

## Thoughts From Other Minds:

Verse 8. Into the abodes of sin he would not enter, but the house of God he had long loved, and loved it still. We were sad children if we did not love our Father's dwelling place. Though we own no sacred buildings, yet the church of the living God is the house of God, and true Christians delight in her ordinances, services, and assemblies. O that all our days were Sabbaths! In his church where God is had in honour at all times, where he reveals himself in the glory of his grace, and is proclaimed by his people as the Lord of all. We come not together as the Lord's people to honour the preacher, but to give glory to God; such an occupation is most pleasant to the saints of the Most High. What are those gatherings where God is not honoured, are they not an offence to his pure and holy eyes, and are they not a sad stumbling block to the people of God? It brings the scalding tear upon our cheek to hear sermons in which the honour of God is so far from being the preacher's object, that one might almost imagine that the preacher worshipped the dignity of manhood, and thought more of it than of the Infinite Majesty of God.

Verse 12. The song began in the minor, but it has now reached the major key. Saints often sing themselves into happiness. The even place upon which our foot stands is the sure, covenant faithfulness, eternal promise and immutable oath of the Lord of Hosts; there is no fear of falling from this solid basis, or of its being removed from under us. Established in Christ Jesus, by being vitally united to him, we have nothing left to occupy our thoughts but the praises of our God. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and when assembled, let us not be slow to contribute our portion of thanksgiving. Each saint is a witness to divine faithfulness, and should be ready with his testimony. As for the slanderers, let them howl outside the door while the children sing within.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Verse 8. *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house*, etc. "I have in my congregation, "said a venerable minister of the gospel, "a worthy, aged woman, who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound, and yet she is always one of the first in the meeting. On asking the reason of her constant attendance (as it was impossible for her to hear my voice), she answered, 'Though I cannot hear you, I come to God's house because I love it, and would be found in his ways; and he gives me many a sweet thought upon the text when it is pointed out to me: another reason is, because there I am in the best company, in the more immediate presence of God, and among his saints, the honourable of the earth. I am not satisfied with serving God in private; it is my duty and privilege to honour him regularly in public.'" What a reproof this is to those who have their hearing, and yet always come to a place of worship late, or not at all! K. Arvine.

C H Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, commentary on Psalm 26:1, 12.

## Camperdown — Terang Presbyterian Church

18 January 2015

**Sermon:** "*Loving the Lord's House*" (text: Psalm 26:8)

**Scripture:** Psalm 26:1-12

**Hymns:** (Rejoice!)

305 We love the place, O God

340 Lord, as the day begins

422 O be my judge, most righteous Lord

303 How glorious Zion's courts appear

### Sermon Notes

**Introduction:** We continue our theme of the believer's love for the Lord with a text from Psalm 26 (v. 8) True, you don't have to go to church to be a Christian—but Christians love to go to church, and are grieved with they can't.

David appealed to his love for the Lord's house as proof that he was not a hypocrite worthy of death. Unable to get justice in an earthly court, he appealed to the Lord to vindicate him, claiming he had led a blameless life (v. 1).

He claims not sinlessness, but sincerity. So when he prays that the Lord would not take his soul with the wicked (vs. 9-10) he also says he has led a blameless life—but asks not for justice on the basis of merit, but for redemption and mercy (v. 11).

David invites the Lord to examine him for himself, (vs. 2-3); he appeals to his lifestyle as evidence that he walked in integrity, for he separated himself *from* the assembly of wicked persons (vs. 4-5) and *unto* the assembly of the saints (vs. 6-7).

The climax of his appeal was that he loved the Lord's house (v. 8) and in the confidence of one who was in his life separated from unbelievers in his life, he was confident that the Lord would not join them with them in his death (v. 12).

### 1. Loving the Lord's house—by being prepared to be there

Love for the Lord's house is solid evidence that we love the Lord; if we were charged with loving the Lord, would there be enough evidence to convict us? If we were accused of hypocrisy, as David was, could we appeal to God as David did? Could we say to him, "I'm no hypocrite; I love your house, where your glory is"?

To love the Lord's house we must first be prepared to be there—and the first step in this preparation is to appreciate its glory. As an Old Covenant saint, David had in view the Tabernacle, with its outward glory. As New Covenant saints we do not have that glory—but we have better glory: Christ and the New Covenant.

The Tabernacle anticipated him and pointed to him as God dwelling among his people; its priests and its sacrifices pointed to him as priest and sacrifice; its glory pointed to his glory—but his coming made it obsolete. In fact, so glorious is the New Covenant by comparison the Old Covenant had no glory (cf. 2 Cor 3:10, WCF 7.6).

So wherever Christians meet is the house of the Lord, for he is there, and its glory is greater than that of the Tabernacle, for Christ is proclaimed with more clarity and power in the preaching of the gospel, and in the sacraments than under the Old Covenant, and those who 'see' this glory are changed by it (2 Cor 3:18).

We are easily seduced by outward glory—but real glory is Christ and his working by his word and Spirit in people as they hear the gospel of his love and grace and repent and believe in him and are by this glory transformed into saints; so we must stir ourselves up to prepare ourselves to be there, to show love for the Lord.

Secondly, we prepare ourselves to love the Lord's house by the way we live during the week. David was no 'Sunday Christian', but a sincere believer (v. 3).

How can we love the Lord's house if we do not keep the Lord's love before us always, and make it the governing principle of our lives? (2 Cor 5:14). If we have little love for his house, could it be that our love for him is lukewarm? We must meditate on his love (Rom 5:8) until it burns into our soul, and we love him and his house.

David did not consort with ungodly men (vs. 4-5). If we have little love for his house, could it be that we have too much time and pleasure in the company of unbelievers? We cannot tell the gospel to unbelievers if we isolate ourselves; but we must not have the same intimacy with them as with believers (2 Cor 6:14-16).

One of the marks of the true Christian is love for other Christians (1 Jn 5:13). At their best, Christians have always been strong in love for one another (Acts 2:44-46). If we have little love for the Lord's house, perhaps it is because we have too little love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

## **2. Loving the Lord's house—by being there**

Our culture sees love as just happening—but real love involves choices; we may choose to love the Lord's house by making worship our priority on the Lord's Day, so that we may show the Lord we love him 'more than these' (Jn 21:15). David was a king—and yet he made time to worship, for he loved the Lord and his house.

If we really loved the Lord we would love to be in his house, and we would be there unless extraordinary circumstances should make it impossible. If we desire to grow in love for him we would love to be in his house, for we may grow lukewarm or drift away from him altogether (Heb 10:25).

Real love for the Lord's house means active participation in worship (v. 6). He came to worship as one with work to do; his hands must be clean; he acknowledged the sacrifice of the altar as for him and his sins; and he joined in the singing of the Lord's praises 'proclaiming aloud your praise ... telling of all your wonderful deeds.'

It's good for us to be encouraged to nurture love for the Lord's house and his people, and to remember that what we do reveals more about the real us than our words, and that love for the Lord's house is reason to believe we have a home in heaven, for what we do there now in worship is a foretaste of heaven.

## ***My Notes:***

### ***Questions for Reflection:***

1. How does David's response in psalm 26 to accusations of hypocrisy marry in with the biblical principle that while salvation is by grace through faith judgment is by works?
2. What was the glory of the Old Covenant and its worship? Why is the New Covenant more glorious, even though it has none of the outward glory of the Old Covenant?
3. How does the history of the church reveal that we find Old Covenant glory more congenial than the glory of the New Covenant? What spiritual danger does this warn us away from?
4. In what ways does what we do during the week impact on our love for the place of worship on the Lord's Day? How might we nurture love for the Lord's house, so that we will love to be there, and make it our first priority for the Lord's Day each week?
5. Why are excuses such as busyness for absence from worship on the Lord's Day not acceptable to the Lord? What excuses are acceptable?
6. What is required of us at worship to show real love for the Lord's house? Why is merely 'being there' not enough to show true love for him or his house?