD, and try me, examine my heart and mind..." *Pause and Pray.*

- **PSALM 26:3-7**

"...³ for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness. ⁴ I do not sit with the deceitful, nor do I associate with hypocrites. ⁵ I abhor the assembly of evildoers and refuse to sit with the wicked. ⁶ I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, LORD, ⁷ proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds."

A life relying on God's love and faithfulness, a life of worship: this is what we should all want to aim at, this is what's available to us in Christ. The language in this passage, "lived," "sit," "stand," refer back directly to Psalm 1: "*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water...*" The key issue in this Psalm is walking with integrity, being *true*, wholehearted, living an *integrated* life because of total dependence on the Lord. Take time again to look into your heart: would you describe your life as one of *integrity*? Do you desire to "walk blamelessly" with the Lord? To be wholehearted and true? However you feel about it today, this is God's desire for us, and He has made it possible through Christ. We may be in different places: some may need to be humbled, some challenged, some encouraged. Invite the gentle examination of the Holy Spirit to shine a light. *Pause and Pray.*

- **PSALM 26:8-12**

"⁸ LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells. ⁹ Do not take away my soul along with sinners, my life with those who are bloodthirsty, ¹⁰ in whose hands are wicked schemes, whose right hands are full of bribes. ¹¹ I lead a blameless life; deliver me and be merciful to me. ¹² My feet stand on level ground; in the great congregation I will praise the LORD."

“LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells.” What a wonderful exclamation! What would this Psalmist say if he knew where it was all headed? That in Christ, God came among us, that “the Word became flesh and *made his dwelling* among us,”? And even more, that through the indwelling Holy Spirit God’s people themselves have *become the temple of God?* (1 Corinthians 3:16) This is amazing: *“I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells”!*

Take time to pray for God’s people, near and far. For our local church family, the churches of our area, our denomination, the church throughout the world. Pray for “the house of God,” and all the obstacles and opportunities we face in this unique season. *Pause and Pray.*

- **SONG**

“Way Maker”

VERSE 1

You are here moving in our midst
I worship You I worship You
You are here working in this place
I worship You I worship You

CHORUS

(You are) Way Maker Miracle Worker
Promise Keeper
Light in the darkness my God that is who
You are

VERSE 2

You are here touching ev'ry heart
I worship You I worship You
You are here healing ev'ry heart
I worship You I worship You

VERSE 3

You are here turning lives around
I worship You I worship You
You are here mending ev'ry heart
I worship You yeah I worship You Lord

TAG

That is who You are, That is who You are
That is who You are, That is who You are

BRIDGE

Even when I don't see it You're working
Even when I don't feel it You're working
You never stop You never stop working
You never stop You never stop working

CCLI Song # 7115744 Osinachi Kalu Okoro Egbu © 2016 Integrity Music Europe

- **Closing**

“Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to you in every way. Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet. Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say. Amen.” (Lectio365)