

The God-Fearing Man

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Bible Verse: Psalm 112
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Our text for tonight comes from Psalm 112 as we are continuing in our exposition of the Psalms. I invite you to turn there. I'm going to read this wonderful Psalm to kind of set it in your mind. Psalm 112, beginning in verse 1. It says,

1 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments. 2 His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed. 3 Wealth and riches are in his house, And his righteousness endures forever. 4 Light arises in the darkness for the upright; He is gracious and compassionate and righteous. 5 It is well with the man who is gracious and lends; He will maintain his cause in judgment. 6 For he will never be shaken; The righteous will be remembered forever. 7 He will not fear evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. 8 His heart is upheld, he will not fear, Until he looks with satisfaction on his adversaries. 9 He has given freely to the poor, His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted in honor. 10 The wicked will see it and be vexed, He will gnash his teeth and melt away; The desire of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 112 is a Psalm describing the blessing that belongs to believers. It anticipates their final exaltation in glory, and it also describes the final destruction of the wicked. As we see so often in the Psalms in a short condensed passage, there is this sweeping expression of great and lofty eternal themes that are really hard to try to explain in a brief message like this but we're going to do our best.

Last time we saw that this Psalm is connected both with the Psalm that precedes it and the Psalm that comes after it. The opening themes in all three Psalms are exactly the same and so we want to see these connected together. Look at 1 of Psalm 111, "Praise the LORD!" Psalm 112:1, "Praise the LORD!" Psalm 113, "Praise the LORD!" And so these Psalms are giving us different aspects of what it means to praise the Lord and to lead a life in light of his glory and under the authority and in submission to his word and in unity with his people. Psalm 111, we said at last time, is an acrostic poem in the Hebrew, each line of Hebrew begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 112 is the same way, and I mention that only to show that again we see that these are grouped together for a reason, and along with those things we also see a commonality in the theme

that in the Psalm 111 and begins Psalm 112. Look at verse 10 of Psalm 111 with me. It says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." Then in verse 1 of Psalm 112 back-to-back you see, Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD." And so Psalm 112 kind of a chain linked together, Psalm 11 12 is picking up on the end of Psalm 111 and expanding on the blessing that falls on the man who fears God.

And we're going to break this Psalm into four sections beginning with this first point if you are taking notes. They're all going to deal with the word "blessings." Blessings, point 1: blessings flow to the godly. Blessings flow to the godly, and in that sense we could read this Psalm as an encouragement and a promise of blessing to those of us that fear the Lord and want to live in submission to his word and live in unity with his people. God blesses that kind of life and I know that most of you were not here when we started our exposition of the Psalms back in 2014. Psalm 1, going back to Psalm 1 for just a moment to kind of set the stage here because Psalm 112 is expanding on that, and we said that Psalms 1 and 2 function as kind of the pillars of the doorway for the rest of the Psalter. You enter the entire Psalter through Psalms 1 and 2 and they set forth these themes: the blessings on those who delight in the law of the Lord and also Psalm 2, the magnificence of Christ and the prophetic foreshadowings of Christ that you find throughout the Psalms. So those are great themes that the entire Psalter is built on even in their brief expressions in these opening two Psalms, and I want you to see as we look at Psalm 1 for just a moment and go back to that, we see that this initial theme of the blessing on the man who loves the word of God is found right in the opening Psalm, and so this is crucial to the entire theme of the Psalms. Verse 2 of Psalm 1 says, "his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers." You have this broad-reaching promise of blessing upon the man who loves and submits to the word of God and that is a theme that runs throughout the entire Psalter.

Now also you find in that opening Psalm, verse 4, the contrast with the wicked. "The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." Psalm 1 lays before us a little bit of a choice and a little bit of a challenge, you might say. It says this is the order of the universe in God's design, there is blessing on the man who delights in the law of God, and there are curses and sorrows and multiplied judgment upon those who reject it. And you can look at Psalm 1 and read it and the question for everyone who reads it is ultimately this: which way is it going to be for you? Which way is it going to be for you? God promises blessing on the one who loves the word of God, he promises judgment upon the wicked, and we are left with the fact that there is this consequence of the way that we respond to the opening of the word of God, whether it's in private, whether it's in what someone says to us or, you know, as you sit under the teaching of the word of God, you know, and it's breathtaking to realize that there are massive consequences to the way that you choose to respond to the word of God in your life, the way that you choose to respond to instruction, sometimes to counsel and correction. There is eternal consequences to that and so Psalm 1 opens us up to that and it

gives us this universal promise, this universal principle by which we can interpret the rest of the Psalter and also all of life and everything that happens around us.

Verse 6, it says, "the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." So the Lord knows what's going on and we are not able to avoid that consequence, and so we look to the word of God in Psalm 1, we see this general theme laid out, and so when we turn to Psalm 112 we haven't forgotten the beginning of the Psalter, instead we have it in mind as we read about these promises of blessing on the God-fearing man, and that's the title of tonight's message if you're taking notes, "The God-Fearing Man."

So let's look at it more closely together and start by defining the fear of God once again. I believe I did this last week but I want to add a dimension to it. This Psalm is about the fear of the Lord, the man who fears the Lord, and as we've taught in the past, there are two primary ways that the fear of God works out and they are completely distinct based on these distinctions between the righteous man described in the Psalms and the wicked man described in the Psalms. And the fear of God for the wicked man works it out in this manner, works it out in this sense, I've defined it this way in the past. For the unsaved sinner, which I know sadly includes some of you as you sit here tonight, for the unsaved sinner, the fear of God describes the abject terror that arises when you understand that God is a threat to your well-being. For the unsaved sinner, the fear of God describes the abject terror that arises when you understand he is a threat to your well-being.

Now we're way too familiar with God in these modern days and we take him far too much for granted and we don't really take seriously his holiness. If you want to read a book that will straighten your thinking out on that and help you with it, I highly recommend R. C. Sproul's book on the holiness of God. That is a book that every Christian should read on this particular theme and he shows in a very helpful way the impact that it has on Christian living. But the holiness of God for the unsaved sinner can be measured by the way biblical characters quaked in fear when they saw the holiness of God or the glory of God displayed to them. You think of Isaiah in Isaiah 6. You think of the way in the book of Revelation how people who are receiving the judgment of God are calling for rocks to fall upon them to hide them from the presence of his holiness. I think of Peter, I believe it's in Luke 5, when the Lord miraculously brought a great haul of fish. He said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." The manifestation of the power of God to deliver a haul of fish after a night of fruitless fishing by men made him see the glory of God in a new light and caused fear in him. So at some point there has to be this kind of bedrock foundation laid if we're going to understand really who God is, that his great holiness and his great character and his hatred of sin is a threat to the well-being of sinners everywhere and should cause them to fear if they are not reconciled to him.

Now when you add something else to it and we talk about the consequences of hearing the word of God together, Scripture says that the most severe judgment is going to be reserved for those who have heard the gospel and nevertheless rejected Christ, and the rhetorical question is asked: how much severer judgment is going to be reserved for those who have heard the gospel and reject it? I'm paraphrasing from Hebrews when I say that.

This is serious and the fact that people can go through life without much of a serious thought or in a cynical way or rejecting the word of God in what they hear, is simply an indication that the fear of God has not yet fallen upon them because if they understood the reality of it, they would be frightened to death and that's just the reality of it, and that kind of fear is what the proper fear of God is for the unsaved sinner. Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." So, you know, we're talking about matters that are serious and consequential here.

That's the fear of God for the unsaved sinner, but having said that and having kind of laid out that foundation, let me hasten to add that Psalm 112 is talking about a different aspect of the fear of God entirely, and you can see it as you read through it. This is the fear of God that applies to the believer. There is a place for the fear of God in the life of a believer. Even though we are reconciled to God fully by the shed blood and the perfect righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, even though we understand that we are on a path that leads to heaven, that there is eternal blessing waiting for us, that we are secure in the hand of Christ and no one can snatch us out of his hand, even though we understand all of that, that does not make us careless or indifferent as we go through spiritual life. No, it has a different impact on us. It provokes a different kind of fear in our hearts and we defined it last time this way, the fear of God for the believer is something different and the fear of God for the believer is this, it is a wholehearted life of loving humble worship, it is a wholehearted life of loving humble worship that you render to God in response to his saving mercy in your life. It is a wholehearted life of loving humble worship that you render to God in response to his saving mercy in your life. This is a different kind of fear of the Lord. There is reverence in it. There is respect and honor in it. And yet there is also this glad willing devotion, this principle of utter submission to Christ in the one who truly fears the Lord and that's the fear of the Lord that Psalm 112 is speaking about. For the unbeliever, making this contrast as clear as my feeble lips can make it, for the unbeliever there is this terrifying fear of judgment, but as you open Psalm 112 when it talks about the fear of the Lord in the believer, you immediately see that it is not a fear of condemnation.

Look at Psalm 112:1 and every one of us here that claims to be a Christian, every one of us that truly has been born again from above is rightly described as a God-fearing man or a God-fearing woman because true salvation produces this kind of fear in the heart of the one who believes, who is truly under the influence of the Holy Spirit. So we see this immediately in verse 1 where he says,

1 Praise the LORD!

Praise Yahweh. Hallelujah, literally in the Hebrew. Then he goes on to say,

How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.

So immediately in the context of this first verse we see that this kind of fear of the Lord is associated with blessing, of being in a position of privileged favor under the hand of God.

There is a position of privileged favor under the hand of God and you're under his blessing, and along with that you see a heart attitude not of one of terror of judgment but instead it's this person described, look at it there at the end of verse 1, "Who greatly delights in His commandments." So whatever this fear of God is, this wholehearted life of loving humble worship, whatever it is, it is a fear that is associated with great delight, with pleasure, with satisfaction in Christ.

Let me just emphasize something that we say repeatedly from the pulpit here, is that one of the marks of true salvation, genuine biblical salvation that actually results in eternal life, that is the mark of the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, you have received a new life from God from above, one of the marks of that life certainly and without fail is this, is that it produces a belief in the word of God, a love for the word of God, and an affirmation of the truth of the word of God. All of that is wrapped up in greatly delighting in his commandments, there is this heart love, this heart response to the word of God. And I've spoken to many of you, I've heard your testimonies, and one of the things that I always listen for when I am hearing someone's testimony or reading it, I'm looking for a change of disposition from their old way of life to their new way of life being marked by something like this, "The word of God became alive to me. The word of God I recognized was true. I loved the word of God. I wanted to hear it. I loved to hear it. It wasn't just a matter of external participation on the Lord's day, but I wanted to read it for myself. I needed to know it for myself." That is one of the indispensable marks of a true Christian and theologically you can know for certain that it has to be that way. The Bible says that the word of God was inspired by the Spirit of God.

Now if the Spirit of God comes to dwell within you and changes your nature and changes your disposition, doesn't it makes sense that he would change your nature in a way that caused you to love what he loved and what he produced through the writers of Scripture? The idea of someone truly having the Spirit of God within him and yet being indifferent to the Spirit's book, that's a contradiction in terms. And it doesn't matter, beloved, it doesn't matter if someone loves the idea of supernatural signs, it doesn't matter if someone loves the staged displays that can be put on like a rock concert by wealthy churches. It doesn't matter if you like that. It doesn't matter if you want the blessing of God. Ultimately it doesn't matter if you simply want to go to heaven and not hell. Who would want the alternative? None of that, none of those things are marks, necessarily marks of true conversion. The one thing, the acid test, the one thing that is going to be a mark of one who has truly got the Spirit of God, is truly a God-fearing man is shown right here in verse 1 of Psalm 112, he greatly delights in his commandments, and there is this spirit of belief and submission to the word of God that marks his life henceforth and forever more.

Scripture is a joy. It is a joy for us to study the word of God. It is a joy for us to obey the word of God. 1 John says his commandments are not burdensome to those who know him. We are glad to obey the word of God in response to the gift of our salvation. And so Scripture starts with this fear of God that gives us this sense of a wholehearted response to God and what he has revealed in his word about himself, and along with that, you know, we talk about the word of God in its written form, we can say all of the same

things about the Word of God incarnate, about the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is given to us and one of the primary ministries of the Spirit is to glorify Christ, Scripture says. So just as there is this love for the written word of God, there is this love for the incarnate Word of God which the Spirit of God produces in those that he has truly converted. It could be no other way. How could we have the Spirit of God within us whose ministry is to glorify Christ and yet be indifferent to him, to go days on end without giving thought to him, without giving him honor and worship for the great redemption that he purchased for us at the cross of Calvary? How could any of those things possibly be true?

So, you know, it's good for us to just be candid with each other and it's good for me to ask pastoral questions. You know, as a pastor you get to say things that maybe others don't feel quite the liberty to say. You know, I ask you tonight as you sit here, man and woman, boy and girl, are you a person who loves the word of God? Is it a living book to you? Is Jesus Christ real and precious to you? Are you thankful to him? Do you realize that without him you would be utterly condemned, that there is no hope apart from him, and yet in him there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? Do you view the word of God written and the Word of God incarnate like that because that's what the Spirit of God produces in the hearts of those who believe. You know, we're not talking about trying to be a better moral person or being a good person. That's not what we're talking about. It's incidental to these greater heart affections that the Spirit of God produces in the hearts of those who believe.

So Psalm 112 opens on a great theme and it is pronouncing blessing on those who take these things seriously, who fear God in the way that we have been describing here. Now as you move on in the Psalm as we're going to see, this fear of the Lord provides the foundation – oh, you're going to need to listen to me carefully – it provides the foundation for true prosperity in life. It provides the foundation for blessing from God. God blesses those who fear him and that is the point of Psalm 112. And we ask the question, "Well, what are those blessings?" And we'll see those unfolded for a moment, but first I need to make a qualifying statement to make sure we understand as well as possible what I'm saying and what I'm not saying. Many times we have rightly criticized the health-and-wealth gospel that promises health and blessing to those who believe in Christ, and it holds out a promise of earthly blessing as a reason to follow after Christ and usually associated with a greater measure of blessing in accordance with your greater giving, you can find the address at the bottom of your screen kind of thing. That gospel, that health-and-wealth gospel promotes a false and a selfish view of spirituality and we are not talking about that in what we address here tonight. At the same time, one of the wonderful things about the promise of the gospel, we saw this on the Sermon on the Mount on extended times, is this, is that the promise of Christ and the love of God for his people means that he does bring blessing on the lives of those who fear him, and this Psalm is speaking about those blessings.

Look at verses 2 and 3. Remember, we're talking about the man who fears the Lord and then that becomes the antecedent for the pronouns that follow here in verses 2 and 3. Look at it with me. It says,

2 His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed. 3 Wealth and riches are in his house, And his righteousness endures forever.

And so there is a lasting consequence to the life of the man who fears the Lord. There is blessing, there is outward blessing that as a general pattern, not without exception but as a general pattern follows after those who fear the Lord in one way or another. Scripture says that David said elsewhere in the Psalms, "I've never seen the descendants of the righteous begging for bread." So there are these blessings, there are these external blessings that God gives in addition to the rich spiritual blessings that have been described that we've been talking about earlier.

Look down at verse 9 as we talk about these blessings as well, that flow on the life of the man who fears God. It says, "He has given freely to the poor, His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted in honor." And the Old Testament frequently emphasizes the blessing of family, children are a gift from the Lord it says in Psalm 127:3. In the 10 Commandments, it speaks about how godly children will be blessed in their days, those who honor their parents will receive blessing that is withheld from those who do not. So there are these material blessings that attend to the spiritual life.

Now having said that, you know, there are experiences like Job walks through. You know, Job saw the loss of all of his blessing. Paul walked through many dark times in his apostolic ministry as he spoke about being beaten and being shipwrecked and things like that. It's not a promise of unbroken tranquility and having everything that you want but there is this promise of the provision of God that attends the life of those who fear him, so much so, let's look at Matthew 6, so much so that Jesus makes this a premise that argues against the existence of anxiety in the life of a believer. This is so precious for us to see. This is meant to go deep into our hearts and settle our anxieties and give us a disposition of trust and calm serenity as we look to the future, these kinds of things of which we discuss here this evening. In Matthew 6:25 Jesus said, "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" If God makes sure that the birds are fed, believer in Christ, don't you think he'll make sure that somehow you have the provision that you need in your life? The logic of this is inescapable. It's an argument from the lesser to the greater. If the lesser thing is true, if God makes sure that the birds are cared for, then surely won't he take care of you who are members of his family by the new birth?

The argument is inescapable so that Christ goes on and says in verse 31, Matthew 6, he says, "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." In other words, what Christ is

saying, make your first priority of life that you are a God-fearing man, in the way that we've been talking about here, that you're a God-fearing man, a God-fearing woman, and God will supply this as part of his overall care for your life and soul, so that believers are to enter into this understanding of the great love of God for them and to trust him that in his love he will provide for us even if we're not sure what tomorrow is going to bring. That is an aspect, an important aspect of fearing God.

Now these material blessings exist, you know, they may ebb and flow from time to time, but the provision of God for his people is promised to us and we believe him for that, and we love him for that, and we trust him for that, so that our minds are thereby freed from consuming anxiety, knowing that these lesser things are going to be taking care of, it frees our mind to focus on the thing that matters in giving our heart in this fearful devotion and loving submission to him. Now ultimately the fullest provision of all of these things, the final provision for this waits for us in glory. In glory, there won't be any need, there won't be any sense of anxiety, there won't be any sense of uncertainty about the future because it's all going to be this perfection of bliss around the throne of God. As we read Psalm 112, we'll see later, we contemplate the ultimate fulfillment of this in eternity but even in earth we have the firstfruits of these blessings in our lives right now.

So we see these blessings that flow to the godly and looking at Psalm 112, this is an unalterable purpose of God in the life of his people. This is something that lasts forever. Look at verse 3 with me, "his righteousness endures forever." Verse 6, "The righteous will be remembered forever." Verse 9, "His righteousness endures forever." Three times in these 10 verses there is this emphasis on the enduring blessing of salvation that God gives to his people.

Now if that's a genuine possession of yours, Christ has genuinely saved you, then isn't it obvious that your response and attitude and heart affections are going to be to fear him with this humble life of loving worship? There's this full-hearted response to it all. I've been criticized in the past for the way that I define the fear of God, and that's okay, but that's why I am not satisfied with the common definition that is easily tossed around that the fear of God means reverential awe. I've never quite understood what that exactly is supposed to mean even though it's commonly said. What is reverential awe? You know, we don't even use that word "awe" in normal conversation. I think it's more helpful and more satisfying to understand that it's talking about this wholehearted life response of love and obedience and devotion, and that there is this fullness of my being engaged in responding to God in response to the fullness of the blessings that he showered down upon me. So I ask you whether your life is like that? Is there something in your heart that responds to God like that because that is the mark of true salvation, and these blessings that flow to the godly are an aspect of what God does for us in his superabundant grace to us.

Now secondly, let's consider in this next section of the Psalm the blessings that flow from the godly. Blessings that flow from the godly. We're not simply a receptacle, we're not simply receiving these blessings but as God blesses us, as God blesses the godly man, the godly man becomes a blessing to those around him and we see this as we continue on in

the Psalm. Look at verse 4 with me, for example. Point 2 here: blessings that flow from the godly. Verse 4,

4 Light arises in the darkness for the upright; He is gracious and compassionate and righteous. 5 It is well with the man who is gracious and lends; He will maintain his cause in judgment.

Now what happens here and you see that there's this outward focus to the God-fearing man, and he's gracious toward others, he is compassionate toward them, he shares what he has with others with gladness. And what we find in this verse 4, this is very interesting to see, it's talking and it's describing the man who fears God, verse 4, "He is gracious and compassionate and righteous." Now watch this, this is why it's cool to connect the Psalms and to make sure that we're aware of the connections that exist between them. Look over at verse 4 of Psalm 111. Psalm 111:4, "He has made His wonders to be remembered; The LORD is gracious and compassionate." Psalm 111 told us that the Lord is like this, Psalm 112 tells us that the God-fearing man is like this: gracious, compassionate and righteous. What that tells us is this, is that as we give to God our wholehearted life of humble worship in response to his salvation, he does something to us, he starts to conform us over time, he conforms us to his own image. The Spirit of God conforms us and makes us increasingly like the Lord Jesus Christ who saved us, and we see that as we compare these Psalms together. God who is in perfection gracious and compassionate, the effect of being a God-fearing man is that it produces on a human scale and indeed imperfectly, but nonetheless observably it creates this sense of compassion and grace in the life of the man who fears God. As we delight in Christ, he conforms us to his image. There is a supernatural process of sanctification that takes place and that's why I say yet once again, that the things of which we're speaking here are of great lasting consequence. These are deep and profound realities.

Now that helps us, that gives us an anchor and you see the anchor alluded to there in the beginning of verse 4 where the psalmist makes a somewhat enigmatic statement, he says, "Light arises in the darkness for the upright." What does that mean? What does it mean light arises in the darkness? Is it that we light candles and physical darkness is dispensed? Well, obviously that's not the case. As I understand the text, darkness here is a reference to the trials and adversities of life. The psalmist is realistic as he walks through life recognizing that it can be very difficult, and so we see that this Psalm is not giving us an unrealistic picture of life and blessing, there's this recognition that there are times of darkness that come upon us, external darkness and affliction of body and soul come upon us and life suddenly we find it to be difficult. A mate fails us, a friend fails us and rejects us or something like that, and we feel the pain of that and the psalmist uses a metaphor of darkness to describe those times of difficulty in our lives. Well, what he's saying is when light arises in the darkness, he says that God gives us hope in the midst of those things. As we remember the blessings that he gives to the righteous overall, as he gives to the God-fearing man, as he gives blessing to them, there's hope that this darkness isn't going to last forever, that there will be a time of relief that comes even if I can't see where it's coming from now, even if I'm waiting until the ultimate fulfillment in eternity, sooner or later it is inevitable that God is going to bring us to a place of perfect blessing and the

darkness will be dispelled. And because God is faithful to his promises and because this is what God does for his people, those who belong to him through faith in Jesus Christ can be guided safely through the pitfalls of life

So we trust him even if the blessings seem to be hidden for a time. We don't doubt the provision and goodness of God anymore than we doubt the fact of the existence of the sun when it's hidden behind clouds. No one in their right mind on a cloudy day thinks the sun has gone away and it's never coming back. It might seem like that sometimes in the springtime here in our region, but no one in their right mind thinks that. Everybody understands the sun is still there, it's just that the clouds are hiding it. Well, in the same way, that's the way that we need to start to deal with and respond to and think about our adversities. Yes, it's a cloudy day in life right now and there are storm clouds that are around me, but I'm confident about what lies behind the clouds and therefore I can walk through without my faith being shaken. So we love the Lord for those things.

He goes on to say these blessings that flow from the godly, because we understand that the Lord will deal well with us, it frees us to deal graciously with others around us, even those who perhaps don't "deserve it." Look at verse 5 with me,

5 It is well with the man who is gracious and lends; He will maintain his cause in judgment.

The English Standard Version, as well as the margin in the NASB translates the end of verse 5 like this, the righteous man, "He conducts his affairs with justice." The idea is this, is that the godly man is fair, he is honest and he is just in his dealings with others. There is this winsome transparency to the godly man that doesn't try to shut people out or to deal with them in a harsh and unfair way.

Look over at Psalm 15 and you see this similar principle being stated. Psalm 15 is also a description of the godly man. And in Psalm 15, we could read the whole thing, I won't. Verse 2, talking about the citizen of Zion it says this, "He walks with integrity. He works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; In his eyes a reprobate is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He swears to his own hurt and does not change." There is this fundamental integrity to the life of the God-fearing man that manifests itself in the way that he deals with others. He conducts himself in an honorable, just and honest way. So these are the blessings that are flowing from the godly life. To come close to a godly man, to come close to a godly woman is to enter into the realm of that kind of integrity and to be blessed by it.

Now let's go to the third section here of the Psalm: the blessings that flow in the godly. The blessings that flow in the godly. What happens to his heart, what happens in the heart of the believing man, the man who fears God? And this is an important aspect and an important balance to what we're talking about here. We've been talking about external things largely because that's what dominated the first half of the Psalm, but as we go on, we see that there is this internal dynamic to true faith that the psalmist explains for us.

Look at verses 6 through 8. I'll read them here for us again. It says,

6 For he will never be shaken; The righteous will be remembered forever.
7 He will not fear evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
8 His heart is upheld, he will not fear, Until he looks with satisfaction on his adversaries.

Do you see this inner dynamic? It's what we were talking about from Matthew 6. Anxiety is answered in Christ. Anxiety is resolved in this understanding of the blessing that God brings to his own so that there is an internal sense of well-being that accompanies the believer, not simply an external aspect to his faith. Over time, and I emphasize that, over time and sometimes with ups and downs along the way, God builds stability into his children. The one who is growing in Christ becomes increasingly stable as he faces different conflicts and adversities in life. He's not as thrown off by adversity as he was in the early days of his conversion. He's learned just as the weightlifter gradually works his way up by increasing weights as he lifts, so different adversities have strengthened the spiritual muscles of the one who fears God in a way that allows him to walk through life with greater stability than he did if he was not a God-fearing man. And knowing who Christ is, knowing what he did for us on the cross, knowing that his righteousness covers us before a holy God, knowing that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, all of those things, knowing that God completes the work that he begins in us until the day of Christ Jesus, there is a production of a spiritual virtue as a result of those convictions. As we go deep into the word of God, there is a deep conviction in us that produces a deep abiding and very attractive virtue and it's called courage. It's called courage. The God-fearing man is a courageous man.

Look at verse 7, "He will not fear evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, he trusts in the LORD. His heart is upheld, he will not fear, Until he looks with satisfaction on his adversaries." How is it that a man like Stephen in Acts 7 could speak with such boldness when men were murderously threatening his life as he spoke? How is it that he could cry out as the rocks were raining down on his head, how is it that he could cry out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"? What noble and attractive courage in the midst of his martyrdom. We spoke a few weeks ago about the first martyr of the Scottish Reformation, Patrick Hamilton, and the courage that he showed as it took those thugs six hours to burn him at the stake because they were so incompetent at doing it. The universal testimony of those who observed him was one of courage and tranquility and not calling down curses on the ones that were torturing him like that. How does anyone live like that? You know, of greater interest, how does anyone die like that? How do you die with that kind of courage? Well, it's the product of fearing the Lord and knowing what his promises are so that your heart is not afraid of what the future holds. So the godly man is not afraid of the future even if it happens to bring bad news. He trusts the Lord to bring him through whatever comes, and even if he dies for his faith in this life, even if he dies for his faith in this life, he knows that there is an abundant entrance to a heavenly kingdom awaiting for him, that the arms of Jesus will welcome him warmly in

heaven, that angels will rejoice in his presence when he arrives in heaven. So there is no cause for fear.

Now I rather suspect, I say this pastorally, gently by way of encouragement to you, you know, to contemplate the things that you're afraid of today in this season of life. I have my own fears and things that I'm concerned about and I need to hear this word myself. We need to bring all of those things, all of those thoughts, we need to bring all of them under submission to the things that we're seeing here from God's word tonight, to see the faithfulness of God to his people. The Lord is gracious, he's compassionate, he is righteous. He has promised us blessing and so we need to view the trials through that perspective and say whatever this oddball manifestation of difficulty is in my life, I'm going to choose my perspective to be that I'm going to view this from the perspective of the promises of God so that this must have a good outcome in the end, rather than simply taking a horizontal view of it that causes you to bind yourself up in fear and anxiety and worry and sleepless nights over what may or may not happen in the future. Either God's promises are true and there is no cause for fear, or they're not true and there is cause for fear, but those two things are not meant to be mixed together.

So we see in verse 9 as time has once again gotten away from me, we see that God gives us strength and God promises a good outcome in the end. Verse 9, speaking of the righteous man, it says,

9 He has given freely to the poor, His righteousness endures forever;

What's the consequence of that?

His horn will be exalted in honor.

The horn was a symbol of an animal's strength. It applies in a figure of speech here to the strength of the righteous and we find our strength, we find our courage in the fact that God will bless us, God will honor us throughout eternity, there is a coming time where God will reward his own. 2 Corinthians 5 talks about that, being before the judgment seat of Christ and receiving the reward for our life for him. God is gracious and God is faithful and whatever reward he gives us, I'm sure it's going to be gracious and far beyond anything that we actually deserve.

So we rest in that and that's our strength. Our strength is in the fact that our lives presently, our lives in the future, even our lives in the past, everything has been under the hand of God who intends our blessing and to do good for us in the end. All of it's under his blessing. All of it's certified to us in these New Testament days by the blood of Christ. All of it promised to us, the golden streets and the dwelling places with Christ in John 14, all of it promised. Jesus said, "I go away to prepare a place for you, and if I go away I'll come again so that where I am you may be there also." Now listen, if that's what Christ is doing for us, why are we so stressed out about what's happening in this temporary and passing world? Yes, I know it's difficult but we must have this perspective on the things that come to us. God will be good to us in the end and when that fundamental conviction

is in your heart, then it shapes the perspective on everything else. Those are the blessings, some of the blessings that flow in the heart of the godly man.

Well, after all of that, we come to the fourth and final section of this Psalm. It's a somewhat abrupt ending to it. We could say the fourth point here: blessings flow against the wicked. Blessings flow against the wicked. And another one of the things that I've loved about studying the Psalms is that they sometimes take a turn that we're not expecting, they take a turn that our Western minds and our Western literary approaches to things wouldn't necessarily take us to, and sometimes without transition or without, you know, without a foreshadowing of what's coming. We have just spent the first nine verses talking about the blessings of God on the God-fearing man, we've spent nine verses and there's just been this overflowing exposition of what God does for the God-fearing man and what a blessing it is to be under his care, and so you might expect it to end on a note of peace and, you know, this God-fearing man will be blessed henceforth and forever more, you know, something like that, a conclusion that leaves you in the clouds and all of that. Psalm 112 isn't like that and Psalm 112 is my favorite Psalm for just this reason. [laughter] They're laughing because I said something last week, I said whatever Psalm I'm currently preaching on is my favorite Psalm. Last week Psalm 111 was my favorite Psalm of all-time, now Psalm 112 is my favorite Psalm of all-time, just a little background to the humor there. Psalm 112 ends on a completely different note with a very abrupt contrast that you don't see coming at all.

Look at verse 10 with me,

10 The wicked will see it and be vexed, He will gnash his teeth and melt away; The desire of the wicked will perish.

This is what we saw in Psalm 1. This is what Jesus spoke about, in that place will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. There is judgment, angry painful judgment upon the wicked who reject this fear of God, who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the prosperity of the righteous irritates the ungodly. The wicked, look at it there in verse 10, "The wicked will see it." See what? They'll see all of these blessings from the prior nine verses. The wicked will see this and they'll be vexed. They do not like seeing the righteous man blessed. It fills the wicked man with anger, with trouble, with envy, with anxiety.

All of these wicked sins of covetousness and hatred fill the wicked man, and what this verse goes on to tell us is what his future is. Notice the future tense there, "He will gnash his teeth; The desire of the wicked will perish." This Psalm is doing nothing less than telling us that the ungodly man, the unsaved man is doomed to perish in utter frustration. As we said about Jesus' teaching on hell, hell is real, hell is painful, and hell is eternal, and that is consistent with the foreshadowings that we see in Old Testament texts like this. Ultimately what the wicked will find is that their hatred of God and their hatred of his people, it all has no resolution. He does not find vindication. The wicked are powerless to stop the blessing on the righteous.

Listen, when the time comes for Christ to return to earth, to receive his own and ultimately to execute judgment on the wicked, there is nothing that man can do to stop him. His utter power and utter sovereignty will bring these things to pass so that there is nothing that the wicked can do to prevent it from happening. And when Christ comes for his people and he comes to bless us and to receive us to his own, there's not a wicked man who has a hand strong enough to grab our ankle and to keep it from happening, to keep us from ascending into heaven where Christ has prepared our home for us. They can't stop it and so they are doomed to an utter frustration of the things that hate them the most. The outcome of their life will be bitter and futile. Listen, think about it biblically, isn't that what Pharaoh learned the hard way as he pursued the children of Israel into the Red Sea with his army? Isn't that what Haman found out in the book of Esther as he was led to the gallows? Didn't the Jews find out that even crucifying Christ could not stop him because he was resurrected on the third day? It's a potent contrast, isn't it. All of these blessings on those who believe in Christ, and the vexation of the wicked as they're unable to prevent it despite the fury that is in their heart.

My friend, all of these blessings of which we've spoken here tonight, they are found in Christ and in Christ alone. These blessings and 10,000 beside are promised to those who come to Christ in humble repentant faith. God delights in blessing his children. God delights in giving salvation to unworthy sinners. Scripture says that he justifies the ungodly, he declares righteous the ungodly. The one who comes to Christ with nothing in his hand, asks for mercy by faith in Christ, God justifies the man like that. No one is justified by their good works. So we see Christ offering forgiveness, eternal life and blessing. To receive him is to know the blessings of Psalm 112. To reject him is to enter into the doom of verse 10. Where are you?

Let's pray together.

We thank You for Your faithful loyal love, O God. Truly You are gracious and compassionate. You've made known to us the power of Your works, the works of Your hands are truth and justice, Your praise endures forever. We thank You for Your goodness. We thank You for all of the blessings that You have given to us in the past. Father, we know that You've blessed us far more than we've remembered. We've forgotten the ninth part of how you have blessed us and we haven't given thanks for all of that and yet You still in Your goodness continue to shower mercy and goodness upon us, mercy and goodness follow us all the days of our lives, and then we dwell in the house of the Lord forever. What a Good Shepherd You are, Lord Jesus. How we praise and honor You. We pray that You'd seal these truths to our hearts and thus make us God-fearing men and women, God-fearing boys and girls. Help us to see, recognize and give thanks for the blessings that You give. And Father, for those that are on that wicked path, we pray for a work of Your Holy Spirit to impart life to them, to open their eyes, to grant them repentance and faith that they might turn to Christ and enter into these blessings and avoid the judgment that is sure to come. We ask all of these things in the name of our blessed Lord Jesus. Amen.

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