

Psalms 112:1-3 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. {2} His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. {3} Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth forever. “Blessed Is the Man” is a phrase that conveys the idea of true and lasting happiness. As stated before, the world’s view of happiness is different than that of the Christian. The world believes that happiness depends on happenings. If things around you are going well, then you are happy – if not, then you’re not happy. One moment you are on top, and the next you find yourself on rock bottom, but the concept of a Christian is totally different from that. We realize that true happiness does not depend on what happens around us but rather what is happening within us and our relationship of God. One of the secrets of happiness is submitting to the will of God. But another secret is found in our passage and that secret is, “fears the Lord.”

There is a close relationship with this psalm and the one that precedes it. The emphasis in Psa 111 is on the God who is to be feared. ***Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*** The emphasis in 111 is on the fear of the Lord while the emphasis in 112 is on the person, who does the fearing the Lord. One psalm calls us to fear God while the other explains what the man is like who fears the Lord.

Now we understand there are different kinds of fear. There is a fear that burdens a man’s life. That kind of fear is implied in ***Psalms 112:7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings:...*** A man who is afraid of life and what it brings is going to find himself burdened with the events of life. There is not going to be a great deal of happiness there. That type of fear has a paralyzing effect on a person’s life and often hinders a person in serving the Lord faithfully. You remember the parable Jesus told about the one talent man in Matt 25. Here we see a man who took a talent that had been entrusted in him by his master and instead of using it for his benefit, he buried it in the earth, and when his master called him into account he said, ***Matthew 25: 25 I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.*** Fear kept him from being all that he should have been in his master’s service.

Fear does the same thing in the lives of God’s people today. This is one reason the statistics tell us that well over 80% of Christians never try to reach anyone for Christ. They are afraid that they can’t live up to God’s standards – don’t know what to do or say. They are not bad Christians, but fearful Christians. This is what the wrong kind of fear will do in a person’s life. It will serve as a burden in life.

But there is a kind of fear that blesses life. ***Psalms 112:1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD.*** That word “*blessed*” means to be happy beyond measure. There is a great happiness to be found in fearing the Lord. As we consider what’s involved in this kind of fear, understand this type of fear does not necessarily mean to be afraid of God. While there is a sense in which we ought to be afraid of God. If we are unfaithful to Him, we should fear the judgment and wrath of God. ***Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*** There is a rightful fear of what God will do to the disobedient.

But the kind of fear that the Psalmist is talking about here really goes beyond that. ***Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*** The fear of the Lord is not only what God can do to us, but also what we can do to/for God. It entails distain for evil. It involves a person’s reverence/respect for God such that he doesn’t want to do anything that would disappoint/displease Him. This is why vs 1 adds ***Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.***

I’ve told you before about the young lady who was out with some friends and while they were out together, some of the kids started to drink and they tried to persuade her to take a drink. She refused and they kept pushing the issue. Finally one of them said, “Are you afraid your folks will find out and hurt you?” To which the young lady replied, “Oh no, I’m afraid my folks will find out and I will have hurt them.” This is part of what the fear of the Lord is. We hold Him in such high esteem that we wouldn’t want to do anything that would hurt Him, or displease Him in any way. It is the man with that attitude who is genuinely happy.

For the next few moments, I want us to notice three areas that show us what that kind of fear involves. **First there is posterity for the God-fearing man.** ***{2} His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*** The man that feareth the Lord is happy because of the impact his life has on his children. It has a positive effect on his descendents for generations to come. It is a rich legacy that is passed down to his children.

This implies two things. **For one, it implies that he lives a life that is seen** by his children. Children watch their parents and they notice what you do and what you say. All so often parents teach their children valuable lessons by what they do more than what they say. You need to practice what you preach to you children. **Don’t expect you children to be more or better spiritually than you are.**

Secondly, it is implied that you live a life that is shared with those children. Of the godly man it is said, *{2} His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.* When it says his seed shall be mighty, he is talking about a moral and spiritual strength. A strength that is passed down and passed on to those children.

Once there was a study of two different families and they traced the descendants of those two families for a number of generations. One of those families was of a man named Max Jukes. This family was known for its criminal behavior and immoral living. Listen to these statistics. A total of 1200 descendants were traced and it was found that about 400 were physically self-wrecked. 310 were professional paupers, 130 were convicted criminals; 60 were habitual thieves and pick-pockets, seven were murders. Out of the 1200, only twenty ever learned a trade and of these twenty, half of them learned their trade in prison. His family cost the state \$1.2 M There was another man in the same area and about the same time named Jonathan Edwards. He was a preacher and a well known figure in the Great Awakening. Of his descendants, fourteen were college presidents. About a 100 were professors and another 100 were ministers/missionaries. More than a 100 were lawyers/ judges. Sixty were doctors and many others were officers of high rank. One said of the Edwards family, "Almost every conspicuous American industry has had as its promotions one or more of the offspring of the Edwards stock since the closing half of the seventeenth century." His family cost the state essentially nothing. What a contrast in the lives of one god-fearing man and one unrighteous man made on his children and descendants. It should be no surprise then that the man who fears the Lord is a happy man.

Secondly, notice also the prosperity of the god-fearing man. {3} Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever. Wealth and riches shall be in his house. During that time material blessings were often associated with serving the Lord, but to us as Christians the emphasis is more on spiritual blessings than material blessings. Today it seems that the riches of this world have been highly over-valued and misunderstood.

A few years ago, there was a list of the 18 wealthiest men in the US was published and Bill Gates was at the top of the list. He topped the list with \$51B. Now some think if they had that kind of money they would be so happy. But it might surprise you to know that you might not be as happy as you think. You talk to the wealthy and many will tell you that material things don't guarantee happiness. You can have all the money in the world and be extremely unhappy. On the other hand, you can live in a rundown house across the tracks with very little money and you can be the happiest person in the world.

Material prosperity does not guarantee happiness because of several reasons. **One reason for that is that there are some things that money can't provide.** *{4} Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness:* The promise to the man who fears the Lord is that he will have light during the difficult times of life. Now money can't guarantee that, because light in the dark times of life can't be bought. In fact, often material things cause the darkness of life. Studies have shown that many of the people that win the lottery were rather content before they won the lottery but afterwards their lives fell apart. In fact some committed suicide. Money can't provide peace when you are sitting in the ICU waiting room wondering if your loved one was going to survive the ongoing surgery.

Money can't provide freedom from fear. *{7} He shall not be afraid of evil tidings:* ... This passage implies that if the righteous is not afraid of evil tidings, then the unrighteous is afraid. In fact, material things often bring additional fears. So often people with substantial wealth don't have peace of mind because of worrying about losing what they have. Again, there are some things that money cannot buy.

The man who fears the Lord will have an influence that will live on after he is gone. *{6} Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.* Money can buy a monument but not a memory. *The story is told about a preacher who received a call from the funeral home near where he lived and they asked if he would preach the funeral of a man he did not know; a man with no church family or a preacher. He thought this was an opportunity to reach out to a family in a time of grief so he agreed. He went to the visitation the night before the funeral and a bit astonished, no one came by except for a couple of neighbors. There were only four people at the funeral service and none were at the graveside except for himself and the people from the funeral home. This situation depressed the preacher so much that he determined to live his life such that it has some value. What a tragedy it is to die at a relatively young age and have no connection with family or friends. How sad to die leaving no lasting value or positive impact on the world.* Notice what the writer of Hebrews says about Able *Hebrews 11:4 ... he being dead yet speaketh.* God fearing people have an everlasting affect on others. That's the prosperity of man who fears the Lord.

Finally there is the propensity (behavior) of the God-fearing man. First there is conduct. *Psalms 112:4b he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. {5} A good man showeth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.* A God-fearing man lives by the standard of righteousness. He is full of compassion and is righteous in his dealings with others. He has a big heart and lends to others; he is gracious. He is right with God because he is right with others. While a Christian has a vertical

relationship with God, he also has a horizontal relationship with others. If your faith hasn't made you a better person, then that faith is suspect and needs to be examined. *1 John 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

There is also the confidence of the God-fearing man. *Psalms 112:7-9 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.* He puts his trust in the Lord and because he does, *{9}... his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.* What a picture of confidence is presented. Compare that to the unrighteous. *{10} The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.* The difference between honor and grief is in your hands. You decide the life that you live. It is your choice. While others may have an influence, it is ultimately your decision.

Invitation.