

Thought for Today: August 28, 2007

Psalm 26 (NASB)

**Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity,
And I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.
Examine me, O LORD, and try me;
Test my mind and my heart.
For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,
And I have walked in Your truth.
I do not sit with deceitful men,
Nor will I go with pretenders.
I hate the assembly of evildoers,
And I will not sit with the wicked.
I shall wash my hands in innocence,
And I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving
And declare all Your wonders.**

**O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house
And the place where Your glory dwells.
Do not take my soul away along with sinners,
Nor my life with men of bloodshed,
In whose hands is a wicked scheme,
And whose right hand is full of bribes.
But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity;
Redeem me, and be gracious to me.
My foot stands on a level place;
In the congregations I shall bless the LORD.**

In this psalm we find a mixture of appeal and apology. By apology, I mean a defense. The author appeals to God for vindication and redemption because his mind, heart, and actions are innocent. He loves being in the Lord's presence, and as His obedient servant, the author wants the Lord to protect him from whatever bad thing he is facing.

Sometimes, we beg God for redemption because we know how far we've fallen from God's ways. But that isn't the attitude of the psalmist this time. According to tradition, this psalm, like many others we've been reading, is attributed to David. When we compare the emotions and the self-defense that we find in this psalm to other psalms that confess sin and failings, we shouldn't think that we've found a contradiction. Rather, we've found another example of the complexity of living a life that's been disfigured and ruffed up by sin.

There are good times, and there are bad times. We aren't as consistent as we want to be, but God is! It is His consistent lovingkindness that gives us good reason to follow Him in faith. Because of His graciousness, we can also affirm that as long as we "walk in integrity," we will always be welcome in the house of the Lord. Thank you, God, for giving us something solid to hold on to.

In Him,
Patrick Barber