

Thanksgiving Day, 2007

Psalm 128 – A Foundation for Prosperity

1. The Root of Prosperity – v. 1
 - a. Faith in Christ
 - i. Rom. 5:1
 - ii. Phil. 3:8-9
 - iii. Heb. 11:6

***Verse 1.** Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord. The last Psalm ended with a blessing,—for the word there translated "happy" is the same as that which is here rendered "blessed": thus the two songs are joined by a catch word. There is also in them a close community of subject. The fear of God is the corner stone of all blessedness. We must reverence the ever blessed God before we can be blessed ourselves. Some think that this life is an evil, an infliction, a thing upon which rests a curse; but it is not so; the God fearing man has a present blessing resting upon him. It is not true that it would be to him "something better not to be." He is happy now, for he is the child of the happy God, the ever living Jehovah; and he is even here a joint heir with Jesus Christ, whose heritage is not misery, but joy. This is true of every one of the God fearing, of all conditions, in all ages: each one and every one is blessed. Their blessedness may not always be seen by carnal reason, but it is always a fact, for God himself declares that it is so; and we know that those whom he blesses are blessed indeed. Let us cultivate that holy filial fear of Jehovah which is the essence of all true religion;—the fear of reverence, of dread to offend, of anxiety to please, and of entire submission and obedience. This fear of the Lord is the fit fountain of holy living: we look in vain for holiness apart from it: none but those who fear the Lord will ever walk in his ways. (Spurgeon)*

- b. Obedience to Christ
 - i. I Sam. 15:22
 - ii. Rom. 6:4
 - iii. Eph. 4:1

...as this blessedness is not apparent to the eye, it is of importance, in order to our being able to apprehend it., first to attend to the definition which will be given of it by and bye, and secondly, to know that it depends chiefly upon the protection of God. Although we collect together all the circumstances which seem to contribute to a happy life, surely nothing will be found more desirable than to be kept hidden under the guardianship of God. If this blessing is, in our estimation, to be preferred, as it deserves, to all other good things, whoever is persuaded that the care of God is exercised about the world and human affairs, will at the same time unquestionably acknowledge that what is here laid down is the chief point of happiness. (Calvin)

2. The Result of Prosperity – vv. 2-4

a. Economic

- i. Is. 65:22
- ii. Josh. 1:8

That, by the blessing of God, they shall get an honest livelihood and live comfortably upon it. It is not promised that they shall live at ease, without care or pains, but, Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands. Here is a double promise, (1.) That they shall have something to do (for an idle life is a miserable uncomfortable life) and shall have health, and strength, and capacity of mind to do it, and shall not be forced to be beholden to others for necessary food, and to live, as the disabled poor do, upon the labours of other people... (2.) That they shall succeed in their employments, and they and theirs shall enjoy what they get; others shall not come and eat the bread out of their mouths, nor shall it be taken from them either by oppressive rulers or invading enemies. God will not blast it and blow upon it (as he did, Hag. 1:9), and his blessing will make a little go a great way. It is very pleasant to enjoy the fruits of our own industry; as the sleep, so the food, of a labouring man is sweet. (Matthew Henry)

Happy shalt thou be. Mr. Disraeli puts these remarkable words into the mouth of one of his characters:—"Youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle; old age a regret." A sad and Cheerless view of life's progress that! It may be true, in measure, of a life separated from godliness; it certainly is not true of a life allied with godliness. Let there be "life and godliness", and then youth is not a blunder, but a wise purpose and a glowing hope; manhood is not a struggle only, but a conquest and a joy; old age is not a regret, but a rich memory and a glorious prospect.—R. P. Macmaster, in "The Baptist Magazine," 1878.

b. Conjugal

- i. Prov. 12:4
- ii. Prov. 31:21

The wife shall be as a vine by the sides of the house, not only as a spreading vine which serves for an ornament, but as a fruitful vine which is for profit, and with the fruit whereof both God and man are honoured, Judg. ix. 13. The vine is a weak and tender plant, and needs to be supported and cherished, but it is a very valuable plant, and some think (because all the products of it were prohibited to the Nazarites) it was the tree of knowledge itself. The wife's place is the husband's house; there her business lies, and that is her castle. Where is Sarah thy wife? Behold, in the tent; where should she be else? Her place is by the sides of the house, not under-foot to be trampled on, nor yet upon the house-top to domineer (if she be so, she is but as the grass upon the house-top, in the next psalm), but on the side of the house, being a rib out of the side of the man. She shall be a loving wife, as the vine, which cleaves to the house-side, an obedient wife, as the vine, which is pliable, and grows as it is directed. She shall be fruitful as the vine, not only in children, but in the fruits of wisdom,

and righteousness, and good management, the branches of which run over the wall (Gen. xlix. 22; Ps. lxxx. 11), like a fruitful vine, not cumbering the ground, nor bringing forth sour grapes, or grapes of Sodom, but good fruit. (Matthew Henry)

The wife is likened not to thorns or briars, nor even to oaks or to other fruits and trees, but to the vine; and also to a vine neither in a vineyard nor in a garden, but set by the walls of the house; also not barren, but fertile and fruit bearing. This admonishes husbands as well as wives of their duties. For as the walls support the vine, and defend it against the force of winds and tempests, so ought husbands, as far as is in their power, to defend their wives by their godly conversation and wholesome teachings and institutions against the pestilential wind of the old serpent; also against the injuries of evil disposed men. "He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church": Eph 5:28-29. Further, the vine is exceedingly fragile wood, and not meet for any work, Eze 15:4. Husbands, therefore, should remember that they ought to behave towards their wives patiently and prudently, as with the weaker vessel; not keeping in mind the fragility of the wood, but the abundance and sweetness of the fruit. If husbands observe this, that will happen to them which Scripture says concerning the peaceful time of Solomon, "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree": 1Ki 4:25. Such was the married life of Abraham with Sarah, Isaac with Rebecca, Jacob with, Leah and Rachel.—Solomon Gesner.

c. Familial

- i. Ps. 127:4
- ii. Ps. 113:9

The children shall be as olive plants, likely in time to be olive-trees, and, though wild by nature, yet grafted into the good olive, and partaking of its root and fatness, Rom. xi. 17. It is pleasant to parents who have a table spread, though but with ordinary fare, to see their children round about it, to have many children, enough to surround it, and those with them, and not scattered, or the parents forced from them. Job makes it one of the first instances of his former prosperity that his children were about him, Job xxix. 5. Parents love to have their children at table, to keep up the pleasantness of the table-talk, to have them in health, craving food and not physic, to have them like olive-plants, straight and green, sucking in the sap of their good education, and likely in due time to be serviceable. (Matthew Henry)

If the earthly felicity described in this Psalm may not always be the lot of the godly, but should it sometimes happen that their wife is a termagant, or proud, or of depraved morals, or that their children are dissolute and vagabonds, and even bring disgrace upon their father's house, let them know that their being deprived of God's blessing is owing to their having repulsed it by their own fault. And surely if each duly considers his own vices he will acknowledge that God's earthly benefits have been justly withheld from him. (Calvin)

3. The Responsibility of Prosperity – vv. 5-6

a. To the Church

- i. Eph. 4:1-6
- ii. Col. 3:1-5

The persons described are said to be blessed from Zion, to lead them to call to remembrance the covenant into which God had entered with them, for he had graciously promised to be favorable to the observers of his law; and these principles of godliness they had imbibed from their infancy. (Calvin)

b. To the succeeding generations

- i. II Tim. 3:15
- ii. Deut. 6:7

A good man can have little comfort in seeing his children's children, unless withal he see peace upon Israel, and have hopes of transmitting the entail of religion pure and entire to those that shall come after him, for that is the best inheritance. (Matthew Henry)

What is added concerning the good of Jerusalem is to be regarded as en-joining upon the godly the duty not only of seeking their own individual welfare, or of being devoted to their own peculiar interests, but rather of having it as chief desire to see the Church of God in a flourishing condition. It would be a very unreasonable thing for each member to desire what may be profitable for itself, while in the meantime the body was neglected. From our extreme proneness to err in that respect, the Prophet, with good reason, recommends solicitude about the public welfare; and he mingles together domestic blessings and the common benefits of the Church in such a way as to show us that they are things joined together, and which it is unlawful to put asunder. (Calvin)

Verse 6. *Lord, let thy blessing so accompany my endeavours in their offspring, that all my sons may be Benaiahs, the Lord's building, and then they will all be Abners, their father's light; and that all my daughters may be Bethins, the Lord's daughters, and then they will all be Abigails, their father's joy.—George Swinnock.*

Application

- Do we have the Root of Prosperity?
 - Do we possess faith in Christ?
 - Do we obey Christ?
- Are we experiencing the Result of Prosperity?

- Are we faithful stewards of the economic talents the Lord has given us? Are we the best workers we can be?
- Are we faithful in our conjugal relations? Do we love our wives as Christ loved the church? Do we love our husbands and children?
- Are our children an honor to our home because they experience the love of Christ in their parents?
- Are we diligent in our Responsibility of Prosperity?
 - How is our service to Christ in the church? Do we love one another with a pure heart fervently?
 - Are we leading our children to Christ?