

Psalm 112

This psalm is about the blessed man as he is described in Psalm 1. How does he become so blessed? Do these blessings only affect him? How does that affect his family and those he encounters? How does being a blessed man cause him to act towards others? How is his view of the events in his life and in the world different?

Read Psalm 112:1: This psalm begins by telling the reader to praise the LORD. What happens when we just keep reading; and we do not praise the LORD? It is like a key to enter into a more intimate briefing. The path to understanding leads to a fork in the road. Those who are dead serious about acting on God's word find themselves being blessed. We can miss the whole message when we merely read for content without intention to obey.

The scriptures are filled with multiple truths; or layers. On the surface, this psalm is telling us that things will go well for the man who considers God in all of his actions. A deeper meditation would tell us that the heart precedes the mind in some biblical interpretation. This is how the parables worked. Those who were not serious only heard a story about seeds and farmers. The true seekers heard about how to cultivate a heart to grow in grace. We may think that we are spiritually healthy, but may feel indifferent. We should not follow our feelings; but they can be telltale signs of what is happening inside of us. The place of blessing comes when our heart and mind are resonating with God. If we are not there; we need to change things up.

...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:21)

To fear the LORD is to take immediate action at every command. Even procrastination is saying “No LORD”. That is an oxymoron. You cannot say no to your Lord. To do so is to not regard him as your Lord.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. (1 Samuel 15:22-23a)

There is a big difference between trying to keep God's commandments versus *enjoying* his commandments. To carry these things out, we need to be sharing the mind and heart of

God. Forced actions and robotic christianity is really just religion. Unfortunately, for me this first step of praise often gets skipped. I am trying to be *a good soldier* with a divided heart. It is stressful to spend time with God, as you worry about your upcoming daily issues. Changing out our heart and mind each day requires advance prayer. We really have to break ties with our natural mind every morning. We have to reboot our mind every day...because it goes off line with God every day. Otherwise the old patterns will dog us down, and compromise our walk.

Read Psalm 112:2-3: The blessed man of God builds a godly heritage. One of the most encouraging things that I have heard in my life was when Pastor Ray Bently turned to me and said “*May God increase your tribe*”.

We want our lives to count for something other than what suits me. We want to help rebuild the broken lives around us. We want to be part of raising up the next generation of saints.

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3 John 1:4)

How do we bless our children? How do we bless those we are in fellowship with? We have a couple of examples of *tribe-builders* in scripture. Abram is really our prime example of faith.

Abraham and Lot are our two faith examples. Abraham shows us what to do; and Lot shows us what not to do. Abraham blessed all of the tribes of Israel; plus every nation on earth. Lot pretty much lived a very unhappy life; and he went to heaven alone. Abram is seen communing with God; and Lot is taking care of business. Let's look at Abraham's pathway to becoming a father to all believers.

Abraham the Legacy Builder

God chose a man to build a family of faith, which we are part of.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.... For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is

neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3 various verses)

Abram began this grand legacy by taking action in faith, and seeking to meet with God in a more personal way.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

He did not do what was convenient. He took another path when God made it clear to him. Faith building does not come naturally. We have to go against our natural path for life. You will know how much zeal you have for God by looking at your footsteps. Is your daily routine really any different with faith versus without faith? Can I see where I did something that I did not want to do in order to obey God?

Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country. From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. (Genesis 12:1-5)

Abraham saw that he had family members making bad choices. He took a personal risk to save them and bring them to a place of recovery. He was not indifferent or a spectator. A good leader does not just save himself. He saves the lost. All solid believers have family members who have major issues. There are endless things that take our loved ones captive.

Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back

all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. (Genesis 14:14-16)

If we follow God; we will fall under his protection. **We need to wear a God-filter to see the things in this world.** This world is filled with false narratives. Hollywood is working hard to sell us on homosexuality. The news is working hard on making pretend environmental issues to be more important than God's values. We live in a sin-polluted world. Almost everything in the media is only virtual. We need to be very selective in what we do and say. Satan wants us to abandon our ship. We also need to view all things in reality. Not in emotion or fear. We need to see things according to God's promises. We can become freaked out as the 6:00 news parades the downfall of our nation. God is completely in charge. Any tragedy that comes has gotten through God's very selective filter.

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." (Job 1:12)

God is our rewarder and protector. Not my savings account or my plans.

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Genesis 15:1)

We can lose our confidence in God's protections as we consider our affairs instead of focusing on God. The glory of God fades in our eyes as we look around this world. When Moses came down from his mountain meetings with God his face was literally glowing. That all went away within hours as he looked around at his people. We also live in two different worlds. There is a place where God heals us and communes with us. There is also our daily lives; with its concerns. It is a similar dynamic to my work week. I travel to different cities to visit job sites. When I travel I am alone and finding my way around strange places. When I return to the comforts of home my life changes as if I am someone else. We are called travelers/wanderers on earth. We don't really fit in; but we have a job to do here.

Therefore thus says the Lord: "If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth." (Jeremiah 15:19)

Ministry can seem to be a very unholy thing at times. Paul tells us to be careful about confusing the fallen person with the job at hand. We need to help them; not condemn them.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:13-19)

We are slowly turning old enemies and strangers into allies and redeemed men, by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are in the Spirit we will be extremely effective. If we are walking with the concerns of this world dogging us down we probably won't be reaching out too much. We can't worry about who we cannot reach. We are to just pray and obey.

All things are for the good to those who are called according to his purposes. God will reach our family members and friends who we cannot change. Ministry is very messy. We are helping people who are making bad decisions. We are surrounded by things that we cannot affect...but God can. I have family members who seemed to get worse, the more I ministered to them. God sent them other people they were more receptive to.

Building a legacy does not happen in our time frame. Abram was called the traveler/sojourner, because he had a lot of stops to make to complete his appointed route. It took many years to see the fruit of his faith. He was a very old man when his son was born. In fact; he was near the end of life. The point is that it can never be about us or our timing. When I put an effort into serving God; I can accidentally turn it into my plan.

I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, When Abram gave up; God showed up and fulfilled his promise with a son. (Isaiah 42:8)

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant

between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. (Genesis 17:1-9)

Read Psalm 112:4-10: The characteristics of a tribal leader are many.

- God will raise him up out of dark situations. Being a believer does not keep us from experiencing setbacks and disappointments. All people experience many of the same things; regardless of faith.
 - *His sun rises on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:45)*
 - Somehow we come out of it as a better man. To react to evil tidings according to the world’s ways is to curse the day; and stomp our feet. If God is really driving, then I need to let him drive all the way through the storms too.
- He is gracious to others. How do we act towards those who we have nothing to gain from? Do we have two faces? How do we act towards those who do not like us? Are we creating a legacy of honor or misrepresentation? How do we act towards those who threaten our way of life? Are we too busy to help others in need?
- He is righteous. Doing what is right is not necessarily always going to look right. It can land us in uncomfortable situations. We cannot make everybody happy. We have to be willing to come away without glory or shine. Doing what is right is not always going to be what we feel like doing. **The reason that most people do not read the bible and pray is that they do not want to.** They don't all necessarily feel that it is not real. We have to subordinate our personal feelings at times.
- He thinks about how his actions will affect others. One thing that separates us from animals is that we have a moral compass. We can see how our actions affect others. We don’t live in a vacuum. Everything we do will have effects on those around us.

- He is stabilized by God. You cannot be stable emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically if you are not on the same page with your creator. We have a purpose and a plan for our lives. Living outside of that; or driving yourself through life will be chaotic and full of uneasiness. This world has winds of change that are blowing. These forces propel popular culture. We are to remain unchanged, because we are anchored in the word of God.
- Bad things will come our way. Bad things can be derailers to put us on a better track. Bad things can be ways of forcing us to let go of unproductive habits. They are unwelcomed bridges to better ways of living. We have to stand back and realize that there is an underlying goodness surrounding all things in our lives. I have had healthy ministry activities pulled out of my hands. The next thing that happened was a life change that would have prevented my continuing with that ministry. This gives us confidence in the face of adversity. We really need to get as much out of our low points as possible. They produce a more raw and effective witness in us.
- Somehow we come out of it all. My parents used to say that I was like a cat. I might fall, but it seemed like I would always land on my feet. I can conclude that all is lost when things start to go south. I usually regret hastily making those conclusions.
- We will be a frustration to our enemies. Those who do not want God's influence will not want our influence. It is uncomfortable for those who make dirty jokes and hateful comments about others to be around us. We are like *party-poopers*. I can remember when guys at work would talk about going to the bars or strip clubs they would get quiet when I came into the room.