

# Vindicate Me, Lord

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[ 0 : 00 ] So we're going to turn to our Bible reading. Phil Copeland is continuing to open up some of the Psalms for us.

And this evening we are in Psalm 26. And we're going to read the whole thing. Psalm 26 from verses 1 to 12.

See Psalm 26 of David. I will not sit with the wicked.

I wash my hands in innocence. And go around your altar, O Lord, proclaiming thanksgiving aloud.

And telling all your wondrous deeds. O Lord, I love the habitation of your house.

And the place where your glory dwells. Do not sweep my soul away with sinners. Nor my life with bloodthirsty men. And whose hands are evil devices.

[ 1 : 28 ] And whose right hands are full of bribes. But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity. Redeem me. Be gracious to me.

My foot stands on level ground. In the great assembly, I will bless the Lord. Amen. This is God's words.

And we'll return to it shortly. Well, please do have your Bibles open to Psalm 26. When a church is falsely accused of not walking before the Lord in integrity, how should that church pray?

And when a Christian is falsely accused of not walking before the Lord in integrity, how should that Christian pray? Well, Psalm 26 will help us.

Now, probably one of my favorite TV shows of all time is called Band of Brothers. I wonder if you've seen it. It dramatizes real events from World War II that happened to a group of soldiers called Easy Company of the 101st Airborne Division.

[ 2 : 52 ] And it's very realistic. It's actually not an easy watch. I often find myself being really moved to tears. Because it's so realistic of a depiction of the conflict that these men fought through.

And there's one episode in particular that's almost unbearable to watch. It's a freezing cold December, 1944. And the soldiers of Easy Company have been commanded to defend a very key location in a little town in Belgium called Bastogne.

And what happens is Easy Company, they end up being pinned back in this small wood just outside of the town. And the enemy has them surrounded. They're under siege. They're freezing.

Their ammo is short. Their supplies are short. And they have hardly any cover. They're just shivering away in their foxholes. And day after day, what happens is the surrounding enemy again and again and again, without a minute's warning, bombards Easy Company with mortar shells.

They bomb the life out of Easy Company. And friends, that was an experience that King David knew all too well in his life. As the Lord's anointed, he was surrounded by enemies who longed to bring him down, to exalt over him.

[ 4 : 12 ] Just look back over at Psalm 25, verse 19, what we looked at last week. David says, these enemies are many. And they all hate him with a violent hatred. And in Psalm 26, David seems to mention these enemies once again.

Please look at verse 4 and 5 of Psalm 26. David says, I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites.

I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. Now we'll think a bit more about these verses later on, but for now, let me just say that when you read these verses carefully in light of the rest of the psalm, then you start to piece together the situation that moved David to write the psalm.

It seems that these enemies who surrounded David had been firing all sorts of false accusations and slanderous words against him. Just like those mortar shells that the enemies were raining down upon Easy Company in Bastogne.

And it seems that these enemies were specifically accusing David of not being right with the Lord. Of not being right with the Lord.

[ 5 : 23 ] Accusing him of having no integrity in the Lord's eyes. And I take it their words were actually out to destroy David, spiritually speaking. To wreck his assurance. And to make him think that he was deeply condemned before the Lord and hopeless.

And we can't be certain about where these enemies have come from. They may well have come from outside the covenant community. They may well have been rival kings or rulers.

Or they might well have risen up from within the Old Testament church. From within the covenant people. In fact, they might have been very close to David. In fact, verse 4 might be hinting that that is the case.

In verse 4, when David calls these men hypocrites, he's saying that they are pretenders. They present themselves to be one thing on the outside. But actually on the inside, they are something quite different.

Completely different in fact. And many good commentators suggest that that little detail about the pretenders might mean that these enemies have one time presented themselves as friends of David.

[ 6 : 27 ] Allies. Supporters of David. But over time, they show themselves to be real haters of David and enemies. One writer calls them David's pseudo-friends who critique, berate, lambast and condemn David.

Questioning the sincerity of his discipleship. And in response to this onslaught, David wrote this psalm, this prayer to the Lord.

And I'd like us to look at it under three sections. Here's the first one. In verses 1 and 2, we see David's great desire. David's great desire.

And what is his great desire? Answer? That the Lord would vindicate him. Please look at verse 1. He says, Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity.

I've trusted in the Lord without wavering. Prove me, O Lord, and try me. Test my heart and my mind. So in response to all of this slander that David is facing at the hands of these enemies, David turns to the Lord in prayer and cries out the great desire of his heart.

[ 7 : 36 ] He says, Lord, vindicate me. Some older translations start verse 1 as saying, Lord, judge me. It means, Set me in the clear, Lord.

Show that I am in the right with you. Please, Lord, make it clear that I'm not guilty of doing the things that these enemies accuse me of doing. Please make it clear that I am a real believer.

That is what he's saying in verse 1 when he says, I have walked with integrity. Or in my integrity. If you were to take that phrase out of context, some of you might be sitting there thinking, Oh my goodness, is David talking about self-righteousness?

Has David been pharisaic here? Is he claiming that he has lived a squeaky clean life of sinless perfection before the Lord? Well, no. That's not what he's saying at all.

Remember, Bible words have Bible meanings. And the word that's translated there as integrity does not mean sinless perfection. Rather, it means to be whole.

[ 8 : 38 ] To be complete. Or to be, what we might say, all there. In other words, David is saying to the Lord, I am a sincere disciple who's walked wholeheartedly in trust before you.

One writer puts it like this. David is not touting some concocted perfection, but an overall consistency. Not a sinless record, but a godly disposition.

One might say that he's not claiming to be without fault, as without apostasy. Now friends, from what I gather, the same Hebrew word that's used there as integrity, is actually used to describe lots and lots of other sinful Old Testament people who were real believers, such as Job.

You remember back to our studies that we had, maybe about a summer ago. Job wasn't sinless, but he was blameless. And we know that's true, because three times in the book of Job, maybe even more than that, the Lord himself looks at Job and says, Aha, here is a blameless one in my sight.

And that is what David is claiming about his own life here. It's terribly encouraging that. Wonderfully encouraging. It's possible for you and I to walk with integrity before the Lord. Please, Lord, that's what he's saying.

[ 9 : 56 ] Show me to be in the right. I know that I've walked with integrity before you. I know that I've trusted in you. These enemies are berating me, saying that I'm under your condemnation.

So please, show me whether it's now or sometime in the future. Show me to be a real believer, so that they may be silenced. In other words, David appeals beyond his enemies, and he looks to the Lord for the verdict, because do you know what?

At the end of the day, it is only the Lord's verdict that really matters. It is only the Lord's verdict that actually matters. No one else's verdict upon our lives actually matters.

Well, first, let me pause there and say, it should not surprise us when we as Christians find ourselves coming under the similar sort of enemy fire that David did all those years ago.

Now, yes, David was the Lord's king, the Lord's anointed Messiah. But David was also a believer, just like you and me, who through the Spirit was in union with Christ, just like us.

[ 11 : 04 ] And so we too should expect this sort of enemy fire to come in our lives today, both as individuals and also as a corporate church, as a church family. It could come from outside the professing church.

You know, I've known many people who've come to faith, maybe when they were in their teens or maybe they were a student or maybe in their 20s. And when they've come to trust in Christ and told their families and their friends about it, they've faced this sort of spiritual assault from non-Christian friends and family.

They say slanderous things to them like, I come off it, you aren't a Christian. What are you talking about? I know all of the shady stuff that you've done in the past. Who are you kidding?

If God were real, then he certainly wouldn't want you. But tragically, we could also face this sort of spiritual assault coming at us from within the professing church.

People who profess to belong to God could well turn against us and publicly criticize and condemn us of doing things which we haven't done. So just think about the scenario when one church decides to boldly speak out publicly against some sort of an evil that's happening in society.

[ 12 : 23 ] Often the very first people to accuse that brave church of being evil, radical, dangerous, and oppressive is other churches. Is it not?

If you don't believe that's true, just go online and look at all the many Christian blogs that are out there. It's quite alarming actually. We must not be taken aback when we find ourselves facing this sort of false allegations and accusations and verbal attacks that David faced back in his day.

But let me just be clear on this. Let's just nuance this a little bit. Friends, there may be times when either as individuals or as a church family, someone criticizes us.

And having examined it, we may well see that actually there's a lot of truth in what they say. For none of us is above criticism.

And if that happens, what we must do is not turn to Psalm 26, but turn to Psalm 51. Psalm 51 where David pours out the truth about his sin and asks the Lord to forgive him appealing to the Lord's mercy.

[ 13 : 33 ] We must repent in other words. However, if we're being lambasted by others and if there is no truth or substance to what they're saying, then at that moment you and I can and we should turn to Psalm 26 and echo David's words in our hearts.

Vindicate me, O Lord. Vindicate us, O Lord. And as we pray through this Psalm, it should help us to remember that ultimately there is only one verdict that truly matters, only one judgment that counts, friends, and that is the Lord's.

And if we are walking with integrity before him, trusting in him alone as our saviour and as our God, then we can have the same confidence that David has here that we will be vindicated.

So that's the first point this evening, David's great desire. Here's the second thing. In verses 2 to 10, we see David's genuine discipleship.

David's genuine discipleship. So verses 2 to 10, what David does is he really presses home the sincerity of his discipleship as a kind of argument for why the Lord should vindicate him.

[ 14 : 46 ] In other words, what he does here, he prays about certain things that are true about his own life, which shows that he has walked with integrity before the Lord. He's been a real believer. Now I've tried to sum them up under four headings, four subheadings.

I don't want to be laborious, but I thought it might be helpful if I just list them and then we'll work through them. So I hope you're all with me. It's quite hot in here tonight, actually. I'm regretting wearing a jumper. But I'm not going to take it off because I'm not confident that my shirt is ironed. So there we go. Here we go. My mom's in this building tonight. She will get me into trouble for that. But anyway, here's the four things. Firstly, David says, these are four things that David lists which

shows that he is a genuine believer who's walked with integrity.

Number one, I have walked in your faithfulness. That's verses 2 and 3. I've walked in your faithfulness. Number two, I hate the wickedness of the evil assembly.

Verses 4 and 5. Number three, I love the worship of your assembly. Verses 6 to 8. And number four, I fear you and your judgment.

[16:00] Verse 9 and 10. Well, let me run through these and we'll pick them up. And as we go through them, I take it we'll find that they will both comfort us, encourage us, and at the same time they'll also challenge us.

So here we go. Here's the first sub-point. I have walked in your faithfulness. Please look at verse 2. David says, prove me, O Lord, and try me.

Test my heart and my mind. Literally translated, that verse says, test my kidneys and my heart. You see, because back in those days, the kidneys were really thought of as the seat of your emotions. And the heart was really seen back then as the control room of your inner being. And today we speak about our hearts as really the seat of the emotions and our minds as being the control room of our being, which is why the ESV translates this the way it does.

But basically, David is asking the Lord to test the very inner parts of his being. the very core of who he is as a man so that the Lord will see that he has been a genuine believer.

[17:07] He's saying, Lord, please carry out a deep search right at the very core of my being and you'll see that in my innermost parts I am anchored to you. I trust you.

And in verse 3, David says that he's exactly the same on the outside. Look at verse 3. For your steadfast love is before my eyes and I walk in your faithfulness.

Notice, please, what David does not say here. He doesn't say, oh Lord, I've walked along very well in my faithfulness, haven't I? Yes, I've been very good in my faithfulness to you.

No. Just look at it again. He says, your steadfast love, your covenant love, your grace, these are the things that have directed my life, they've shaped my behavior and my decisions, but also, I am the one who's entrusted my life to your faithfulness, to your keeping.

And I think David is also saying in verse 3 there that the only reason he has lived this way is because the Lord has kept him living this way in his goodness and faithfulness. David knows that without the Lord's grace and steadfast love, he would never walk with integrity.

[18:22] He would never keep trust in the Lord both on the inside and on the outside. But he has. And it's all because of the Lord's goodness. So that's the first thing David brings to the Lord to confirm his integrity.

I have walked in your faithfulness. Here's the second thing. I hate the wickedness of the evil assembly. Please look at verse 4 and 5.

David said, I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.

So here David says to the Lord that there is an assembly on earth, a group of people that he does not sit with. In fact, David says, it's very strong, stark language, is it not?

He says, I hate this assembly, and I hate what they do. As I said earlier, commentators suggest that this assembly contains some of those who are viciously slandering David.

[19:23] It's full of men of falsehood, literally, men of emptiness, no substance. It's full of hypocrites, those who conceal their true selves and their real beliefs. They are evildoers and wicked.

And you know, if you were reading through the book of Psalms, through the Psalter, from the very beginning, you would have bumped into this assembly right from the very get-go, because they appear in the background in Psalm 1.

Elsewhere, the Bible gives them a name. The world. The world. That is all of humanity who has done the opposite of David.

They've refused to trust the Lord, and instead, they've set themselves against the Lord and his kingdom. And David says, I do not love them. I don't want to be part of them. I hate the world.

I hate the wicked assembly and their practices. An un-commentator puts it like this, David doesn't hang out with these evildoers. He doesn't bask in their camaraderie. He chooses to separate himself from them.

[20:27] And this separation can lead to certain loneliness. There can be a certain cost to pay for doing what David does here. The world can't conceive why you don't drown yourself in the same

debauchery they crave.

It drives them nuts. And they get so angry and vicious over it that they malign and badmouth you. But the fact remains that part of walking in wholeheartedness before the Lord means you hate the assembly of evildoers.

Holiness requires hatred. Now, God's people need today to listen to Psalm 26. We are so smothered in our culture.

And sometimes in churches you find this with sugary pronouncements that we need to be accepting everyone. Well, if we do that, says the commentator, we may well have already lost the hostility we're meant to keep.

Now, some of you might come back and say, hang on a minute here. Hang on a minute here. What did Jesus do? But Jesus associated with sinful and evil people. So shouldn't we?

[ 21 : 39 ] Well, listen to this belter of a quote from Alexander McLaren, an old Bible teacher. He says this, we may safely imitate Christ's free companionship to sinners which earned him his glorious name of their friend as long as we also imitate Christ's remoteness from their evil.

Isn't that a helpful quote? We can be friends with the world as long as we also imitate Christ's remoteness from their evil. In other words, we can certainly share our lives with the world but we must never let ourselves become compromised.

We must not let the world drag us into their evil ways. Psalm 26 encourages us to have a healthy hatred of all things that are opposed to God's kingdom.

Friends, that's something for us to think about. I'm not sure, it might not be much of a problem now but when I was a student it was very trendy to say things like I'm not going to go to release the word Bible study tonight.

I'm actually going to go out to the concert with my pals, my non-Christian friends. I'm going to go hang with the guys in the rugby club. It's a social tonight. I'm trying to win them for Christ. I'm trying to be with them to win them for Christ.

[ 22 : 57 ] And I tell you the truth, most of the people that I knew who said that when I was a student, all they would do when they would go out with their mates was end up behaving exactly like them and not winning them for Christ at all.

It's something for us to think about especially, I take it, if you're our student. And that brings us on to the third thing that David brings before the Lord as a sign of his integrity.

He says this, he's having said, I hate the wicked ways of the world but I love the worship of your assembly. Verses 6 to 8, please look at them.

He says, I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord, proclaiming thanksgiving aloud and telling all your wondrous deeds. O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells.

You see the contrast? Verse 4 and 5, here's the assembly that I shun. And verses 6 to 8, David is really talking about the assembly of the Lord. He refers to it in verse 12.

[ 24 : 02 ] It's the assembly that's full of people who bless the Lord. Again, that's in Psalm 1, it's mentioned in Psalm 1 right at the very beginning of this altar. It's the assembly that's full of the righteous, that is those people who are genuine believers, who worship the Lord.

Another great quote from one writer, he says this, David is a man who shuns evil, but he craves the exercises of worship. I just noticed the tone, the tone in these verses is so important.

David's full of joy. Just the very mere thought of worshipping the Lord and meeting with the rest of the true believers of God, of the Lord, just the very thought of doing that fills him with great happiness.

It thrills him. Verse 6, he says, I love the preparation for the gathering of this assembly. Verse 7, I love the proclamation that happens within the gathering of this assembly as we praise you, Lord, for your wondrous deeds and what you've done.

Verse 8, I love being in the special presence of the Lord that is there when this gathering, this assembly meets. David loves to gather for public corporate worship.

[ 25 : 17 ] It fills him with joy. Let me just say a little aside point here and it's this. If anyone ever tells you that life under the Old Covenant in Old Testament times was hard, miserable and dull for the people of God, then you need to point them to these verses and say, no it wasn't.

I'm sorry, that is rubbish. When public worship was carried out by real believers around the Lord's altar, there was great joy and thanksgiving. Old Testament times weren't miserable.

They were wonderful times. And so many of the Psalms tell us that this was the case. Look for example on to Psalm 27, verse 6. Psalm 27, verse 6, the Psalmist says, and now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Don't look this up but you can look at it later. Psalm 42, verse 4, the Psalmist talks about how he would lead the whole assembly of the Lord in a wonderful, happy procession to the house of God with great shouts of joy and songs of praise. Now there are so many, I could go on and again and again and again and again all the way through the Psalms, all the way through the scriptures there are loads of references that speak of the same joy and thanksgiving when the assembly of the true people of God gathered together under the old covenant.

[ 26 : 49 ] Real believers like David, they loved it because they loved being in the Lord's presence. And friends, still today this is a mark of a real believer.

I once listened to a recording of a man giving his testimony. He was a former minister of a church not so far from here and he spoke about the fact that he'd grown up, going to church through his whole life but actually he was, Jesus didn't mean anything to him.

He heard about the gospel just one more time and like that, by the grace of God, Jesus went from being nothing to him to being everything. And he was talking in his testimony just about how the priorities in his life shifted.

And one of the things he found so striking about his life was that on a Sunday before he was a Christian that was his worst day of the week. That was his worst day of the week. But actually when he became a Christian it slowly turned into his favourite day of the week.

It was the Lord's day. And this man, I remember listening to it, he was almost in tears. You could hear his voice cracking when he spoke about the joy of getting to bookend his Sundays morning and evening with the rest of the church family engaged in worshipping the Lord as God and being encouraged and being lifted up and challenged.

[ 28 : 11 ] And that's David. So that's the third thing that he says is a sign that he's walked with integrity before the Lord. I love the worship of your assembly. Here's the fourth.

David says, I fear you and your judgement. Please look at verse 9 and 10. Do not sweep me, sorry, do not sweep my soul away with sinners nor my life with bloodthirsty men in whose hands are evil devices and whose right hands are full of bribes.

What David does here is he brings before the Lord another sign of his integrity and it's the fact that he fears the Lord's judgement. He does not want to share in the destiny of those men who've set themselves against the Lord in his kingdom.

So the things listed there, the characteristics of these men, bloodthirsty, evil scheming, bribery, these are all things that reveal in the hearts of these men there is not trust in the Lord.

They do not seek to walk by the obedience of faith. No, they are men who have set themselves against the Lord. They are unbelievers. But David is a real believer.

[ 29 : 23 ] He fears the end that will come upon those who live their lives like this. And he doesn't want to share in that divine repudiation when it comes. Just listen to Ralph Davis, tell Ralph Davis on this.

He says this, there is a contemporary attitude, I think it's even oozed into the church, that operates on a God in our own image principle. and would likely poo-poo David's concern here in verses 9 and 10.

People might say, well, well, of course, God, as we conceive of him, the merciful, soft, sentimental, mushy God we prefer, would never bring David to share such judgment, which would mean that David's anxiety here in these verses is just a tad ridiculous.

But friends, Jesus doesn't agree with that. He seems to tell us that in fact, what David says here is a mark of a genuine believer. It is a mark of a genuine believer to have a healthy fear of God's judgments.

Let me read to you Luke chapter 12, verse 4 and 5. Jesus, speaking to his disciples, says this, I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more they can do, but I will warn you whom to fear my disciples.

[ 30 : 43 ] Fear him who after he is killed has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, my disciples, fear him.

As it seems to me that David's fear in verses 9 and 10 is precisely the same fear that Jesus described all those centuries later. Now it is true, wonderfully true, is it not?

As the book of Romans tells us, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. but according to Jesus, it is still a sign of spiritual health to have a healthy fear of the end that will come upon all those who have rejected the Lord and his grace.

So remember that. Those are the four marks of David's life that he brings before the Lord in prayer to press home the fact that he has been a sincere, real, genuine disciple.

Let me run them again. He says, number one, I have walked in your faithfulness. Number two, I hate the wickedness of the evil assembly. Number three, I love the worship of your assembly.

[ 31 : 48 ] And number four, I fear you and your judgment. Well friends, very, and I mean very briefly, let's look at our final point, our final main point in the sermon.

Verses one and two, we saw David's great desire. Verses two to ten, we saw David's genuine discipleship. But lastly, verses 11 and 12, we see David's gritty determination.

Please look at 11 to 12. David says, but as for me, I shall walk in my integrity. Redeem me, be gracious to me.

My foot stands on level ground in the great assembly. I will bless the Lord. So friends, David here, he actually closes the psalm by speaking about his great determination for the future, his resolve for what lies ahead in his life.

And just notice please that in verse 11, he comes back to the way that he started the psalm in verse 1. Verse 1, he spoke in the past tense. He says, I have walked in integrity.

[ 32 : 53 ] And verse 11, he now looks forward and he says, I'm going to keep walking in that same integrity in the future. Literally, I'm going to go on walking by faith and I'm going to do it in a wholehearted way.

He's determined to carry on doing what he's been doing all along, living in faithfulness to the Lord and living under the Lord's faithfulness to him. David is not disturbed by these false accusations of his opponents.

And he finishes the psalm by vowing to keep doing what he's been already doing. Now we might have read the psalm and hoped for something a bit more climactic, but sometimes, you know, after committing our cause to the Lord, there is no need to change how we are living except to go on living in the same way that we've always lived.

Again, listen to dear Ralph Davis on this point. He says this, I remember hearing a story about some Christian fellow in the early centuries AD who was plowing a field with his ox or some sort of an animal.

And along came some excited, supercharged Christian brother who was apparently struck by the imminence of Jesus' second coming. And he asked our plowing friend what he would do if he knew Jesus would return, say, in the next hour.

[ 34 : 15 ] And the man behind the plow looked down the field, pointed and said, I'd finish the furrow. In other words, I'd just carry on doing what I'm doing. And maybe we need to realize that amid our troubles and prayers, the Lord is not necessarily calling you to a higher ground or to heroic efforts.

Maybe he simply wants you to keep on going, walking in wholeheartedness by faith. So friends, whether we are facing false accusations or not, this psalm is absolutely clear.

The Lord wants us all to walk before him in integrity. And encouragingly, friends, that is something that you and I really can do. Don't sit there thinking, no, this is beyond me.

Psalms won't allow that. It means that we've got to only live and care about the Lord's verdict on our lives. It means we've got to trust in the Lord's grace and his faithfulness to us.

It means being hostile to the wickedness of the world and turning away from it. And it also means loving the worship of the Lord's assembly and having a hunger for his presence.

[ 35 : 28 ] And it means fearing the Lord and his judgments with a healthy fear. And friends, those who live this way, with the help of the Spirit of Christ, they will be vindicated.

If not in this life, definitely, definitely on the last day when the Lord Jesus appears in glory. Those who've walked this way, the Lord Jesus will look at you and say, well done, my good and faithful servant.

And friends, if we do find ourselves ever being blasted with all sorts of false accusations, examine it. If there's truth in it, then repent. But if there's no truth in it, open up Psalm 26 and pray that

wonderful, beautiful prayer and ask your God, the Lord your God, to vindicate you.

Well, let's be quiet for a moment, take some time to respond to the Lord's Word in our own hearts and then I'll pray for us. Let's pray for us. Let's pray for us. Our gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, we praise you that by your grace, you have reached out to us in your sovereignty and you've transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We praise you for all of the blessings of salvation that are applied to our lives as soon as we come into union with him. Father, what mercy.

[ 37 : 17 ] We thank you for this. You have bought us by his precious blood to be your own, to be set apart, to be holy for you. And Father, thank you for the realism of Psalm 26 that tells us that all those who are in Christ in the world today, we should expect to face this sort of attack, this sort of verbal assault.

So help us not to be surprised when it comes on us either as individuals or as a church. But Father, whatever happens, would you help us by the Spirit of your Son, the Spirit of human holiness who dwells in us, would you be making us more into the likeness of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? Would you help us to fear you with a godly fear? Would you help us to trust in your grace and your faithfulness alone? Would you help us to turn away from the world and all of its temptations and all of its ways?

And instead, would you help us to love the public gathering of your people and to love your special presence that dwells there in the midst? For one day soon, we will see you face to face and we will be with you face to face.

And on that day, we will be vindicated, every one of us, for walking in integrity with our Lord Jesus. And we pray this in his name and for his sake.

[ 38 : 46 ] Amen. Amen.