

“Count Your Blessings”

September 26, 2010

Dr. Ritch Boerckel

Scriptural Foundation: Psalm 103:1-12, ESV

Bless the LORD, O My Soul

Of David.

- ¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!
- ² Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
- ³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
- ⁵ who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ⁶ The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all who are oppressed.
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.
- ⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
- ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Leprosy is a word that sent fear through the hearts of those living in Jesus' day. How difficult it must have been for ten men the day that they first heard that ominous diagnosis spoken over their lives: leprosy. Leprosy not only spelled slow and miserable death, but it also spelled instant and permanent isolation from family and friends. From the time these men were diagnosed with leprosy, they were not allowed communion with their parents, their wives, their brothers and sisters, their neighbors, or any healthy person. The only people they could talk to were other people who had leprosy. They were outcasts without hope of healing and without comfort from friends.

One of these ten men was a Samaritan. Normally, the other nine would not allow this “Samaritan” into their circle, but leprosy changed that. These ten men were now bound together by their hopeless plight. One day these ten men heard Jesus the Healer was approaching their village. They knew that they would not be allowed to approach near him, but maybe, just maybe, they could get close enough to shout out together and capture His attention. They saw Him, and they immediately raced as far as the law would allow them. From a distance, together, in unison, they cried out, “Jesus! Master! Have mercy on us!” The crowd looked at them with contempt, but Jesus looked upon them with compassion.

He approached them and he looked at them and said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” They were confused by this command. They looked down and their hands were still white with leprosy. They touched their faces and the

leprosy was still covering them. But, they had nothing to lose; the Master said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests”, so they started on their way to see the priests.

As they were walking, they talked of this strange command and what it might mean for them. All of a sudden one of them started shouting and jumping up and down, “It’s gone! I am clean! Look at my hands!” They looked at him and they saw his hands no longer had leprosy, but his face as well. Immediately, the other nine quickly looked down at their hands too, and they too had joy surge through their hearts, “I am clean, too!” “So am I!” “Me, too!” All ten began singing and dancing in that dusty street. After a time of merriment, the Samaritan in the group said, “Hey, let us go back and thank Jesus. Let us go back and praise Him!”

The others looked at one another and then looked at the long road upon which they had just traveled. It was a great distance, all the way back into the village. The others looked at one another and one said, “Well, my family lives just right down the road and I have not seen them for a long time. I need to go to there first.”

Another said, “My friends gather at an inn just a little ways in this other direction. They will be really excited to see me and I will be really excited to see them, too.” One by one, the ten men left in different directions with only one of them going back to the village in which they started, and that was the Samaritan.

The Samaritan did not even know if he would be able to find Jesus, but nonetheless he went back. On his way back he considered just how great God is and how God had blessed him. He was dead and now he is alive again. He felt reborn as a result of his encounter with Jesus. He prayed to find Him and then, from a distance, the Samaritan saw Him. He ran to Him, falling down upon his face before His feet, “Jesus, Jesus, thank you, thank, my Master, my Lord! I was a leper, but now I am clean. Praise God, now I am clean!” Jesus smiled at the man and asked him, “Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Talking to His Disciples, He asked, “Is it only the Samaritan who comes back to thank me?” Then He looked at the Samaritan leper who had been cleansed and He said, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”¹ Let me ask you, who do you think received the most joy from the miracle Jesus performed that day? Who do you think received the most blessing from the work God did for these men? The most blessed of the ten certainly was the one who returned to give thanks.

When God calls us to give praise and to give Him thanks, it is not out of cold obligation, but it is out of a heart that knows God has done a great and wondrous work within us and for us. It is a heart of true faith which recognizes He is the Great Giver of the good gifts we enjoy.

When we read that story in Luke 17, we often put ourselves in the position of the Samaritan. We are the ones, as we think of ourselves in that story, who go back. We take that long, dusty road, wondering whether we will find Jesus, but we do it because we want to thank Him, but the story is written for us to caution us against a forgetful heart. It is written to remind us what a rare thing it is to remember to stop and give thanks after we have received the full benefit of God’s blessings. Is it not true that the best of us are often very much like the other nine? We are more ready to ask God for what we do not have than to praise Him for what He has already given. We are prone to grumbling and complaining, rather than to thanking and to singing.

Friends, as we study Psalm 103, let us pray God will change the spirit within each of us so we will be grateful, glad hearted worshippers. I believe God will use Psalm 103 to help us with this if we ask Him. We open our Bibles to Psalm 103 to confront a spirit of forgetfulness that robs God of the praise He rightly deserves and which also robs us of the joy that we need in our lives. We are studying the first twelve verses of this psalm and we will divide these verses into two parts.

First, in Verse 1 and 2, we see a commitment of the psalmist to remember God’s blessing. It does not happen naturally. We have to commit ourselves to remember. Secondly, we see a catalog of God’s blessings and five of them are written for us in the first six verses.

The first blessing is God forgives. The second blessing is God heals. The third blessing is God redeems. The fourth blessing is God loves. The fifth blessing is God satisfies.

¹ Luke 17:11-19

First, let us consider a commitment to remember God's blessings, as we read verse 1,

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

This is a psalm of David and we have to ask the question: who is David speaking to in Verse 1? He is speaking to himself. He wants to stir himself into the worship of God. The most helpful sermons are not the ones a preacher preaches to you, but the most helpful sermons you will ever hear in your life are the sermons you preach to yourself. Unless we begin to preach to ourselves we will not hear the way God intends for us to hear.

When we face big decisions in life, the world says, "Listen to your heart. Let your heart guide you." God says, "Don't do that. Your heart is deceitful. It will trick you. It is desperately wicked and it will move you in a direction away from Me. Do not 'listen to your heart'. Preach to your heart. Preach God's truth to yourself. Preach God's message of grace, of hope, and of righteousness to your own soul, then you will learn to be wise in the decisions you make throughout your life." So, David is preaching to his own soul.

David says to his soul, "Bless the Lord." To "bless" means to worship the Lord by saying good things to Him about Himself; by recalling those provisions and acts of kindness God has done, and then adoring Him and admiring Him with those words of blessing.

The opposite of "blessing the Lord" would be complaining and grumbling about our present condition. The opposite of "blessing the Lord" would be to bless another god; to give praise and admiration to something other than God and praise and admiration only God should have and receive. The opposite of "blessing the Lord" is to neglect Him; to set Him aside in some corner of our life and ignore God is altogether lovely.

David says, "I am not going to be a complainer. I am not going to be a grumbler." He is preaching to himself, "Do not be a grumbler, David." He says, also, "I am not going to be one of those people who blesses another god. 'David, remember, to love the Lord your God with all your heart. Do not leave room for any other gods.'" And, he says, "Do not forget God is center to everything. 'David, bless the Lord. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and let all that is within me bless His holy name.'"

David recognizes he is prone to half-heartedness. He feels the natural pull of spiritual dullness creeping over his soul. Friends, do you? We are all prone to a lukewarm Christianity. The spiritual, gravitational forces which act upon our soul every day tug us toward spiritual lethargy.

When I was a youth pastor, I took a group of youth to a wilderness camp in Colorado and we stayed out in the wilderness in tents. I was not, and still am not, much of an outdoorsman and it was late at night when we finally arrived at our campsite, after a long hike up the mountain. It was getting dark and we had to set up our tents in the dark. The area looked pretty good to my buddy and me. It had a bit of a slope to it, but certainly nothing which appeared to be uncomfortable. Later that evening, as it was getting cold, we got into our sleeping bags and into our tents. About an hour later I woke up and we were both at the bottom of our tent. That is why I woke up because we had slid down to the bottom. We climbed back to the top of the tent again and I held on with my arms and I fell asleep again. About forty minutes later, I woke up again and we were at the bottom. This happened three or four times. We kept sliding down in that tent towards the lowest part of the ground. Finally, we said, "This is crazy", and it was about two thirty in the morning and we were not getting any sleep. We got out of the tent, took everything out of it, and moved it to a place which was flat ground. There was a gravitational pull which, while we were sleeping, moved us. We did not intend to move to the bottom of the tent. That is the way nature took us and that is what happens in our spiritual lives.

We have to awaken ourselves and crawl back up if we are going to maintain our spiritual passion and our spiritual intensity. I know many people, and I am sure you do also, who, at one time in their life, were "white-hot" for the Lord. Perhaps it was not even a long time ago. It may have been a year, two years, five years, or ten years of time they were totally committed to Christ and they were going to serve Him and live their life for Him, but if you talk to them today there is coldness in their voice when they talk about their Lord. There is no passion, there is no zeal, and there is no energy for Him. You ask, "What happened?" The answer does not necessarily be some great sin or one tragic event. Often times it is a slow, inch-by-inch retreat because they did not do what David does; they did not "preach" to

themselves. They did not awaken themselves and say, “Soul, bless the Lord” and get everything within you behind that blessing! “When you give praise, soul, I am going to arouse you to a full-hearted commitment.”

David will write, in Psalm 42,

¹ As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.

This is no half-hearted faith David is content with and that is what I want from my life.

Jesus urges us toward a deep devotion to God. Jesus was asked by a lawyer, in Matthew 22,

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*”²

If I were to wrap up the whole of Christian faith, here is what it is: it is a whole-hearted love.

Paul echoes this deep yearning when he writes in Philippians 3,

⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

“For me to live is Christ,” that is what Paul says.

Christian, do not become one of “those Christians” who give half-hearted devotion to God, who want God to be in their life, but not filling their life. They do not want to be too distant because they recognize the danger in that, but they also do not want to be consumed. I know that type of Christianity, the half-hearted type, is more common than the “sold out” type of Christianity, but that type of Christianity is wholly unworthy of God. Let us recognize that. That type of Christianity will leave you with eternal regrets and it will keep you from eternal joys. Let us refuse to be “average”. Let us yearn for a heart which sours like eagles. We must not be content with shallow knowledge of God, but we rouse our souls to know Him deeply and walk with Him day by day.

How is it David nurtures his soul to have this whole-hearted passion and love for God? Verse 2 tells us,

² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...

We are a very forgetful people. We seem to remember past grievances quite well, but the benefits we receive from others slip from the consciousness of our minds. David knows forgetfulness of God’s past faithfulness is one of the reasons we become dull in our worship. All through Scripture, God tells us to set up remembrances for ourselves. He tells us to set one day a week so we would remember the Lord, because He knows we are prone to forget if we do not set regular times to remember. He gives us the Lord’s Supper and a piece of bread and a cup of wine so we might remember. All through Scripture, God is setting up “remember stones” and “remembering places” and “remembering days” because we are prone to forget.

Spiritual remembrance awakens spiritual affection, so David sets some time aside to do this. I encourage you, by way of application, sometime today, spend a good bit of time, more than five minutes, remembering. Say, “I am going to set aside some time to actively remember the benefits God has given to me in my life.” If you make that a conscious, regular discipline, then that discipline will provide grace which will help you stay out of “lukewarm” Christianity.

It is a failure to remember which leads to spiritual lethargy. In order to conquer our soul, Satan does not have to make us hate God; he just has to tempt us to forget Him. If we forget God we will be prone to a host of temptations since we have lost sight of God’s goodness, of God’s glory, and of God’s life. So, David calls himself to remember and not forget, and he begins to rehearse God’s kindness to him. He knows remembering God’s blessings to him will make him happy in God.

² Deuteronomy 6:5

My wife and I love to look at our wedding photos and of our dating years and early years. When we look at those pictures, we remember and we become happier in each other. It is a good thing to remember because it creates an energy into the present relationship we have. It keeps warmth in our soul and it keeps the flame glowing. It is like putting logs on a fire.

David, in Verses 3 and following, begins a catalogue and he lists five specific benefits, five specific blessings from God, he is going to keep in front of him. The first benefit he catalogues is: God forgives us our sins, as we see in Verse 3,

³ who forgives all your iniquity...

The forgiveness of sins is the first among God's blessings for His children. Without the forgiveness of sin, no other blessing could be truly enjoyed. God's forgiveness means He removes the offense we committed and which causes separation between us and Him. God is holy and when we are not holy there is a separation and distance which, necessarily, must take place because holiness has no fellowship with unrighteousness. The forgiveness of sins means God takes that slate filled with a record of the wrongs we have committed against God, our acts of disobedience, and God wipes that slate completely clean so it is as though they were never committed in the first place; cleaned, cancelled, and pardoned.

I want you to observe four aspects of God's forgiveness of us. First, God's forgiveness came at an infinite cost to Himself. That is important for us to remember so we do not take God's forgiveness lightly.

We live in a culture which does take God's forgiveness lightly, "Of course, God will forgive us. That is what God does," as though God somehow winks at sin and says, "It is okay, buddy. Do no worry about it. I will take care of it." No, God's forgiveness came at an infinite cost to Himself. His ability to forgive was not purchased cheaply or easily.

The Bible says God is just and righteous as surely as He is merciful. God cannot merely look past sin. That would be a mockery of justice. Listen to how the Bible describes the nature of God in Exodus 34. Part of that is going to be quoted later in this psalm by David, in Verse 7 and 8. He makes reference to Exodus 34 when he talks about how God made His ways known to Moses. Exodus 34 is a time when God passes in front of Moses, and the Lord proclaims of Himself,

⁶ "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished..."³

That is important for us to remember. God is very serious about punishing sin. He does so consistently and He does so every time. There is no sin ever committed in this universe which is left unpunished. Let us not believe the lie that God winks at our sins and would not really punish us severely for them. No, the Bible records time and again God's acts of justice against sin. You cannot read the Bible and right out of the gate, Adam and Eve, Cain's sin against Abel, the wickedness of Noah's day, and the flood came and destroyed the world. You cannot read the first few chapters of the Bible, let alone the rest recorded, without seeing God is revealing He is a God who actively and consistently punishes sin. God would not be perfect if He were not just, so how is it God could let sinners off the hook for the sins that we have committed?

Hebrews 9 says,

²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

The blood of bulls and goats in the Old Testament could never permanently remove sins from us. God had a better plan than all of those sacrifices pointed toward. Everyone knew those sacrifices were not sufficient because they had to be repeated day-after-day-after-day. There was not one sacrifice for all time until God sent His Son Jesus into this world. It was on the cross Jesus fully satisfied the demands of God's justice and God's demands for righteousness.

³ New International Version (NIV)

Jesus took our penalty upon Himself so He was treated by God as though He committed our sins. That is unfathomable to me. It is not possible to grasp the staggering dimensions of God's grace and of God's wisdom which were on display, on that day, when Jesus died upon the cross, but we can be thankful and we can be joyful. Though we cannot grasp it, we can be thankful and we can rejoice in it, for as a result of that sacrifice we can be brought into God's family, be adopted by Him, and enjoy the riches of His grace.

Please note God's forgiveness is not merely a syrupy expression of His emotion toward us, but is an expression of His holiness, a holy love. John Walvoord writes, "**Forgiveness** on the part of God always has a judicial basis, not an emotional basis, and represents an attitude of God based upon the satisfaction of His righteousness in (Christ)." This is important because we often think of God's forgiveness only emotionally. Its foundation is judicial and it represents an attitude of God based upon the satisfaction of His righteousness in Christ. God's forgiveness is not cheap to God.

The second truth about God's forgiveness is it covers every sin and all sin. You might circle the word "all" in Verse 2. No person can sin so deeply as to sin past the measure of God's grace and past the measure of His mercy. David himself, the author of this psalm, committed adultery and he committed murder, yet God's forgiveness was available for him. This does not minimize the gravity of sin or the consequence of sin. David suffered deeply for his sins, even though he was forgiven by God for them. This does magnify the amazing grace of God. All sin is infinitely abhorrent to God because it is done against God's person, and yet every sin is able to be forgiven by God as a result of the immense and amazing grace which was given to us in Christ.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is in I John 1. I think of it almost every time we take communion, and it says this,

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

I am made clean by the blood of the Lamb. What is our condition after we have been forgiven of our sin? The condition is one of absolute cleanness. The dirt of disobedience is wiped away. Isaiah would say, in Isaiah 1,

¹⁸ "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."

This is all because of the blood of Jesus.

"White as snow, white as snow
Though my sins were as scarlet
Lord I know, Lord I know
That I'm clean and forgiven.

"Through the power of Your blood
Through the wonder of your love
Through faith in You I know that I can be White as snow."⁴

The third truth we learn of this forgiveness is it is permanent. It is not temporary, but it is lasting. Will God ever bring up our sins He has forgiven back to our faces? The answer to that is if we read further in Psalm 103,

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

How far is the east from the west? They are in opposite directions and there is an infinite distance between those two, and it is as though our sins are placed in the west and we are placed in the east, never ever to be brought together again. It is said God casts our sins in the deepest ocean and then posts a "No fishing" sign; they will never be brought back up to our faces.

Once we are forgiven the most Christ-exalting act we can render to God is to enjoy our forgiveness, and we have trouble with that, not because of our humility, but because of our pride. Our pride says, "Do not enjoy the forgiveness

⁴ "White as Snow", Leon Olguin, copyright Maranatha Praise, Inc., 1990

of God until after you have suffered for it and until you have paid some of the price. You cannot pay all of the price because you need Christ for that, but you have to pay some of the price for it. Do not enjoy the infinite forgiveness of God until after you suffer.”

How long does it take for us to suffer for our own sins? We keep bringing them up and we feel bad and we feel guilty and somehow there is this false spiritual sense of rightness about that. God says, “Do not do that. The most Christ-exalting response we can give to the Gospel is to enjoy the forgiveness of God.” When the ugliness of our sins flash in our face and cause us to say, “God, in Christ’s amazing death upon the cross, that was taken care of”, and it should cause us to set our eyes upon Him all the more.

The last truth about forgiveness is God’s forgiveness must be humbly requested in order to be received. God does not forgive all of the iniquity of all the people. He forgives all the sin of those who humbly seek Him and who repent and confess their sin. 1 John 1 contains a great Bible verse,

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The condition for us to benefit from God’s forgiveness is we humble ourselves by repenting of our sin, confessing our need for God, and clinging to Jesus as our Savior.

Remember the Pharisee who went to the temple and prayed, “Lord, I am thankful that I am not like the other sinners here, not like that guy and that tax collector over there. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all my income to the Lord.” That Pharisee, he did not have one sin forgiven. He did not receive the blessing of God and His forgiveness. On the other hand, there was a very wicked sinner who sinned much and often who came to the Temple that day, but he stood far back from the altar because he realized he was not worthy of God. He bowed down upon his face before the Lord that day and he cried out to God as he beat upon his breast and he said, “God, I have nothing in myself to present to you which would gain your favor and your merit. God, be merciful to me a sinner!”⁵ The Holy Spirit had convicted him of his sin and had brought him to the end of himself. That man left the Temple that day completely clean and forgiven.

The second benefit is: God heals us of our diseases. It says in Verse 3,

³ ...who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases...

I believe God is talking about physical healing, however some wrongly teach God promises physical healing to every believer throughout this life. If that were true the saints would never die, but we do die. The promise here is God heals us of our physically diseases completely in the way He chooses. I believe a hint of what is driven at here is found in John 11, where Jesus is talking to Martha about the death of her brother, Lazarus. Martha had already told Jesus, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She is blaming Him for the trial she is in, having lost her brother, and we read,

²⁵ Jesus said to her, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;*
²⁶ *and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*⁶

There is a perspective about life God has and God tells us disease will never destroy us. We will never die, not in the sense our body won’t expire, but we will never die in the sense of being separated from God’s goodness, separated from God’s joy, and separated from life itself. Disease does not kill or destroy the believer. Disease will eventually separate our souls from our bodies for a short time, and even this will be remedied when Jesus returns and we receive our new bodies, bodies made from this one but which are fashioned for eternity and fashioned for Heaven. Here is the truth: our last breath on earth is our first breath in Heaven. There is no intermediate space of time. One ends and immediately another begins and the person, whose physical body dies, does not experience death. They feel no destruction or pain from that particular event when that happens.

⁵ Luke 18:9-14

⁶ NIV

Verse 3 does tell us we need to praise God when He heals our bodies in this life, and God often does that. I was talking with a man who has been coming to our church and he told me this story. Not long ago a doctor took him into his office and he showed him a scan which showed he had cancer. The doctor said he immediately needed to be operated upon; within the next two days. The man looked at the doctor and said, “I feel I need to pray about this and seek some other medical counsel.” The doctor replied, “You can do that and that will be fine, but I want to let you know there is a chance, if you wait, the cancer may spread all through your body and there will not be any hope.”

He went to another clinic and they looked at his old chart and said, “Yes, you have cancer, but we will take new tests.” From the new tests, there was no cancer. What do you do with that? David says, “We need to praise God for that, and not just for the serious illness of cancer, leprosy in the case of the ten”, but what about those nights, you who are young parents, and your little one has a fever. Those fevers always come at night, and the fever is 102 or 103, and climbing and you are praying and you are asking, “God, protect my little son, protect my little daughter”, and you are praying all through the night. Morning comes and the fever is broken. What do you do with that? David says, “Let us not forget the benefits. Let us not say, ‘That is great. We are done! Whew!’” No, let us take some time to thank God for His protection over us, whether that protection is to renew our body, as is most often the case, or whether it is to lead us into glory. Let us take time to bless the Lord, that He heals all of our diseases.

The third benefit is: God redeems our life from misery, as we read in Verse 4,

⁴ ...who redeems your life from the pit...

The word “redeem” means “to recover ownership of by paying a specified sum.” God did not merely forgive us our sins at the cross, but He purchased us so that we become His own dear possession.

Redeemed--how I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child, and forever, I am.

I think of my blessed Redeemer, I think of Him all the day long;
I sing, for I cannot be silent; His love is the theme of my song.⁷

The fourth benefit is: God loves us with an unending love, as we read in Verse 4,

⁴who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy...

I love the way David words that, “He crowns” you with steadfast love.” Have you ever seen a prom queen with her crown on? How does that crown make her feel? She is walking straight, tall, happily, and joyfully because the crown makes her feel regal and special and significant. God says, “I have crowned you with love.”

Do you realize every time you walk around in this world you have a big crown on? God has crowned you and His crown says, “I love this person!” David says, “Let us not forget that!”

In the final benefit, God satisfies our life with good, as we read in Verse 5,

⁵ ...who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Our God is the only One who can give us a satisfied life. The pages of the entertainment news are a record of the unfulfilled promises of sin. Sin promises to satisfy men and women with life, and we are often tricked by it; the drinking crowd, the partying crowd, the crowd which is successful in business, the crowd which achieves much acclaim in this world. What ever the temptation and battle, sin always says, “You are going to be satisfied if you chase after me and grab hold of me!”

⁷ “Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It”, Fanny Crosby

In some people it becomes more obvious. If we look at Lindsay Lohan or Paris Hilton, do you think they are satisfied with life? What is missing? They are rich. They have more money than they know what to do with. They are famous. They are accepted. They are able to do whatever they want to do and everyday, when they get up in the morning, they are able to do whatever they want to do. They have the resources. They have the connections, but they are empty, sad, and despairing. Why? It is for the same reason why others are empty, sad, and despairing: they are looking outside of God for satisfied life.

I want to close with two applications. First, make certain you share in these blessings. These blessings are enjoyed only by those who have humbled themselves before the Lord. These blessings are only enjoyed by those who have humbled themselves before the Lord. In Verse 11 we read,

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him...

These blessings are for those who “fear” God. Have you experienced God’s forgiveness? Have you experienced God’s redemption? Has God given you a satisfied life? If not, the only place you will discover God’s blessings is at the foot of the cross and I urge you to race to the foot of the cross and fall before Him. God will be kind to you. God is a God of blessings.

The second application is to believers. Let us preach to our own heart. Let us awaken ourselves to bless the Lord. Let us not be content with lukewarm, respectable Christianity. Let us rouse ourselves out of the muddy bog of spiritual lethargy. God will give us grace to have a whole-hearted faith if we seek Him with all of our heart.