

Prepare To Meet The Sovereign King!

Some Thoughts on Psalm 24:3-4

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Hebrew Text:

3 מִי־יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר־יְהוָה וּמִי־יִקּוּם בְּמִקְוֵם קֹדֶשׁ
4 וְגִי כַפַּיִם וּבֵרֶ־לֵבָב אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִשְׂא לְשׂוֹא נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה

Author's Translation:

Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul to vanity; and has not sworn deceitfully.

Explanation:

Approaching God can never be trivial. The holiness of God demands the holiness of those who draw near to His presence.

Psalm 24 provides four helpful qualifications for God's people to worship Him rightly. When God's people come to meet with Him in worship, one must ask if adequate preparation has taken place. So then, here are some helpful thoughts for preparing to meet the sovereign King.

I. A Sanctified Life.

Hands were part and parcel for the entire body. In our culture we understand this. We say: "If you work with your hands" it means that you're working hard with your entire body in exerting energy to perform a task. Thus, if someone has "clean hands" it means that he is entirely clean in his outer life. The one who approaches God must have a clean life. The worshipper must come as a clean and pure vessel before God. Since no one perfectly measures up to this kind of impeccably pure life, the believer in God must be one who confesses his sin and repents (=turns) from it diligently.

*So then, do you come to God with a sanctified life? What kind of lifestyle and what sort of week to you present to God when you worship Him on Sundays? What do your prayer times look like when you begin your communion times with God each morning? Do you confess sin? How diligently? How zealously? How fervently? How emotionally and passionately? Do you ask God to forgive you and give you the grace to turn from sin *today*? If not, why not? Is there a relationship that you need to mend? Is there a person you need to confess a sin to? Is there a child that you lost your temper with that you can humbly ask for their forgiveness? Is there a hidden sin in your life? Is there immorality? Do you covet and live a life of greed? Do you worship the god of comfort and self-centeredness? Sin must never keep us from worshipping God. On the contrary, when you recognize a sin in your life let it *catapult* you irresistibly to the presence of God in humble contrition and genuine repentance. God requires that those worshipers who may ascend the hill of the LORD be those who are clean (innocent) in conduct.*

2. A Spotless Heart.

God seeks worshipers who worship Him in *spirit* and in truth. This means that those who worship God should worship Him *inwardly* and with their whole hearts. God does not want mere “lip service.” There are many who perform religious rituals, cultural ceremonies, and moralistic methods of trying to get right with God. And let us not be fooled, religious people can certainly appear to be very religious to us. But God alone reads the heart. God sees the inside of the worshiper. If the heart is impure, if the inside is corrupt, if the sinner harbors and clings to known sin even *while* outwardly performing a religious act, God rejects his worship. God demands that His people come to Him with pure hearts.

Do you purify your heart before worship? If not, why not? What kind of time do you devote to soul-searching and internally directed questions *before* meeting with God in worship times? Do you confess your sins? Do you repent of the sins that *no human person* knows about? The self-gratification, the greed, the pride, the bitterness, the slander, the lustful thoughts, the angry heart, the elevated thoughts of self, and the lack of treasuring Christ? Do you confess this? What is your heart like even now? Are you lucid before God? Is there a transparency in your heart to God? God, who sees your heart, wants His worshipers to be *clean*, pure, transparent before Him. Whatever you are *outwardly* should be what you are *inwardly* in worship. Don't be something *outwardly* that you aren't *inwardly*. That's hypocrisy. God requires that His people come to him with a pure heart. Take time on Saturday night and Sunday before corporate worship and confess your sins (even the ones that no one knows about). Beg God for a heart of genuine worship today. Ask the Spirit to help you worship Him *rightly*, inwardly, passionately, and truly. Refuse to come to God and worship Him *outwardly* when there is hidden sin in your heart *inwardly*.

3. Sole Allegiance in Worship.

The person who does not lift up his soul to worthless things can come to God in pure worship. The idea of “lifting up one's soul” is further explained in Psalm 25:1 where the same language is used to refer to “trusting in something.” In other words, the person who can draw near to worship God has an allegiance that is totally committed to God. This inherently includes the context and setting of worship. This person worships God *and Him alone!* There is no syncretism in his soul — that is, the mixing together of different forms of worship. This is monotheistic, heart-felt, genuine worship *directed to the One True and Living God*. There must be no treasured idols that the worshiper clings to during worship. He must abandon all idols and all false gods. God Himself has said long ago: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

It is no wonder that the Apostle John in writing to his beloved flock in Ephesus told them in the final words of his first epistle to them: “keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21). Our hearts by default manufacture idols and anything that is manufactured is by very definition an *idol*. Only God is worthy of worship. What have you worshiped this week? What have you craved for today? What have you desired to such a degree that you were willing to *sin* to get it? Do you crave attention from others? Do you long for sexual pleasure? Do you need the “approval of others”? Do you seek to trust in yourself by being worried, fearful, anxious, and overly concerned about life, circumstances, situations, and the future rather than trusting in the One who has already predestined what the future will hold — namely, God? What do you need to

confess today? What are the idols that battle for preeminence in your heart? What is it that you can't live without? Who are the people with whom you are infatuated? Is money vying for supremacy? Is love of position, prestige, reputation, prominence warring in your heart for center stage? Do you confess your heart idols before approaching God in worship? God takes very seriously His own word that He must be worshiped with "all the heart, soul, mind, and strength". Nothing less will do. Let us approach God on bended knee with hearts that sincerely confess any idols in our heart and lustful cravings that attempt to cloud God out of our vision each day.

4. Sincere Lips.

The person whom God receives in worship must speak truth to his neighbors (Eph 4:32). Psalm 24 says that this kind of worshiper does not swear to deceitfulness. That is, he does not live a life of falsity or fraud. He shuns deceit. He hates manipulation. He kills verbal insincerities. It is this worshiper who knows that the tongue is a restless evil and set on fire by hell itself. This Godly man knows that no one can tame the tongue and he knows that he cannot bless God and curse his brother with the same tongue. He affirms that deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil (Prov 12:22). He looks to Jesus who had no deceit in His mouth (Isa 53:9). He clings to Ephesians 4 where Paul says that deceit is a trait that must be *put off* and exchanged for a Godly way of talking in its place (Eph 4:22).

What has come out of your mouth this week? Are you one who comes to worship God and bless God with a mouth that earlier in the week (or earlier in the day, perhaps) cursed a fellow man? Have you lashed out in verbal anger at anyone? Have you spoken evil against someone? Have you slandered someone's character? Have you gossiped about someone's sin? Have you spoken things that are *only* edifying and good for the need of every moment? Have you earnestly desired to build others up in the way you speak? Have people been drawn closer to Christ in hearing you talk this week or have people been repelled away from Christ from the filth that has come out? Have you talked to your wife with an attitude, tone, manner, and with words that are gentle, cherishing, and tender? Have you been Christlike toward her? Have you respected your husband? Have you talked well of him with your girlfriends? How have you disciplined your children when they sinned against you? Were you tender, gentle, and Fatherly? How would it be if you approached God to sing praises to Him even at this moment? Could you do it in good conscience and with a genuine heart or have you spoken ill of someone and you must go reconcile with them? Have you confessed your sinful words lately? Have you neglected opportunities to share the gospel? Have you shamefully ignored gospel proclamation opportunities with co-workers, friends, strangers, neighbors? Confess your sin to the Lord. Be right with Him when you come to worship Him. Look to Christ and see how He spoke and then strive to emulate Him. Ask the Spirit to strengthen you to talk gently, encouragingly, Christ-exaltingly, gospel-centeredly, and biblically to others. May God help His people prepare to meet Him.

"The Kingship of the Lord is not merely a religious affirmation — it is a basis of worship and praise. . . . The recognition of the kingship of God must result in the worship of God by those who recognize his royal authority; to worship presupposes moral integrity."

—Peter Craigie