

**PSALMS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 122 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we saw last time, Psalms 120 through 134 are called “A Song of Ascents” and the reason for that is that they were sung when the Jewish people made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the three main Feasts; the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. And as they journeyed together they would sing these Psalms.

Last time we saw in Psalm 120 that this Jew was in distress. Whatever the situation, it was bad. Lies and slander were spoken of him and life was not easy. Then, as we moved into Psalm 121 he is making his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the city is in sight. The joy that must have brought to his life as he enters the hills of Judah! And now, as we get into Psalm 122 this evening this pilgrim, this Jewish man has made it to the gates of the city so he can worship the Lord! This man is just waiting to enter into the Temple area and that is where we will pick up our study this evening in Psalm 122 starting in verse 1 as we celebrate with this Jewish man the joy of coming to worship the Lord!

**PSALM 122****VERSES 1-2**

1. When was this Jewish man “**glad**”? It says that he was glad when those who were with him said, “**Let us go into the house of the LORD.**” The Hebrew verb that is used here for “**glad**” carries with it the idea of laughter and delight. There is tremendous joy!
  
2. Now what about us? Are we glad to come to church? “Hey Pastor Joe, we are not under the Law. I don’t have to go to church!” That is very true, I never said you did. And you don’t have to go; you get to go to church. But that is not the point here. When you do go, are you glad? When you can’t come does it bother you? You see, it always amazes me when people are more excited to go to a football game, or to do this or that than going to church. I am sure most of us feel church is important to us, but that again is not the answer to the question. Are you glad to come to church?

If going to church has become work, if there is no joy, then you need to look at your heart, repent, and fall in love with Jesus all over again. You need to return to your first love! We see that point in Jesus’ letter to the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2.

Jesus tells this church that they are working hard, they labored for the Lord, they persevered, they exposed the false teachers and it looked like they were doing very well. But then Jesus said to them in Revelation 2:4-5, “**Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent.**”

What happened to their love for Jesus then? They are maybe some 40 years down the road from when the church was started and at this point we are now into second and third generation Christians. That first generation of believers knew God and His power. By the time we get to the second generation of believers they might have known God but not His power. And for that third generation of believers, they may have lost both. You can't work for the Lord without loving Him, He won't accept that. He wants our love and it is out of that love we have for Him that we serve Him!

And what I like is that The Great Physician; Jesus Christ gives to them a prescription that would cure their spiritual condition. It is very simple really; **REMEMBER, REPENT** and **REPEAT**. You see, remember when you first were saved, the love you had for the Lord, how that fire burned brightly in you. Then repent before God, do a 180 degree turn back to Him, return to Him. And finally, repeat your first works or do those things you did when you were first saved, go to those Bible studies, spend time in prayer, be in fellowship with believers and fall in love with Jesus all over again! That is the cure for this spiritual ailment!

The **WARNING** is simple, if you don't take the medicine, if you don't remember, repent and repeat, God will remove your light, your witness of Him! You see, we are to be light bearers of Christ, but if we remove Him from our lives, the light of Christ will go out, our witness will be gone.

The Psalmist was glad to go to the house of the Lord, and so should we. We are so blessed that we can freely gather together and worship the Lord. May it be a delight and not a burden to come to worship the Lord! If it is a burden then something is wrong and again, you need to do a heart check! May we be able to say as the Psalmist did, “**I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’**” Psalm 122:1.

#### VERSES 3-4

1. Now Jerusalem is truly compact. In David’s day it was only some 2 city blocks long and a half of a city block wide. It was expanded during Solomon’s reign and Herod’s reign. But this city that is set upon a hill has the Hinnom Valley to the south, the Kidron Valley to the east, and the Tyropoeon Valley to the west. Even today there is a very dense population of people that live there and of course the city swells even more during the tourist season.

2. And it was not just the city of Jerusalem that they went to that brought them this joy, it was coming to the house of God, the Temple of God to worship the Lord and to thank the Lord for all that He has done for them. I think that is another good lesson for us. Do we thank the Lord for all He has done or do we complain about what we don’t have? Their joy was not only in the worship of the One they loved, but to give thanks to Him and may we do the same!

3. Let me share with you just a few verses that deal with us giving thanks to the Lord.

- Psalm 105:1 – **“Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples!”**
- I Corinthians 15:57 – **“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**
- II Corinthians 9:15 – **“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”**
- Colossians 3:17 – **“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”**
- I Thessalonians 5:8 – **“in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”**
- Hebrews 13:15 – **“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”**

May we have hearts full of praise and thanksgiving unto our Lord!

#### VERSE 5

1. We need to keep in mind that Jerusalem was not only the central place for worship, it was also the place where civil judgments and decisions were made. It was not only the spiritual capitol of the nation, but also the political capitol. This was the place where the court cases were heard and judgments executed.

But let’s think ahead to the Millennial reign of Christ and understand that one day Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole earth as Jesus rules and reigns from Jerusalem. As Psalm 48:1-2 says, **“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, In His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King.”**

VERSES 6-9

1. The name “**Jerusalem**” means “city of peace” and I find that interesting because it has been destroyed some 17 times in its history and rebuilt 18 times! I guess that is one of the reasons we are to be praying for the peace of Jerusalem! The reality to all the destruction it has seen, all the war it has seen, the absence of peace is because the Jewish people have turned away from the Lord, the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. There are consequences to turning from God and Israel has seen that!

The wonderful thing to me is that one day they will turn to Jesus and as they call upon Him as a nation, He will return and set up His Kingdom on this earth. Let me show you what I mean. In Hosea 5:15-6:2 we are told, “**I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me. Come, and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.**”

As I read this it is telling me that God came to the earth and the Jews rejected Him. And thus, He returned to His place, He returned to heaven after His death and resurrection and will remain there until they acknowledge their offense. What is their offense? It is their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah! He has been gone for almost 2,000 years but He will revive them and then for 1,000 years He will rule and reign from Jerusalem!

Now some of you may have a hard time with that, but listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 23:37-39, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”** In other words, they will not see Jesus again until they call upon Him and I believe that takes place during the Tribulation Period!

Will Israel be saved? Absolutely as Paul tells us in Romans 11:25-27, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’”** The only way the Lord can take away their sins is by them receiving Jesus as their Lord and Savior and thus, their sins have been washed away by His shed blood! All Israel will be saved!

But until that time, there will be no true peace apart from the Prince of Peace. The world is quickly turning against the Jews and what is truly tragic to me is the Christian church is also moving in that direction. What a mistake.

Did you notice that there is a blessing for those who pray for their peace, that they would prosper! We see this again in Genesis chapter 12 as the Lord said to Abraham, “**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.**” Genesis 12:3. You see, God will bless any nation, any people that bless the Jews, those who will stand with them. I pray that this nation does not turn its back upon the Jewish people and the nation of Israel, for when we cast them off, I don’t see any reason why God would withhold His judgment from being poured out. Truly the cup of our indignation has to be almost full, with all the immorality that is running wild through this country.

2. Now some may see this as being unfair. Why did God bless Jerusalem out of all the places that are in the world? In I Kings 8:16, and 11:36 we are told, “**“Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.’ . . . ‘And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there.”**” God has placed His name upon this city. He chose this city and the Jewish people not because they were better than anyone else, but that was His decision. He has placed His name upon them! Let me ask you another question. Why does God bless His church? Because He has placed His name upon us, a living temple in which the Spirit of God dwells in. May we pray for the peace of Jerusalem!



**PSALM 123**

As you read through this Psalm there are two words that stick out. The first is **“eyes”** and it is mentioned four times. The second is **“mercy”** and it is mentioned three times. Also, as you will see, it seems like they are in captivity, maybe Babylon. And the Jewish people have been in captivity many times since their birth. And what we see here is that the Psalmist is focusing on the Lord in the midst of this captivity, his **“eyes”** are on the Lord. On the other end of the spectrum is the **“mercy”** of God that the Psalmist is seeking in the midst of this captivity. That is the correct perspective to have, eyes focused upward upon God and calling out for His mercy which never ends! So let’s read through this Psalm and see what we can glean.

**VERSES 1-2**

1. Keep your eyes focused on the Lord, simple and yet if we don’t we will lose our focus and become distracted and depressed in the things that we are facing. Fix your eyes upon the Lord. Even the Jews who were traveling to Jerusalem would sing this out because their reason for going to Jerusalem was to refocus their eyes upon the Lord. Think about it. If we begin to look inward, at all the things that are going on in our life, we will become depressed! Also, if we look outward at all the things that are before us, the giants that stand in our way, the situations that are like mountains, we will become distressed! But, if we look upward, if we fix our eyes upon the Lord we will be strengthened! The choice is ours but may we be like the Psalmist who said, **“Unto You I lift up my eyes.”**

2. As you look at verse 2 it may be a little confusing. But think of it like this. In those days, when you had a party, you would direct your servants by using hand signals, and it was the same for the mistress in directing their maids. Certain hand gestures would tell these servants what their master wanted. But for them to see what their master was trying to communicate to them meant they had to be looking directly at their master. They could not be day dreaming or looking somewhere else. Why didn't they just yell out, "Hey Joe, I need some more water!" or whatever? The reason is simple; it would draw attention to you and away from the master. The servant was only there to serve, not to be recognized, not to draw attention to himself!

What does that mean to us? I think you have figured it out already. Our Master, our God is directing our lives by His Spirit through His Word and that means we need to be looking at Him if we are going to know what He wants us to do. If I start looking around at what everyone else is doing I am not going to see the Masters Hand in my life, I will not know where to go or what to do! Keep your eyes upon Jesus!

And make no mistake about it; God is not some cruel Master. God directs us very gently, not drawing attention upon us, for we are only His servants. But again, we must be looking at Him to be directed by Him. We must be in fellowship with Him so we know what to do next. I love the way the Psalmist puts it in Psalm 32:8-9. He says, "**I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.**"

You see, God wants to gently direct us by His eye, and we must be looking to Him so we can see His leading. We must be in His Word, so that He can lead us. We must be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is showing us. If we refuse, He will direct us like a wild animal. That means by using bit and bridle, which caused pain upon the animal to get them to move in the direction you wanted them to go. But God does not want to lead us that way.

#### VERSES 3-4

1. Yes the enemies were all around but the Psalmist desires to keep his eyes upon the Lord, the only one that can truly help him! But the days are so evil, what can we do? We should not be surprised about the days we are living in, that they are evil because God's Word tells us that very thing. In fact, Paul makes this very point in II Timothy 3:1-5 as he wrote, **“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”** Don't focus on this world; keep your eyes focused on the Lord. There is no security in this world; our security comes from the Lord! May we not lose our focus!

**PSALM 124**

As you will see as we go through this Psalm that everything is going to be dependant upon the “**if**” and you will see what I mean as we go through this. But the basic idea here is that the Psalmist realizes the fact that ***IF*** God was not with them, their lives would have been destroyed.

**VERSES 1-5**

1. We don't know what event David was speaking of, or if he was just speaking allegorically, realizing that without God's help, without God's sustaining power, they would have been swallowed up, destroyed, overwhelmed, and-so-on. What a great thing to do, look at God's past deliverance's, thanking Him for them, and using them to help us through our present situations.

2. Now let's think about this for a minute. I could have written this Psalm and so could you because if the Lord had not been with us, we would have been overwhelmed! We would have been washed up. Make no mistake about it, the Psalmist went through this tough time and is giving us encouragement as we go through tough times. This Psalm is for us, helping us to remember what God has done in the past to sustain us in the present situation we face.

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 1:9-10, **“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”** Notice what Paul says here. God had delivered him from past difficult situations and He will deliver Paul from the present ones he is facing. We can apply that to our own lives. We can be confident that God will see us through all the way to the end because, as Paul said, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”** Philippians 1:6. In other words, **“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side . . .”**

#### VERSES 6-8

1. Now the Psalmist shares how the Lord delivered him from past troubles. The fowlers were trappers of birds, and the Psalmist is speaking of how God delivered them from these fowlers who were trying to trap them like birds! As Christians we might say that Satan is the fowler and we are the birds. And he goes around trying to snare us, cause us to stumble, but the Lord will break his traps and set us free. And he concludes with a correct perspective, the God who made the heavens and the earth can deliver me from the hand of the enemy. It is as Proverbs 18:10 encourages us and comforts us when it says, **“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.”** Make no mistake about it. If the Lord had not be on our side, we would have been completely subdued by the world, the flesh and the devil. It is only because the Lord has given us the power, His Spirit to be free from these things if we would walk in the Spirit! Again, **“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side . . .”**

**PSALM 125**

As you read through this Psalm you get the feeling that the Psalmist is nearing Jerusalem, Mount Zion is in view and thus, he speaks of standing in the security of the Lord. Why did he feel that way? The reason is simple, he felt safe within the walls of the city of Jerusalem. He felt safe within God's holy city!

**VERSES 1-2**

1. When you stand in the city of Jerusalem, this picture comes alive, for the city is surrounded by mountains. Mount Skopos in the distance, Mount Golgotha and the Mount of Olives which is close by. And the city itself is built upon Mount Zion. Thus, just as the mountains surround the city of Jerusalem, the Lord surrounds His people, not just today, but forevermore! It is as Psalm 34:4-8 says, **“I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”**

2. What does this mean to us? What is our faith built upon? It is built upon the Solid Rock, Jesus Christ! That Rock can't be moved and if you place your life upon this Rock you will not be moved either. The storms of life may come crashing down, but your feet are secure in Him!

VERSES 3-5

1. This is so simple and yet it is the thing we stumble with. It is so easy that a child can understand it, the problem comes with applying that which we know to be true to our lives. If you reach out for evil it will grab hold of your life and consume you. It is as Amos 5:14-15 says, **“Seek good and not evil, That you may live; So the LORD God of hosts will be with you, As you have spoken. Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”** You see, the way to prevent evil from grabbing hold of your life is not to reach out towards it, but cling to God!
  
2. Now if you refuse to obey what the Lord has said. If you reject God and love evil then God will not force you to follow Him, He will allow you to travel down that path. He will warn you, but you can reject His love for you and He will make your heart more firm in the evil you desire, He will give you what you want. When Moses came before Pharaoh, seeking to see his people freed, Pharaoh refused. Even after all the plagues, those object lessons that should get anyone’s attention, and I guess it did for awhile, but in the end he did not soften his heart. He was bent on evil and God gave him the desire of his heart. We read in Exodus 9:12, **“But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.”** The Lord did not make his heart hard, it was already hard, and God just gave him what he wanted. Don’t be bent on evil, you may not like what you get!

3. Now this Psalm concludes with these words, “**Peace be upon Israel.**” Now we have talked about this a little already, but Israel has not seen a lot of peace since God raised them up. Did God fail them? Is this Psalm wrong? No, God did not fail them and this Psalm is not wrong. This Psalm is dealing with those who trust in the Lord and thus, the promise is only to them! When you look at the nation of Israel, when they were walking with the Lord they did have peace. It is when they turned from the Lord that they found themselves under attack and in bondage! I think the same is true in our own lives. As we walk with the Lord we will find peace. Not an absence from problems, but a peace in the Lord. We won’t find ourselves taken captive by things. We won’t find ourselves in bondage to things. We are able to rest in Him. And thus, our peace is found when we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ!

### **PSALM 126**

After long years in exile, this Psalm shows the joy after returning home to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity. At one time the nation was glorious; it reached its zenith of power during the reign of Solomon. But, because of idolatry the city was destroyed and the Northern Kingdom of Israel went into captivity in 721 B. C. by the Assyrians.



Then the Southern Kingdom of Judah went into captivity starting in 606 B. C. with the final deportation in 586 B. C. when the city and the Temple were destroyed by the Babylonians. And as the Southern Kingdom was being led into Babylon, we read in Psalm 137:1-4, **“By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept When we remembered Zion. We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, And those who plundered us requested mirth, Saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’ How shall we sing the Lord’s song In a foreign land?”**

As they went into captivity their joy was gone, as you can imagine. And their captors, mocking them, wanted them to sing a song. But no one felt like singing any longer. Now we have come to the other side, the captivity is over and now it was time to head home and as they did, the song in their heart was heard on their lips. They were back in the land that God had given them. That is what this Psalm is all about.

### VERSES 1-3

1. The day had finally come and you know how it is, the impossible has come to pass, the day they only dreamed of was now here. And that is true in our own lives, I have experienced this and I am sure you have too. You know how it is. God does some glorious work in your life; it is almost like a dream to you. You can’t believe it is happening to you. It is like you have to pinch yourself to see if it is real. That is how the Psalmist felt as God brought them back from their captivity in Babylon.

2. Now let's get a little perspective on this. When they came back home they did not come home to beautiful homes, a beautiful city, a beautiful Temple. All those things were destroyed by the Babylonians 70 years earlier! Jerusalem was in ruins, it was nothing more than a big rock heap.

Then why were they rejoicing? How could they rejoice? Because they saw the hand of God upon their lives and they knew that God would see them through these tough time and He would raise up this city once again! God was with them and that is all they needed, no matter how difficult the situation was!

3. May we have that kind of heart! A heart that sees the hand of God in a given situation, a difficult situation and rejoices because God is with you! Let us not become lazy or comfortable where we are at like many of the Jews did at this time. You see, during the first return, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, only some 50,000 people returned to Jerusalem in 538 B. C., out of some 2 to 3 million that went into captivity. Then, in 457 B. C., less than 2,000 returned under the leadership of Ezra.

What happened? Sadly, most became very comfortable living in Babylon, they had homes, were making good money. Now to leave all of that and make that 900 mile journey back to Jerusalem, which was in ruins, seemed foolish for the uncommitted. But for those that were serious, they made the journey knowing it was not going to be easy.

What has God called you to do? Yes, it may be difficult, but if He has called you isn't He more than able to see you through no matter how difficult it is? Absolutely, thus, start moving and rejoice in the fact that God is with you!

VERSES 4-6

1. Yes, the work is hard, it seems overwhelming at times. Yes, the enemy is big, powerful and tries to stop us. But if God is for us who can be against us? No one and the joy of going forward is knowing that there are the rewards for our labor. As Christians we are to sow the seed, the Word of God, not with a haughty spirit, but with a humble spirit, with tears, tears for the lost. As someone said, “Winners of souls are first weepers for souls.”

We must also understand that our labor is not in vain, for there will be a bountiful harvest, there will be fruit from our labors. Don't give up. As Paul said in I Corinthians 15:58, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”** Those have been very encouraging words for me over the years and I hope they encourage you. God will accomplish what He desires, not always what we desire as we serve Him and thus, our labor is not in vain, He will bring forth the fruit in due season!

2. One more point here and that is our heart attitude. Are we proud people or are we humble people? Let me give you this example and you will see what I mean. Years ago there was a minister who graduated at the top of his class. He was very smart. As he stood up on that first Sunday morning in his first pastorate position he was very proud of what he had accomplished. He spent time studying and preparing and everything was perfect, the people would be blessed, I mean, how could they not be blessed!

As he stood behind the pulpit and began to speak, his mind went blank, nothing! He began to become afraid, nervous, he was terrified! When he tried to talk the words were all wrong, the points were missed and it was a horrible situation. As he finished, as quickly as he could, he put his notes back into his Bible and began to walk down from the pulpit. He was humiliated!

As he walked by one dear saint said, “If he had come in like he went out, he would have gone out like he came in.” Before we are too harsh on this young man, do we think we are God’s gift to the rest of the world? Do we think we are special and it is very lucky that God has us? If that is how you feel you will be broken because God can’t use you, you are just too big for Him to use. But if you realize that you are nothing and everything you have, everything you do is because of Him, you are small enough for God to use! As James said, “**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**” James 4:10.

### **PSALM 127**

This Psalm, written by Solomon, could have been sung as they went up to dedicate the Temple, which took some 7½ years to build at a cost of billions of dollars at today’s standards. And as you will see, the focus is on building, not only a physical house but our families and unless the Lord builds them, we build in vain!

VERSES 1-2

1. In these two verses the word “**vain**” is used three times. It is a word that means worthless or useless or empty. And the principle is powerful. No matter what you are trying to build, unless the Lord is the one doing the work, unless He is involved in this, your labor, your work is in vain. It will not stand! It could be something you are building or guarding or watching over and unless you have given it to the Lord, unless He is involved in it, unless He has called you to do it, all your work, all your effort is in vain!
  
2. In regards to what I am doing here I also have to be careful as we do things in the church. I don't want to use the efforts of man to build it. And this just makes sense. If I do it through my strength, it will be futile. It won't stand. My responsibility is to feed and love the sheep, and God will **BUILD HIS** church! He will **GUIDE HIS** church. He will **WATCH OVER HIS** Church.
  
3. This is a very important principle that can be applied to our lives and I want to focus on the area of the family because there is truly an assault against this institution that God has ordained! Think about it, over fifty percent of marriages end in divorce and this is seen in the church as well as outside the church. Do you realize that 80% of all violent crimes against children are committed in the home? That means it is 80% safer to be out in the streets! The attack on the family is growing stronger each day.

What can we do? What is the solution? The Lord must build the family! Unless the Lord is the center of your family, your work is in vain. That also means that God needs to be the focus, for the house will crumble without Him. You need to seek the Lord as a family, spend time with Him, be in His Word as a family and apply the things that He is showing you to your life. Men, you need to be the spiritual leader in the family or your house is not in order. Ladies, you need to let your husbands be the spiritual leader of the family or your house is not in order. Some may feel, “What’s the big deal?” It is this, **“Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it.”**

You see, it’s a waste of time to cultivate communication skills if you’re not seeking God together. It is pointless to establish a relationship built on fun, vacation, or recreation if you’re not seeking the Lord together. If you want a healthy family life, let the Lord build the house!

4. One more point here and it comes out of verse 2. Anxiety is a big problem today. People are fearful of all kinds of things. It doesn’t matter if you stay up late or rise up early in the morning, that fear, that anxiety is still there. You won’t have peace, you won’t have rest. And the enemy uses anxiety, fear to control our lives. What can we do about it? Give it to the Lord and then have a good nights rest and wake-up refreshed in the morning. It is as the Psalmist tells us, **“For so He gives His beloved sleep.”**

VERSES 3-5

1. We have been talking about the family and thus, the Psalmist speaks of children. The world looks at children today as a burden, a hindrance to their life's goals. But God sees children as a blessing. Before we had children we did what we wanted and when we wanted. But once Joey came along and then Tony, they were the priority in our life. We didn't leave home without first packing up the home to bring with us all the things they needed. Our schedules revolved around their schedules. That lesson can be and should be extended to the ministry, extending yourself to the needs of others.

2. Now here is something that can be controversial. The Psalmist says that, "**Happy is the man who has a quiver full of them.**" In other words, your home needs to be full of children. The question is, "How much is a full quiver?" Some teach that 12 is a full quiver and unless you have 12 children you are disobeying the Lord. I have had people tell me, not to have 12 kids but that I should have more because I have not obeyed the Lord in filling my quiver. That is ridiculous. That is not Biblical. I have a smaller quiver, it is only holding two! You see, a full quiver depends on what God has for you, and whatever that is, it is a blessing. Be thankful for what God has given to you.

3. Now, as you become older your children are "**Like arrows in the hand of a warrior.**" That is they can protect you, care for you, watch out for you. Christian children should do that! And so, "**Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it.**"

**PSALM 128**

This Psalm deals with the blessings one receives in fearing the Lord. Interestingly enough, Luther called this a “Marriage Song.” It describes a happy family life and then gives the invocation of the Lord’s blessing. It is God’s picture of a happy family, and again, the foundation is in fearing the Lord!

**VERSE 1**

1. Since we are speaking of the family, what makes a family blessed? People have all kinds of ideas of what this might be but unless you walk in the ways of the Lord, you will never find it! In other words, you need to acknowledge the Lord in every area of your life; you have to give Him all of your life, not just what you want! When you are walking in the fear of the Lord, honoring Him, then what will flow from your life will be the things of God and not the things of the flesh. Now what are those blessings that the Psalmist is speaking of? We don’t have to guess because he is going to expound on them. But the key to all of this is that there must be a fear of the Lord in the home!

**VERSE 2**

1. In a society today where many don’t want to work, they just want things given to them, the Lord speaks of the blessings that you have from your labor. And the key here is for those who are serving the Lord in their work and I am not just speaking of being in the ministry at church. Whatever job you have, do it in the fear of the Lord, do it to the best of your ability and you will bring forth fruit!



For those that are working independent of God, your labor will be in vain. Remember what the Lord said to Haggai the prophet in regards to the remnant that returned from the captivity. They were building their homes while the house of God was in ruins. They had their priorities messed up. And in Haggai 1:5-6 we are told, **“Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Consider your ways! You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.’”** All their labor was futile because the Lord was not the priority in their life. And thus, the Lord is saying that if you are obedient to Him you will eat the fruit of your labor, you won’t have to battle for it.

#### VERSES 3-4

1. Notice what is going on in the family life, they come together, spend time together. It is not just a passing “Hi” and then “Goodbye!” They spend time talking about the Lord, seeking the Lord. In other words, a home that has a reverential fear of the Lord will be blessed! Make time for your family and make sure that the Lord is the focus, the center of your family!

#### VERSES 5-6

1. Part of this blessing is seen in long-life to the one who follows after the Lord, who walks in his ways. I think for the Christian that long-life does not necessarily speak of the number of years we live, but the living we do in those years. What I mean is that we live the life God has given us to the fullest for the glory of God.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-33, **“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”**

Place the Lord first in your life and God will provide your needs. Worrying about food, shelter, health will not help your situation one bit. Focus on the Lord and He will see you through. Make the Lord the focus of your life, the focus of your family and you will see that your home will be blessed! You can go to all of the conferences you want to, but you will never have a happy home, a blessed home until your relationship with God is right. When you get your relationship with the Lord in order it will amaze you how many of your problems will fall into place and take care of themselves. As the Psalmist said, **“Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways.”** Psalm 128:1.