

Main Idea: Experiencing the Lord's blessing is a result of a relationship live out in obedience.

Intro:

Today Scott was suppose to be preaching while Pastor and Sherry are on vacation; however, with the passing of Pam's father, Scott sent me a text this week asking if I could fill in while they are in Colorado. Shortly after I read the text from Scott Dave text me asking if He needed to get something ready for this week since we were on vacation this past week. What testimony of how the Lord is using Pastor Brad! There are not many churches our size who can have a number of men to call of to preach on a Sunday Morning. Then when I think about the Preachers in Training ministry, the 2/2 ministry, women's Bible Studies, CDT training, and the other ministries around here it is obvious we are a church who loves the Scriptures. Praise the Lord!!

As many of you know, I have been working on the final stages of writing my doctrinal statement. I have spent the last 1.5-2 years studying The Word and theology books in order to gain a greater understanding of what Scripture says. This has been a fun and, at times, difficult process. I have truly loved and enjoyed every minute of this process. However, since I have finished writing the statements, while on vacation this past week I was looking forward shifting gears a little in my reading and studying.

However, over the past few months, there was this feeling that something was missing. There was this feeling of dryness spiritually. I couldn't explain it. I mean ministry was going well. I had been studying the Scriptures. I have been loving my time with my church family. Everything has been great in my relationship with my wife and kids. What was it? I decide to read two different things while at the beach. First there was a devotional on the YouVersion Bible app called "Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation" by Robert Morgan. This was a simple 7 day plan that was just the reminder I needed, but more about that later in the message. The second was a book by Joe Thorn called "Experiencing the Trinity: The Grace of God for the People of God". This is a little booklet that has "50 daily readings that reflect on God and the Gospel" (pg 18). It is a book that draws the reader's attention to our awesome God.

While reading the first chapter of the book on God's holiness I came across this quote, "It's not enough that you properly define God's holiness..but this central aspect of God's character must also be experienced" (pg 23-24). That's when the

Holy Spirit allowed the light bulb turn on for me. At some point I had slipped into the pattern of treating the Scriptures as an academic study only. Don't get me wrong the intense study of Scripture is important, but if it stops there, we have missed the mark. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to take the Word of God and impact, change, and mold our hearts. We need to experience the truth of Scripture in real life.

In a church that is devoted to the study of God Word, I wonder if there are others who have the tendency to slip into this same spot I had been. Treating their study as just an academic study, and missing out on the relationship that could be theirs through Scripture. My prayer for today's message is two fold: 1) You would be encouraged. It would be great if I was the only one in this position, and the message today is just an encouragement to keep going. Keep doing what you are doing and enjoying the relationship with our Lord. 2) But in case there are others who are in the same spot I as me, I hope you are able to break through that state and once again enjoy your relationship with the Lord of the universe.

Reading of Passage:

1 Praise the Lord!

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,

who greatly delights in his commandments!

2 His offspring will be mighty in the land;

the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches are in his house,

and his righteousness endures forever.

4 Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;

he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

5 It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;

who conducts his affairs with justice.

6 For the righteous will never be moved;

he will be remembered forever.

7 He is not afraid of bad news;

his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

8 His heart is steady; he will not be afraid,

until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.

9 He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor;

his righteousness endures forever;

his horn is exalted in honor.

10 The wicked man sees it and is angry;

he gnashes his teeth and melts away;
the desire of the wicked will perish!

Psalm 112 Background

The author and the setting of this Psalm is unknown. We do know that this Psalm is an acrostic poem. Each line of the Psalm starts with the Hebrew alphabet. So if it was written in English, the first line would start with A, the second with B, the third with C, and so on... We have all see things like this, right? Whenever I hear of this my mind goes to two things: 1) cross stitching. I cannot pinpoint an exact cross stitching, but I am sure I saw plenty of them growing up. 2) Studying in school. My teachers would put the facts we needed to memorize into some sort of an acrostic or mnemonic as a study tool. What does "Roy G. Biv" help you remember? With that in mind, I am sure this Psalm was written to help people take this with them and remember the truth shared. As Pastor Brad says, the songs we sing are take home theology.

This poem is also part of a collection of Psalms that gave instructions for worship. The ESV Study Bibles says, "This wisdom psalm joins Psalms 1; 37; 49; 73; 127; and 128 (with 34:11-14) in making themes from the Wisdom Literature the topic of prayer, praise, and instruction in worship."

Transition: With that in mind let's take a look at the first verse. We will spend the majority of our time in the part of the Psalm.

A. The relationship (vs. 1)

1 Praise the Lord!

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,

who greatly delights in his commandments!

1. Praise Him

The first instruction the Psalmist gives is to Praise Him! When we praise the Lord, we shine a light on, move the focus to Him. We point out who He is, and what He has done. We should be doing this in our conversations, singing, and the way we live our lives. 1 Peter 4:11 says, "Those who preach must preach God's messages; those who serve must serve with the strength that God gives them, so that in all things praise may be given to God through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and power forever and ever. Amen."

Praise is giving credit where credit is due. I love being around people who do this in everyday life. With in any circumstance there are people who will constantly be bringing the attention back the Lord. You don't have to be in a conversation with Gary Storm too long before you will hear the words "to God be the Glory". Knowing Gary as we do we know that to him, that's not just a cliché, he truly wants to draw the attention back to the one who deserves all the glory. I pray that we are all do this more and more in our lives!

Notice that this is the first thing the Psalmist, I think there is significance to this for a few reasons. First, it points our attention to the Lord right from this start. In our flesh when we start hearing about blessings our tendency is to turn our focus to ourselves. We must remember that He is always the focus. The second reason is that even if we never received anything for the Lord, he is still deserves all our praise simply because of who He is. He is the Holy, Righteous, Just, Loving, Gracious, Sovereign, Creator God of the universe! He is worthy of all our Praise! If you look at Psalm 111, another acrostic poem, it is all about the Greatness of God. Then it ends with the subject of fear. Many believe these two psalms are linked and Psalm 112 is picking up where Psalm 111 left off. Because of the greatness of God, Praise Him!

Transition: However, the Lord chooses to Bless us in ways that we do not deserve.

The next word in the poem is "Blessed". What does it mean to be blessed? It is a common thing to hear people looking to get. "I went to church today to get a blessing". "I just needed a blessing for that day so I opened the Bible until I got that blessing. Do we truly understand what it is? Being blessed is a state of happiness, being joyful. It has been my observation that people are looking for a temporal, early feeling rather than an eternal state based on truth. The Lord wants so much more for us than jumping for one spiritual high to another to help us put a smile on our face in this life. He wants to give us joy, hope, and a steadiness that will last, even through the storm of life, that can only be explained by pointing people to Christ. Sadly, the American Church is full of people who are missing out of the joy because they never get past this stage of their relationship with God! They have some superficial knowledge of God, come to an emotionally charged service once a week, and hope that high will last until the next service. However, that formula does not work when the trials come. That's when people question, loss hope during a difficult time, or walk away because they don't think it works anymore.

How do we receive this blessing? According to verse one of Psalm 112, blessings come to those who fear the Lord and delight in his commandments. Blessings are founded in a loving relationship with the Lord of the universe that is grown through the study of his Word!

Transition: In addition to Praising the Lord, let's take a look at the actions of those who truly experience the Lord's blessing.

2. Fear Him

The text says "blessed is the man who fears the Lord". What type of fear is the writer talking about? Are we supposed to be trembling or shaking as we are afraid of the Lord? Maybe, if you are not in Christ. If you have not been washed by the blood of Christ, and adopted in to his family. That means you are an enemy, and that is a very fearful place to be. However, this is written with those who are faithfully serving the Lord, so it takes a different tone. Fear here mean a reverence, worship, respect. The ESV Study Bible uses the word "Reverent Love".

What does this look like? How do we show reverence, respect for the Lord as his children? Obedience? Absolutely! However, there is a heart attitude that that is important to consider. Have you ever come to the Lord in prayer, bible reading with a flippant attitude? We are called to come to the throne room with boldness, but not with disrespect. It is difficult for us to picture reverence in our current culture. We live in a culture that celebrates entitlement, anti authority, disloyalty, "sticking it to the man", making a name for yourself, speaking your mind attitudes. However, we need to approach the Lord with a gratitude, respect, faithfulness, and humility.

Ever been in a family member, co worker, or friendship with someone that every conversation turned to them? They always focused on their circumstances, their stories always had to one up yours, and they half listened when you were talking about things in your life. Not much fun is it. I mean what do you do in that situation? However, I wonder if I were to look at a transcript of my conversation with God, would it remind me of that type of conversation. Do I make everything in my relationship with God about me?

Reverence and Respect is when I listen more than I talk. It's having a heart of thankfulness. It's have a proper assessment of the situation and the people involved. It's having the humility to not focus on myself. We may not have a king in this country, but we respect police, military, judges, etc because of the position

they hold. How much more should we revere and respect the one true God because of his position and who he is?

Transition: May the Lord teach us reverence, so we can truly delight in Him. Which is the third point in this verse.

3. Delight in Him

Verse 1 continues by saying, "who greatly delights in his commandments!" Now some of you may have picked up on the fact that I just said "delight in Him" and you are now seeing that the verse says "delight in his commandments". I know..hang with me, and I will explain. First let's back up to the word "delight".

What does it mean to delight? The word here means to take pleasure in, to incline, to experience. It is describing more than just a quick look. This is pointing us to meditation. What is Meditation? It is not an absence of thought, but rather, taking the Scriptures trying to understand them, apply them, and allowing the Spirit to work in our lives to change and mold us. This is where I fell short. I had slipped into the habit of just understanding them. Reading them. Checking that discipline off the to do list. I was not delighting. Is that where you are?

How do we meditate? We read and re-read the scripture, we make observations, ask questions, journal, draw pictures, memorize, make sure it is always before us. It's a constant, ongoing activity that takes effort, thought, and time, and as we do this we see the Spirit start to change us.

"As we ponder, picture, and personalize God's word, we begin looking at life through His lens...His perspective. We practice biblical meditation by noting, quoting, and devotion ourselves to whatever passage of Scripture we're reading or studying, based on the premise that God's Word is flawless, faultless, and unailing... As we meditate, God guides and changes our thoughts." (Robert Morgan)

What are we to meditate on? "His commandments"! At the time the Psalmist is writing this it would refer mainly to the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. I can see some of you may be thinking, "Matt, when I do my read through the Bible plan, there are many parts of that section I just get through. I do not delight." I get it! It is not as easy in that section as it is in the Psalms or New Testament writings, but we have to keep a proper perspective. What is Scripture...all of Scripture? It is revelation; it is what the Lord has given us that reveals himself to us. If we want to know who God is, we need to study His revealed word. As we

meditate and delight in the Word we should eventually make the transition to delighting in Him. "Bible Study was never meant to be merely academic. It's relational. Transformational. It's not simply and book; its fellowshipping with a Friend." (Robert Morgan) Joe Thorn closes one chapter by saying, "Behold his glory. The whole earth is full of it, but does his glory fill your mind and heart" (pg 25) As we meditate on the Lord, we grow in our relationship with Him!

Transition: When we are living in a relationship like this. Praising, fearing, and delighting it results in obedience.

B. The result

1. Obedience (vs 2-9)

Obedience? That sound kind of cold? That's because we misunderstand the difference between obedience with and without the context of relationship. Obedience without the relationship is just following a bunch of impersonal rules, it's legalism; however, when we obey as a response to a loving relationship with the Lord, it's worship! We experience the truth of the Lord when we live our lives in light of who He is, and we trust that He will keep his promises.

Now, we do not have time to go through each of these verses to see the obedience and blessing associated. I will leave that to your own personal study. You will see that the Psalmist touches on all areas of life: family (vs 2), work and finances (vs 2-5), response to circumstances (vs. 6-8), service (vs 9). Now it would be easy to misinterpret this as a health and wealth passage. That is not the type of blessing talked about here. You will see reference to darkness (vs 4), bad news (vs 7), adversaries (vs 8) as some examples.

The Psalmist is careful to give true hope, for those resting in their relationship with the Lord, in real life situations. How to respond, the grace to overcome adversity, the ability to live our hope in a hopeless world.

Transition: However, when we live out that hope it will not always be easy. There is another result.

2. Opposition (vs. 10)

10 The wicked man sees it and is angry;
he gnashes his teeth and melts away;
the desire of the wicked will perish!

The enemy does not like it when we make much of the Lord. When we live as an example of hope and peace. The wicked do not understand the things of the righteous, so we can expect resistance and persecution. Remember, to walk in the fellowship with the Lord is worth it, and we will need to continue to Praise, Fear, and Delight in the Lord when times are tough.

Application:

1) Take time for meditation of the Word this week!

As you are meditating you will gain greater understanding of who God is.

2) Allow that greater understanding to impact our reverence for the All Powerful God.

3) Praise Him every chance you get!

-In your heart, out loud, and to others!