

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

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GOD IN MY LIFE

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(Sunday School Lesson Notes on Psalms 116, 117, 118)

Psalms 113 to 118 are called the Hallel (Praise) Psalms. They were sung in families on the night of the Passover, a memorial feast celebrating Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The first two (113, 114) were sung at the beginning of the feast, and the last four (115, 116, 117, 118) were sung at the close. All were songs of thanksgiving for the mercies of God. It must have been one of these that Christ and His disciples sang at the Last Supper. See Matt. 26:30.

Some think Psalm 116 is the resurrection song of Christ. The prophet thinks of Christ as having passed through the agonies of the cross. His work of atonement is finished, and He is risen from the dead. Sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on High, He proclaims to the world the blessings He received from God during the day of His incarnation, and the glories He has received in the kingdom of His heavenly Father.

Inasmuch as Christ said that all that was written of Him in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms must be fulfilled, we can see how appropriately the words of Psalm 116 apply to Him. Moreover, the words of Ps. 116 are appropriate on the lips of every redeemed soul, for we too have experienced God's mercies and ought to voice our gratitude in song. We have three prominent themes in Ps. 116: Supplication; Redemption; Devotion.

I. SUPPLICATION

"I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications." The Psalmist, speaking for himself and for all the redeemed, says, "I love the Lord because He has heard my prayers." Answered prayer leads to more praying: "I will call upon him as long as I live." The Psalmist was in dire distress: "The sorrows of death compassed me." As hunters surround the stag with dogs and weapons, so the writer is ringed around with trouble and danger. And when he saw no one around to help, he looked up to God and He helped him. And this

was our experience in conversion. When there were no saviours around us, we looked up to Jesus Christ and He saved us. And let every redeemed soul say, "I love the Lord."

II. REDEMPTION

"For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." Salvation is of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed us from death which is the wages of sin; He has dried our tears shed in mourning over sin; and He has kept our feet from falling into false ways of salvation. Ps. 40:1, 2. Also Acts 4:12; Gal. 3:13.

III. DEVOTION

"I will walk before the Lord." This is the psalmist's response to God's deliverance. He says, "Thou hast"; "I will." By a man's walk is understood his way of life. To walk before God is to live as under His all-seeing eye. Some live as only in the sight of men, regarding their judgment and craving their favour. "Thou God seest me" is a better influence than "My neighbour sees me".

There is "walking with God", which means communion, fellowship, and companionship. Enoch walked with God. We also read of "walking after God", which means guidance, direction, and example. "I said in my haste, All men are liars." The psalmist is not saying that no man ever tells the truth, but that no man tells the truth all the time. There is only One of Whom it can be said, that He never told a lie, and this is Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Samuel Horsely: "In an ecstasy of despair, I said, the whole race of man is a delusion." The RSV: "I said in my consternation, Men are all a vain hope." Jonathan Edwards: "The meaning seems to be this — I was greatly afflicted, I was in extreme distress, I was in great astonishment and trembling (as the word rendered "haste" signifies trembling as well as haste Deut. 20:3); and in these circumstances

I did not trust in man; I said, "All men are liars, not fit to be trusted in." It is a way of saying that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour — the only One to be trusted. Acts 4:12. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" This is the question of every saved soul — "How can I ever pay God back for all He has done for me?" The psalmist answers — "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." The way to requite the Lord is to enjoy His salvation and call upon Him for more blessings. There are no material things with which we can requite Him; we can only pay Him back in love and thanksgiving. God needs nothing. He says "If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is mine." Paul stood on Mars' Hill and said "God is not worshipped

with men's hands as though he needed anything."

We are indeed to give to the support of His cause, but this is not to enrich Him; it is to enrich ourselves. Christ: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." God calls for our gifts, not because He is needy, but because we need the blessedness of giving. The liberal soul shall be made fat. Prov. 11:25; Mal. 3:10, 11.

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." What will secret disciples say to this verse? We pay our vows in public; first, by open confession in baptism, and after that by taking part in public worship, by tithes and offerings, and by witnessing to others.

THE SINNER AFTER DEATH

LUKE 16:19-31

INTRODUCTION: One of the best evidences that the Bible is the word of God is that it makes no effort to minister to human pride - it does not suit the taste of fallen man - it does not say what the natural man would like for it to say. But it says what a ruined soul needs to hear.

The Bible reveals divine pity without petting and pampering. It reveals much mercy and grace and love for sinners, but it also warns against abusing these needed and lovely attributes. The grace of God calls for gratitude and consecration on our part. It is not enough to enjoy grace; we must use grace to God's glory and human good. He who loves to hear grace and never uses grace is apt to be graceless. Paul said he was saved by grace and also worked by grace so that he labored more abundantly than others. Grace is not only a comforting truth; it is also an impelling truth. And where there is grace there will be labor as well as rest - labor of love.

The doctrines of the Bible are exemplified in actual examples. Salvation by grace exemplified in the salvation of the dying thief. Doctrine of chastisement finds an example in God's dealing with David. Justification by faith is seen in the case of the publican. The doctrine of eternal punishment finds exemplification in this story of the rich man as he lies hopeless in hell. We also have here the exemplification of the truth that we are our brother's keeper.

In the story before us we hear the groans of a damned soul - the piteous cry of a man who would not learn save in the school of experience. This story opens the door to the lower regions and shows us the frightful condition of one who in this life had no fear of God before his eyes. We see one repenting when it was too late; we hear one crying when there was no hope; we look upon the poverty stricken state of one who in this life fared sumptuously every day. Here is a man denied help from heaven who refused to give help here on earth. Here is a striking example of the modern adage: too little, too late.

Where are the dead? What is the condition of the lost man after death? What are the experiences immediately after the spirit takes its flight? We can't tell by looking at the body. The body may be clothed in a silken shroud, and lie in a metallic casket, and placed in a bronze vault. The body may lie in a veritable flower garden. The body may appear to be peaceful and restful. But where is the real person? The body is only a tent of clay; the spirit that animated it has left it; the soul that moved the hands and feet and eyes is not there. Where is that soul and what are its experiences? This story gives the solemn and true answer. That soul is in torments. As a physical being the man is at rest, but as a moral being the same person is restless in the flame. He is not in hell yet- the place of eternal punishment- the lake of fire is only in a flame.

1. He is in a place of conscious suffering. He is in hades, the unseen realm, where the lost begin their punishment. He is not in hell yet. Hell in proper will be populated when the lost have their bodies raised. Hades and hell might be distinguished by comparing these two places to the penal farm and to the electric chair. The criminal does not get full justice which while working at forced labor; justice is meted out when he is electrocuted. Matt.,10:28, Rev.,20:14.

2. He is in a place of hopeless isolation. Hades is a place of quarantine, an island of despair. The rich man looked up for once and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. He hoped that Lazarus would not return evil for evil. Father Abraham, send Lazarus to help me. Send him here with some water for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham's reply froze him into hopeless despair.

3. Son, remember that you had your good things in the other world. Remember the purple and the fine linen; remember how you fared sumptuously every day. But those days are forever in the past - no more such days as those. The lost have all their good things in the present which is soon in the past. At death everything bad for the saved is in the past.

4. And besides, there is a fixed chasm between the place you are and the place where we are. And there is no bridge over this chasm. There is no passing from one place to the other. Here is a refutation of purgatory, according to which a man suffering in purgatory may get release. Here is refutation of the doctrine of the second chance. At the resurrection hades will be emptied into the lake of fire.

WHAT WAS THE SIN OF THIS RICH MAN?

Somebody says there was no charge against him. Why was he in torment? Because he was rich? No, for many rich men are saved. What was the charge? Drunkenness? No. Adultry? No. Murder? No.

1. He had broken both precepts of the law of God. He had not loved his neighbor as himself and he had not loved God as he ought. John says there is no

use talking about loving God whom we have not seen if we do not love our brother whom we have seen. This man had done nothing when he had opportunity to do much.

2. He was an unbeliever. He had not believed Moses and the prophets, for had he believed them he would have believed Christ, for they spoke of him.

3. He had not repented. He does not like the place where sin had brought him, but he still likes the sin that brought him there. He was sorry he was in the flame, but he shows no sorrow for having ignored Lazarus who suffered at his gate. He manifests no broken heart over sin; he only wishes to escape punishment.

4. He suggests that something else be used for the salvation of sinners. He argues that if a preacher goes to his brothers from the graveyard they will repent. But Abraham says they have Moses and the prophets - they have the Bible - if they will not believe it they would not be convinced if someone should rise from the dead and preach to them.

The gospel is the only means of salvation and faith is the only way. The gospel is the good news of what Christ did at Calvary and in the resurrection. Faith is depending upon that for salvation.

C. D. COLE

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE

Happiness,
Love,
Contentment,
Peace of Mind —

Those things cannot be bought with money . . . They are free for the asking . . . Christ offers them all to you.