

Psalm 112 • The heart of a God-centered life

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Psalm chapter 112 speaks about the driving force of our lives. And what I mean by that is that everyone has something or someone who drives them. In practical terms, there's no such thing, really, as an atheist. People like to say that they are but everybody has a driving force. Everybody has something in their life that they're living for. I think it's impossible not to have a driving force.

Some people would say that their driving force is a good thing because they might be: focused, or the driving force of their life may be raising their kids, or just family in general, or trying to be the best employee, or employer that you can be, the best business person, whatever. For others the driving force of their lives may be: fashion, or sports, or whatever hobbies, or interests we may have that become consuming in our lives.

You can, you say, well, I don't really know what the driving force of my life is. Well, it's probably where you spend the majority of your discretionary time and money more than likely. And Jesus talked about this idea of the driving force of our lives as it relates to being a disciple.

We were going through this recently in our study of Luke and Luke talked about what the driving force of our life is related to love. And who we love. And how that love is compared to our love for Him. And we were dealing with that.

And he challenged us, in our Luke study on Sunday morning, to love Him more than we love the other things of this life. And that's... It's very challenging. Because if you really... Well, it's only challenging, I suppose, if you look into it. If you really stop and ask yourself the question: what do I love besides the Lord? Then it becomes challenging. Hopefully, it doesn't become condemning.

But it should become challenging in our lives because He is telling us, when He speaks to us about those things, that our love for Him ought to be paramount and not to be above the things that we love in this life other than Him. And that all other things and people must become secondary.

You may think, wow, that's pretty brave for somebody to ask that! Yeah, but He's God. He has a right to our lives. He has a right to your life. He doesn't ask because it's just a good thing to ask. He has a right to ask.

Keeping all that in mind, we look at what is in the center of our lives in the midst of this in this Psalm here. It's all about the heart of a God-centered life. Because we know that when we get off center from God, things get off track pretty quickly in our lives, don't they?

Verse 1, it says,

"Praise the LORD!" (ESV)

And it begins with those words, which are the same. It's hallelujah, in the Hebrew.

"² Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments!"

And so this Psalm begins by pronouncing a blessed condition upon the person who number 1., fears the Lord. And then secondly, who loves His Word. To fear the Lord is not to be an abject terror of the Lord.

To fear the Lord, means to honor and respect the Lord and to understand that He's God, and you're not.

And then secondly, he says, there's a blessed condition for the one who loves the Word of God. And he simply describes it using Old Testament language, which is, *"delights in his commandments."*

And, frankly, we can use that language in the New Testament because there are still commandments upon our lives. Not that those commandments save us. Not that they saved people in the Old Testament. Do you guys know that people didn't get saved during the Old Testament by keeping the commandments? God never said in the Old Testament, He would save people because they kept His commandments.

Well, how are people saved? This is a big question. How are people saved in the Old Testament? People ask that all the time. I know we're saved by grace through faith, putting our faith in Jesus, what He did on the cross. How are people saved in the Old Testament?

People assume they were saved by keeping the law. They were not. Nobody is saved by keeping the law. Nobody ever has been saved by keeping the law.

How were people saved back then? By putting their faith in God for the forgiveness of sins. They were just looking forward to the final and ultimate sacrifice. You and I look back at the sacrifice that Jesus did. They looked forward. They confess their sins and they put their faith and trust in the God who forgives sins and delights to show mercy. So why does God say that there's a blessed condition for those who delight in His commandments?

Well, it has nothing to do with salvation. It has to do with a godly life. It has to do with aligning our lives to His will and the purpose of His will for our lives. And there are great benefits that come from fearing the Lord, and loving His Word.

Look at those outlined beginning in verse two. He begins to outline them here.

"2 His offspring will be mighty in the land. (That's the first thing. And then) the generation of the upright will be blessed.

He begins by talking about the influence of the person who makes God their everything, or who puts God as the driving force of their lives. He says, that that influence is first of all going to have an impact upon their children. And secondly, it's going to have an impact upon other godly individuals. I'll even go as far - I'm not adding to the Word of God - but I'm going to go as far as to say, it'll also have an impact on the ungodly, but it'll just be a bad one.

Verse 3. We're still talking about the benefits.

"Wealth and riches are in his house and his righteousness endures forever."

Now you have to be careful here not to read verses, like verse three, and look at it as a promise. Gee, if I'm just godly, then I'm going to automatically be rich. The apostle Paul actually warned Timothy about that attitude when he wrote him. And he said, there are some people who actually believe that godliness is a means to financial gain. And so that was a common belief, even, in the early time of the early church. And that's not what God is saying here.

Instead, it's saying, that the man who makes God the driving force of his life, the focal point of his life, he's going to have a wealth and a riches in his life, that earthly measurement can't reach in earthly... in the terms that people of the

world used to describe wealth and so forth. God is able to make you rich in ways that the world can't even really even understand, let alone reach.

He says in verse 4,

"Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;

And I love this benefit. The man who fears the Lord and loves His Word, it says, light dawns even in the midst of darkness."

Have you found that to be true? As a believer, have you found, first of all, number one, that you and I deal with just as much darkness as the world does. In other words, difficulties come into our lives just as often as they come into the lives of people who don't care anything for God. But you know what makes the difference in our lives? Light dawns in the midst of that darkness. And that's a huge difference, isn't it? God allows light to shine into our lives, even in those dark areas. Light eventually dawns.

The New Testament, basically, just says it in a different way. It simply says, that, God works all things together for good for those that love Him and are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28) And that's God bringing that light.

And sometimes you and I have to search to find it because we see a difficult situation. And sometimes all we see is a difficult situation. But there's a promise in God's Word, that He's going to allow light to dawn in the midst of that difficult situation. And He does it. He does it. That's a great blessing.

Verse 5 goes on. It says.

"It is well with the man who deals generously (That's the first thing. And also) lends; and who conducts his affairs with justice."

Now, we go on to talk about how this blessed man is, or, I should say, the blessing that God bestows upon this man, is seen in his actions toward others.

First of all, you'll notice he deals generously. He's not a stingy individual. He gives. And why does he have the freedom to give generously? It's because he knows that the Lord has given him everything, and it's not his to hoard, or hang on to. And so he's generous in the way that he blesses other people.

Secondly, it says, he lends to others. If they need something, he's there to help them out. Doesn't matter what it is you might be lending. You need some tools to get the job done, yeah, come on over, or whatever the case might be.

And then thirdly, it says, he conducts his business with fairness and justice. And then it's interesting here, the psalmist then goes on to insert, you'll notice a promise.

"6 For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever."

The righteous will never be moved and that's simply a statement of stability. It's saying, that the person who fears God, who loves His Word, there's going to be a stability in his life. And yeah, difficulty is going to come. Darkness is going to be cast into his life but there's going to be a stability through it all. And when he gets to the end of his life, people are going to see it.

And believe me, I have done many, many funerals for godly people over the years. I've done a lot of them. And there's one thing that you can say... And I've also done a lot of funerals for unbelievers. And they're not nearly as enjoyable, let me tell you.

The hope of the life that we can see in the life of a believer at the end of their life is absolutely fantastic. I love sitting up here and telling the family, your loved one is enjoying the presence of the Lord, right now. What a wonderful thing that is.

But there is seen a stability through the course of their lives, for that person who fears God and loves His Word. You can see it. It's like they got to the end and they made it! They ran the race. They finished the race. They got to the end. It wasn't easy. Sometimes it wasn't even pretty. But they got there.

And he says, *"the righteous will never be moved."*

And then he continues with the blessings of someone who's driving force is God. Look at this. Look at what it says in verse 7 and 8.

"He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm. (Why? Because he's) trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart is steady; he will not be afraid, until he looks in triumph on his adversaries."

It says, he trusts God, and therefore he considers bad news to be something that God needs to work out not him. I like that.

Do you do that? When you get bad news, do you bring it to the Lord? Say, Lord, You have a problem here that You need to take care of. Instantly, we think that we got to take care of all the issues, all the bad news, things that come into our lives.

We get this bad news, you lost your job. You get a call from the auto repair place, well," he says, hey, are you sitting down?" You know how that goes. Right? Whenever the repair guy says, "Are you sitting down?" You better sit down. This is going to be a whopper. Oh, man! Now what am I going to do? But it says, here that he's not afraid. *"He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm."*

People, please don't think that the psalmist is describing some superhuman person that you can't possibly ever be. Please don't think that. Please don't think that the psalmist is describing some, biblical character who's a paragon of virtue that none of us could possibly attain to. In fact, he may be talking about a very, very weak man from his own personal standpoint.

He simply has a strength in his life because he chooses to trust in God. That's what makes the difference. He chooses to trust in God. Therefore, his heart is steady and he's not afraid until he finally, at the end, looks in triumph on his enemies.

Verse 9 says,

"He has distributed freely;"

And that means, he has spread his wealth, or blessing to others. He distributes freely. The different translations say this differently. But it's the picture of casting seed, where the seed is just... Here's what the Lord's given me in my hand. I'm just going to cast it. I'm just going to throw it out and bless other people with it. And that's the picture here.

It says,

"he has given to the poor; (And what is the result?) his righteousness endures forever; his horn (and of course, you know that means strength) is exalted (or lifted up) in honor."

There's an honor of this individual's personal strength. Because the Lord has made him strong. His strength, his righteousness endures. And his strength is honored and lift it up, because it's the Lord's strength.

And then the final verse is interesting because it contrasts all, everything that we've said here, with simply the response of the ungodly. And this is the, of course, the person who lives for himself, not for God. His master passion is not God. His master passion is himself.

And it says, in verse 10, that,

"The wicked man sees (all of this and he's mad about it he) is angry; (and) he gnashes his teeth (and in doing so, it says, he) melts away; (It characterizes him like a burning candle and) the desire (he says, this almost ends with) of the wicked will perish!"

But the man who fears the Lord, the man who trusts, and the man who loves His Word continues on.