

# Question of Identity: The Expressive “I”—and the Collective “We”



# Introduction

- **Historical testimony to the power of the Psalms from the individual voice.**
- **Appeal to the person in trouble—about 50 of these Psalms!**
- **Two-fold commonality among the 50 Psalms**



# Common Set of Elements

- Name God & speak to Him in direct address
- Feature descriptions of trouble
- Organized around a petition
- Faith assumption behind it all
- Trust is claimed
- Sacrifice to God in context of deliverance is promised



# Final Introductory Remarks

- These Psalms give God's people the language to express the inexpressible
- Use of the Psalms shape and mold us
- According to the rabbis & Augustine, three levels of reading and understanding the Psalms
- Important questions of how to view these Psalms



# The Expressive “I”

- **Ps. 51** as test case (Superscription, historical setting)
- Personal sin
- Recognition of personal evil
- What God is looking for in my heart
- Appeal to God
- I can be cleansed—what God will do
- What I will do in response



# We...Our (The Expressive Community)

- **Psalm 8:1, 8**
- **Psalm 12:7**
- **Psalm 20:1-9**
- **Psalm 21:13**
- **Psalm 22:25**-- From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him.



# Psalm 26:11, 12

**But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. My foot stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the LORD.**



# Psalm 33:20-22

Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.





# Psalm 36:7-9

How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.

