



STAYING CONNECTED

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR MCIVOR CHURCH FAMILY

July 26, 2026

REFLECTIONS ON PSALM 50 – PASTOR JON

The literary setting of Psalm 50 is something referred to as a courtroom scene, or a legal prosecution. In verses 1-4, God the righteous judge presides over His court. In verses 5-7, God calls His people to the stand for judgement: *"Listen My people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel: I am God, your God."* (v. 7)

God's prosecution of His people comes in two parts. The first (v. 8-15) acknowledges the people's faithful sacrifices, while seeking to add some perspective. It seems like God's people had settled into a routine with their ritual acts of worship and devotion to the point that they thought of their relationship with God as one of mutual dependence. In their mind, their sacrifices were providing something that God needed and, in exchange for being fed by their sacrifices, God would look after His people's needs.

God corrects this understanding: *"I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills... If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all that is in it."* (v. 9-10, 12)

Instead, **sacrifices are God's gift to His people. They were a means for God's people to approach their God. And by this approach, to enter God's presence and to be made holy as God is holy, so that they can be His presence in the world.** *"Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call on Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor Me."* (v. 14-15)

The point of the sacrifices was to provide a means for God's people to enter His presence, and there, to be formed into His people in the world.

The second part of the prosecution is to suggest that while the sacrifices are happening, the transformation of people's lives was not: *"You hate My instruction and cast My words behind you. When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw your lot in with adulterers. You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue for deceit."* (v. 17-19)

Even though the people offered many sacrifices, God's primary concern of seeing transformed lives was not being met.

Today, because of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, we no longer use animal or food sacrifice as a means of approaching God. Instead, we spend time in prayer in the presence of Jesus. We are invited to meditate on God's Word as it is given to us in Scripture. And we gather together as we are able to worship as a church community.

I have noticed that it's easy for me to start thinking of these things as obligations: things that God requires from us for some reason, as if God has something to gain from my devotion. When this becomes my perspective, it's unlikely that any of it translates into a transformed life. Fulfilling my obligations seems like doing enough.

God is inviting us into His presence. Not as an obligation, but as a gift of grace, by which our lives are transformed.

But when I am able to shift my perspective and receive things like prayer time, reading Scripture and worshipping together as gifts from God, by which God is inviting me into His presence, then I am more likely to sense the transforming of God in Christ by His Spirit at work in my life.

This means that today, **God is inviting us into His presence. Not as an obligation, but as a gift of grace, by which our lives are transformed by the divine life of God:** *"Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor Me; to those who go the right way, I will show the salvation of God."* (v. 23)

PSALM 50 – A PSALM OF ASAPH

1 The Lord, the Mighty One, is God, and He has spoken; He has summoned all humanity from where the sun rises to where it sets.

2 From Mount Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines in glorious radiance.

3 Our God approaches, and He is not silent. Fire devours everything in His way, and a great storm rages around Him.

4 He calls on the heavens above and earth below to witness the judgment of His people.

5 **"Bring My faithful people to Me**—those who made a covenant with Me by giving sacrifices."

6 Then let the heavens proclaim His justice, for God Himself will be the judge. *Interlude*

7 **"O My people, listen as I speak.** Here are My charges against you, O Israel: I am God, your God!

8 I have no complaint about your sacrifices or the burnt offerings you constantly offer.

9 But I do not need the bulls from your barns or the goats from your pens.

10 For all the animals of the forest are Mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills.

11 I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are Mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for **all the world is Mine and everything in it.**

13 Do I eat the meat of bulls? Do I drink the blood of goats?

14 **Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God,** and keep the vows you made to the Most High.

"Then call on Me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give Me glory."

Psalm 50:15

15 **Then call on Me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give Me glory."**

16 But God says to the wicked: "Why bother reciting My decrees and pretending to obey My covenant?

17 For you refuse My discipline and treat My words like trash.

18 When you see thieves, you approve of them, and you spend your time with adulterers.

19 Your mouth is filled with wickedness, and your tongue is full of lies.

20 You sit around and slander your brother—your own mother's son.

21 While you did all this, I remained silent, and you thought I didn't care. But now I will rebuke you, listing all My charges against you.

22 **Repent, all of you who forget Me, or I will tear you apart, and no one will help you.**

23 **But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me. If you keep to My path, I will reveal to you the salvation of God."**

GIVING

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