

150 Days in the Psalms

*The Lord bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life!
May you see your children's children!
Peace be upon Israel! Psalm 128:5-6*

Psalm 128 speaks of the immense blessings experienced by a faithful father in regards to his wife and children. To the father who is faithful the psalmist speaks of their wife being like a fruitful vine within their house and their children will be like olive shoots around their table (which are both images of fruitfulness and growth). Marriage is a gift from God that is meant to be a fountain and source of blessings to both husband and wife. Yet, when two sinful people come together there is bound to be some strife and conflict at some point. What was meant to be a blessing can at times seem like quite the opposite. We humans tend to take the things God meant for our God and twist and corrupt with our own sinfulness. A marriage that is producing blessings can hurt and cause great mental anguish.

The psalmist lays out a path that this hardship can be avoided (though we can never do perfectly) when he calls husbands/fathers to walk in the way of the Lord. This is the first command that he lays out and the rest of the psalm contains all the fruits and blessings that follow. So what does it mean to walk in the way of the Lord in regards to marriage and fatherhood? To answer that we must look at one of the most important verses regarding marriage found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul writes concerning the role of husband,

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

This is what the psalmist is speaking of when he tells husbands to walk in the way of the Lord. He means for us to be imitators of Christ in our marriages. Marriage is an icon of the marriage between Christ and His

church. The husband stands in the role of Christ which is no easy task. Just as Christ sacrifices everything for His bride so too the husband must be willing to sacrifice everything for his bride and that even means he must die for her if need be. To walk in the way of the Lord is to show that sacrificial love for your wives at all times, even if you are mad at her. It means adoring her as if she is the most priceless treasure in the world (and to you she definitely is). It means that you show her unconditional love no matter the circumstance. It means that you are faithful to her and only her just as Christ is faithful to His bride! In the end this love means that you put her needs and wellbeing above your own just as Christ has done for us.

How can a husband expect his marriage to be a blessing and his wife to love him if he is unwilling to be an imitator of Christ and lay down his very life for his bride? The husband who refuses to walk in the way of the Lord is destined to have a strained marriage for he has failed to understand what marriage truly is.

But to the one who does these things, the blessings of marriage are soon to follow him. The one who sacrifices must grow a deeper knowledge of what true Christian love actually is. Again this is no easy task, and to be honest there will be times you fail at it. After all, we are still sinful human beings and in no way can we perfectly match the will and love of our Bridegroom. To walk in the way of the Lord also means that to walk in the way of repentance, understanding our own sinful and selfish flesh and our inability to be the icon of Christ. A faithful husband is also one who daily repents and turns back to the Gospel of Christ to be forgiven. A faithful husband is one who goes to God in prayer and seeks Him out in His Word and Sacraments so that he can be a better husband. The job of a faithful husband who walks in the way of the Lord is a never ending task and struggle, yet the reward and blessings that come from are worth it! May God continue to strengthen you and equip you all the days of your life to walk in His ways and be that icon of Christ in your marriage.

-Rev. Andrew Munding
Holy Cross Lutheran Church Concord, CA

Psalm 127

Monday



The 127th Psalm is a psalm of instruction. It teaches us that worldly authority and household order are nothing less than God's gifts and rest only in His hand. For where He does not give peace and good government, there no wisdom, order, exertion nor armor can hold onto peace. Where He does not give good fortune, with wife, children, and workers, there all care and work will be for nothing.

¹Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.
²It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.
³Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.
⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.
⁵Blessèd is the man
who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, Your Son gathered the little children to Himself that He might bless them. Strengthen the parents of our congregation that they may faithfully bring up their children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord by a life of prayer and devotion to You and Your Word; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 128

Tuesday



The 128th Psalm is a psalm of comfort, in which the estate of marriage is splendidly praised. Marriage partners are given this great comfort: they should not look only at the trouble, work, discouragement, and discomfort, which they must feel and experience in marriage, but rather the gracious will of God toward them, that their station and life are a gracious creation of God and are blessed by Him. Therefore marriage is dear to Him and He gives it much more happiness and blessing than discomfort, where one only believes and adapts oneself within marriage and faithfully remain with it. Therefore in the beginning and middle of the Psalm it says, "Those who fear the Lord..." when the godless go astray, on the other hand, it is no surprise.

¹Blessèd is everyone who fears the Lord,
who walks in his ways!

²You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

³Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.

⁴Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
who fears the Lord.

⁵The Lord bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life!

⁶May you see your children's children!
Peace be upon Israel!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, God of all grace, govern our hearts that we may never forget Your blessings but steadfastly thank and praise You for all Your goodness in this life until, with all Your saints, we praise You eternally in Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Psalm 129

Wednesday



The 129th Psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the people of Israel give thanks for the many deliverances which God has often done for them since the beginning. The book of Judges and of Kings show how often they were oppressed by the heathen. They oppressed them severely for a long time and thus plowed long furrows on their back [v. 3) and in the yoke and bonds burdened them overmuch until God raised up a deliverer for them and he freed them from their plows, yokes, and ropes. At the end he wishes for Israel (that is, prophe- sies of them) that all their enemies would be dried up and withered, which then was done. For all those peoples are gone, Israel alone remains. Thus all the heathen and enemies of Christ are like the grass on the roof that sprouts and grows as though it will produce much. But it withers before it is fully developed. It brings no fruit and there is no blessing in it. So also the heathen, heretics, and other enemies when they rage and storm ultimately vanish, leaving neither seed nor mark behind them. The Christians however remain forever and ever.

¹“Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth”—

let Israel now say—

²“Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth,
yet they have not prevailed against me.

³The plowers plowed upon my back;
they made long their furrows.”

⁴The Lord is righteous;
he has cut the cords of the wicked.

⁵May all who hate Zion
be put to shame and turned backward!

⁶Let them be like the grass on the housetops,
which withers before it grows up,

⁷with which the reaper does not fill his hand
nor the binder of sheaves his arms,

⁸nor do those who pass by say,
“The blessing of the Lord be upon you!
We bless you in the name of the Lord!”

Prayer

Almighty God, with the whole creation, we praise You for Your gift of life and the world that sustains us and all the living. Grant that seeing Your even greater gift of deliverance from the disfigurement of sin and the promise of the renewal of Your original design all people may come to repentance and faith in Your gracious invitation through Jesus Christ, risen and victorious over death; in Jesus name we pray. Amen

Psalm 130

Thursday



The 130th Psalm is a psalm of prayer which comes from the genuine Davidic devotion and understanding. It confesses that before God no one is righteous nor may he become righteous by his own work and righteousness, but rather, only through grace and forgiveness of sins, which God has promised. He relies on this promise and word and comforts himself. He exhorts all of Israel that they should do the same, and learn that with God is a throne of grace and redemption. Israel must through Him alone, and no way else, be freed of their sins, that is, "through forgiveness" (without which there is no grace) become righteous and blessed. Apart from this, he truly would be in the depths and would never stand before God.

Look! Here is a true Master and Doctor of the Holy Scriptures who has understood what this means: the seed of the woman shall tread on the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15) and through this seed all the nations of the world shall be blessed [Gen. 12:3; Gen. 22:18]. Therefore he places both a promise and a prophecy of Christ in this verse: "He will redeem Israel from all his sins." Upon this verse, and from it, comes the entire Psalm.

¹Out of the depths

I cry to you, O Lord!

²O Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

³If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?

⁴But with you there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.

⁵I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

⁶my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

⁷O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,

and with him is plentiful redemption.

⁸And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.

Prayer

Almighty God, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly pray that we may live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

.

Psalm 131

Friday



The 131st Psalm is a psalm of instruction. It speaks against the proud, stiff-necked saints who comfort themselves by placing confidence in their great services of worship and their great holiness, and not in the forgiveness of which the preceding psalm speaks. In contrast to the proud saints, the psalmist says,

"I cannot travel so high and boast of my holiness as these people do, who rely on themselves. For whenever I have wanted to do so, not grounding and stilling my heart on God's grace (which is what it means to "be still"), I become like a "weaned child" [v. 2]. Without the nipple of the promise and grace, I cry day and night and have no peace in my conscience."

Therefore this is his conclusion: Let Israel and everyone trust and hope in God and depend only on His grace. Let no one take this nipple from you. I commend it to you, for the promised and coming Christ is in it.

¹O Lord, my heart is not lifted up;
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.

²But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

³O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore.

Prayer

We implore You, O Lord, that Your abundant blessing may be upon Your people who have held the passion and death of Your Son in devout remembrance, that we may receive Your pardon and the gift of Your comfort, and may increase in faith and take hold of eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Psalm 132

Saturday



The 132nd Psalm is a psalm of prayer in which Solomon, or the people of Israel, pray for the preservation of the priesthood and the kingdom. That is, they pray for the spiritual and worldly authorities, for God's word and temporal peace. For where these both stand well, things go well. He sings on in verse 11 to tell how such a prayer is not only heard but that God has already also promised with an oath to preserve kingdom and priesthood in Jerusalem and to dwell there Himself. He will give all blessing and grace Himself and bring their enemies down to disgrace, so long as they also keep His commandments and be obedient to Him. Why however in verse 6, he calls the place of God's dwelling "Ephrata" and the "Plain of the woodland." is too long to comment on here and belongs in a commentary.

- ¹Remember, O Lord, in David's favor,
all the hardships he endured,
²how he swore to the Lord
and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,
³"I will not enter my house
or get into my bed,
⁴I will not give sleep to my eyes
or slumber to my eyelids,
⁵until I find a place for the Lord,
a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."
⁶Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah;
we found it in the fields of Jaar.
⁷"Let us go to his dwelling place;
let us worship at his footstool!"
⁸Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.
⁹Let your priests be clothed with righteousness,
and let your saints shout for joy.
¹⁰For the sake of your servant David,
do not turn away the face of your anointed one.
¹¹The Lord swore to David a sure oath

from which he will not turn back:
“One of the sons of your body
I will set on your throne.
¹²If your sons keep my covenant
and my testimonies that I shall teach them,
their sons also forever
shall sit on your throne.”
¹³For the Lord has chosen Zion;
he has desired it for his dwelling place:
¹⁴“This is my resting place forever;
here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
¹⁵I will abundantly bless her provisions;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
¹⁶Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
and her saints will shout for joy.
¹⁷There I will make a horn to sprout for David;
I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.
¹⁸His enemies I will clothe with shame,
but on him his crown will shine.”

Prayer

Supply Your whole Church on earth with faithful pastors and laborers who will continually feed and lead Your people, rightly proclaiming Your Word, administering Your Holy Sacraments, and caring for all in their charge. Guard and bless Your servants: Matthew, our Synod President, Mike and Allen, our District Presidents, and Andrew and Matthew, our pastors. Amen

Psalm 133

Sunday



The 133rd Psalm is a psalm of instruction that (both in the spiritual and worldly stations) we should live together harmoniously as friends, having one teacher, one authority, and that each should carry the help of the other. He gives two comparisons: first, of the anointing oil, which flows from Aaron's head over his beard and robes; second, of the dew which falls from Mt. Hermon onto Mt. Zion. Were things happen in this way, there God gladly dwells with all His grace, blessing, and life. But where disunity and faction prevail, there the devil dwells, and death, and all misfortune.

¹Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!
²It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!
³It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore.

Prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, we offer before You our humble prayer for the well-being of Your Church throughout the world. Guide and govern it by Your Holy Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians be led into the way of truth and hold the Christian faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in the righteousness of life; in Jesus name we pray, Amen