

Psalm 108

Read Psalm 108:1-3: Being content with what God has given us is a blessing.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, [d]and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:6-10)

We all want peace of mind. God is telling us how to find peace of mind and contentment. Do we praise God because we are happy; or do we become happy after we praise God? It can be a sacrifice to praise God when you do not feel like it. That is part of the healing formula: *It is not about us...*but eventually it seems to somehow become about us all over again. The idea of praising God in a storm is to make it about him as fast as we can...and let him fix the issue. When we fixate on our problems we go downwards.

We can start out each week with anxiety over looming responsibilities. We can carry the burden of health, commitments or financial issues with us. We were not made to carry such burdens. We are not really built to carry much of a load. It is unhealthy for us to carry emotional baggage. Our health dissolves when we carry these weights. Things eventually become too heavy to carry. God wants to carry our burdens; if we will let him.

David is telling God that he is feeling great. His heart is right. There are many psalms that begin with an anxious predicament; but end in praise and a restful sense of well being. God can heal our body, soul and spirit. He can solve any problem. It seems naive to turn to God; instead of focusing on the problem. God will send you the answer and the focus that you need.

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about

tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:31-34)

I can say that I frequently am unsure on how to proceed on a given day. When I focus on God first; it all falls together nicely.

Our lives are a continuum of new challenges. It seems like every test involves putting our eyes and heart back on God. That is hard when you receive bad news. That is the first challenge. Then we need to elevate our praises above our normal mundane thoughts. Musical accompaniment helps us to reach higher praise.

Our personal struggles can have value to others. Why should my private struggle become so public? It is comforting to know that others are thinking the same things. My victories are for the benefit of the team. Giving thanks to God; and sharing what he has done empowers, and encourages our brothers and sisters in the faith.

Read Psalm 108:4-6: We can give thanks for what we observe in our little worlds. We really do not know about what God is doing with our neighbor, or in the universe; or in heaven. What is God doing about meteorites, or the suns or the black holes? Men have a limited understanding of what goes on in the universe and heaven. We worry about health and money and family enough as it is. What would happen if we knew about what was happening on Saturn or in other universes? We cannot handle that kind of load. The angels are far more aware. This psalm speaks of the praises that come to God for what he does above the heavens and earth. We are like little pill bugs living under the welcome mat. Our focus is on what is right in front of us. We cannot see the spiritual world too clearly. The angels see God and they battle with demons, and Satan.

Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:14-17)

For a mighty angel to be impressed, something must be pretty awesome and breathtaking. How do the angels see God's mercy on men? The Old Testament prophets and the angels were curious about what God would do with men in the future. It seems counterintuitive to bring idol-worshiping Gentiles into God's family to build a church. It also seems to be odd that lowly redeemed men would judge the powerful and capable angels someday. How did we get promoted over them? On the surface it seems like a mistake...but it is not.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? (1 Corinthians 6:3)

God's mercy is seen up in the heavens. Does it look the same as it looks down here on earth? We will sing a different song than the angels in heaven. Men will sing about their appreciation for being rescued. We will thank God for paying a high price to redeem us to himself.

“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, (Revelation 5:9)

The angels do not understand redemption, second chances, mercy or being rescued. They see Jesus as an all-powerful creator and commander, who is far superior to themselves. They see his power and his curious willingness to humble himself. In a sense, having men and angels praise God adds depth to the chorus of praises.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was

slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Revelation 5:11-12)

God's mercy in the heavens is a whole different level of understanding and power and awareness. We can only see a tiny part of what God is doing. The angels see far more. Sometimes even the angels are speechless; and other times they cannot stop praising him.

...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged Your sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (Hebrews 1:3-4)

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. (Revelation 8:1-2)

Read Psalm 108: 7-9: In a sense, Jerusalem is God's city and home. The surrounding countries are like areas that surround his family room. A man might toss his work shoes by the back door of his house. He might have a kitchen area where he washes up when he comes in. Likewise, God is referring to the nations surrounding his home like places of his conveniences and desired uses. Either way, the interest in the surrounding nations are subordinated to what God is doing in Jerusalem. The nation of Israel is like a world prophecy clock. The attacks and aggressions and judgements of Israel's neighbors all relate to how Israel is behaving. They just play a role.

"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad. (Psalm 14:7)

Read Psalm 108:10-13: Men of war in the bible knew clearly that if God was with them that they would prevail. They also had no illusions of how they would be killed if they

ventured into war without God's help. David and Joshua were famous men of war. They explicitly followed God's commands.

Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Therefore David inquired of the Lord, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." And David did so, as the Lord commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer. (2 Samuel 5:22-25)

Sometimes we need to do things larger than ourselves. The children of Israel had to march through the land, and defeat many nations. Israel had no military training or weapons of war. We are asked to take on big things too. The solution is to let God drive. We need to wait for a clear vision, and encouragement to proceed. The times when Israel was defeated were in their own strength. No battle was lost where men followed God.