

WALK IN THE PATH OF JUSTICE

Responsorial Song from Psalm 15 for Sunday 22B
for Psalmist, Assembly, Ascant & SAB Choir
with Keyboard, Woodwinds & Guitar

TONY BARR

*Who shall stand in this holy place?
Who dare gaze on the Face of God?*

The innocent of hand and of heart,
whose lives are not empty and aimless;
who seek justice and integrity,
and whose ways are but truthful and blameless.

Who do no harm to others,
speak no anger, no words of contention,
who respect both stranger and neighbor,
to be honored by all in return.

*Walk in the path of justice
you shall live in the house of God.*

Who do not borrow or lend,
turn away from bribery, corruption.
If you do these things in your heart,
the trouble shall come to disturb you.

Yes, you shall be blessed by the Holy One
your reward shall be double as he has called you.
Be strong in your love, ever watchful,
seek daily the God who is Living.

About the Psalm

Psalm 15 is a gateway liturgy, which was later included in the psalm 24. When the time arrived for the Festival Vigils to begin, the Pilgrims would be summoned to the Temple. First, they would have to climb Mount Zion to the Temple gates. There they were met by the gatekeeper, who questioned them about their worthiness to pass through the gates, about their truthfulness in keeping the Covenant. Once they had been allowed the Temple precinct, they would take the steps for ascent to ascend to the Temple Courts. In Israel's early days, they were not permitted to enter the inner courts which were reserved for the priests. But after the Exile and rebuilding of the Temple, the inner Courts were open to all.

The Psalm is an open question: 'worthy to stand?' The verses spell out the qualities and conditions of discipleship, of behavior in the presence of God. The end result is to be found in the fourth verse, an addition to the psalm in the days of the Temple. 'The Holy One' is a mutual act of thanksgiving. A *berekah*, blessing, is not a magic word used to influence God, but a mutual response of gratitude. But how might an Infinite Being be capable of accepting a human attribute of gratitude? In the poetry of Covenant, God finds pleasure in a human life well lived. And poetry speaks of truths which are beyond prose.

About this Setting

As both liturgist and musical scholar, the lectionary psalm as being an answer to a question which has not (yet) been asked. To strengthen the liturgical character of the piece, I have integrated the question (from Psalm 24) into the piece as an introduction and intermezzo to the refrain. To this end, I have also added an additional verse from the psalm as a way of completion.

An ancient tradition of the psalm was a rite of ascent. The music setting follows the arc of this journey. In each verse, the melody climbs higher and higher through the first phrase, then the second, and then its apex, to descend on the fourth phrase and find its rest. The verses should be intoned by the psalmist in the place where Scripture is proclaimed. In the Early Church, it would have been intoned by the deacon, or the Reading which preceded it, by the one intoning the reading.

- Tony Barr

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Structure
The dynamics of the piece

Keyboard Introduction

A question intoned by the Psalmist (from Psalm 24)

The Refrain as the answer sung by the Choir or Schola (choir section)

The Refrain repeated by the Assembly as us

The Verses chanted by the Psalmist

The question is asked again

Leading into the Refrain

*Who shall stand in this holy place?
Who dare gaze on the Feet of God?*

SAMPLE

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INTRO ♩ = ca. 96

B \flat Dm C F Dm Gm Am7

THE QUESTION

Psalmist (or Cantor Asking the Question)

Who shall stand in this ho - ly place Who gaze on the Face of God?

Dm F C Dm Am C Asus 4

THE ANSWER

Choir/Schola (Answering the Question)

God. Walk in the path of justice, you shall live in the house of

B \flat Dm C F B \flat maj7 Am7 Gm/C Dm Gm Am

SAMPLE

REFRAIN

Flute on selected Refrains

Musical staff for Flute part, showing a melodic line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

Oboe on selected Refrains

Musical staff for Oboe part, showing a melodic line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

Descant on selected Refrains

Musical staff for Descant part, showing a melodic line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

Walk in the path of jus - tice, and ye shall live in the house of

All

Musical staff for All part, showing a melodic line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

Walk in the path of jus - tice, and ye shall live in the house of

SAB on selected Refrains

Musical staff for SAB part, showing a melodic line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

Walk in the path of jus - tice, and ye shall live in the house of

Musical staff for Bass line, showing a bass line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

B \flat Dm Gm B \flat maj7 Am7 Gm/C

Musical staff for Piano accompaniment (treble clef), showing chords and a melodic line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

Musical staff for Piano accompaniment (bass clef), showing a bass line in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature.

SAMPLE

1-3 to Verses Final

God. God.

God.

God.

Dm Bbmaj7 Am Dm Gm7 Am Bbmaj7 Gm7 C D+2

SAMPLE

VERSES Psalmist *singing at the ambo*

1. The in - no - cent of hand and of he whose

2. Who do no harm to oth - ers, speak no

3. Who do not bor - row lend, turn a -

4. Yes, you have been by Ho - ly one and re -

Am7 Dm Bb Dm sus4

1. lives are not emp - ty aim - less who seek jus - tice and in -

2. ang - er, con - ten - tion, who re - spect both stran - ger and

3. way from any, cor - rup - tion. If you do these things in your

4. ward - ed who has called you. Re - main strong in your faith, ev - er

Dm Dm Bbmaj7 Fmaj7 C


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THE QUESTION ♩ = ca. 96

Psalmist (or Cantor Asking the Question)



Who shall stand in this ho - ly place? Who dare gaze on the Face of God?


REFRAIN *(The Answer)*

Descant on selected Refrains



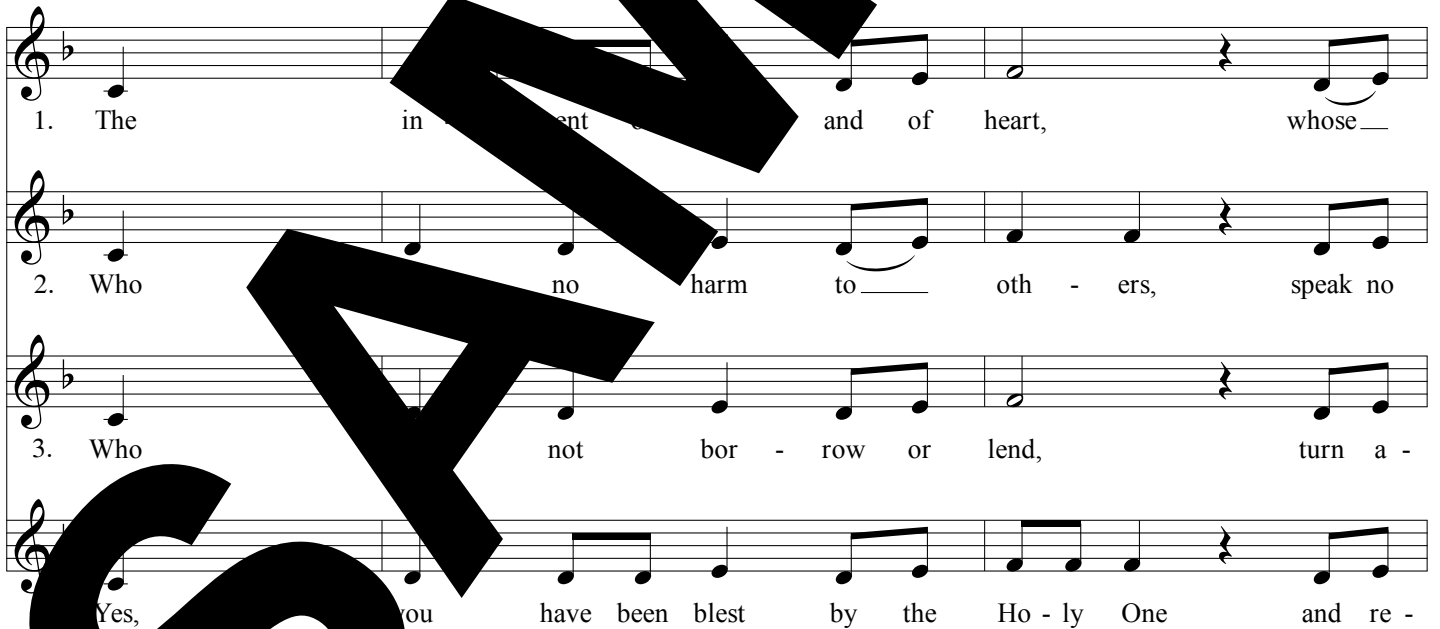
Walk in the path of jus - tice, and you shall live in the house of God.

All



Walk in the path of jus - tice, you shall live in the house of God.

VERSES *Psalmist singing at the ambo*



1. The in - nocent and of heart, whose
2. Who no harm to oth - ers, speak no
3. Who not bor - row or lend, turn a -
Yes, you have been blest by the Ho - ly One and re -