

When We Walk with the Lord

Psalm 128

Pastor/Elder Cliff Peppers, GCBC, Date, 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

Turn with me in your Bibles – once again – to the Psalms. JP just led us in the reading of **Psalm 127** – and our text this morning will be the very next Psalm - **Psalm 128**. These two psalms are so similar in form and message that scholars believe they may have originally been **one Psalm**, which would also make the author of this psalm – *King Solomon*.

**These psalms speak to everyday life –
at HOME – at WORK and in the COMMUNITY.**

Psalm 127 – reminds us that – for our **homes and families are to be STRONG** – not we – **BUT THE LORD** - must be the “**BUILDER OF THE HOUSE**” - **OR OUR LABOR IS IN VAIN.**

Psalm 128 – builds on that. If our **homes and families are to - RECEIVE GOD’S ENDLESS BLESSINGS** – we must live – every day - in **LOVE - HONOR AND OBEDIENCE TO HIM.**

**Taken together – these two psalms picture the Christian family – lived with
CHRIST AT AS ITS FOCUS – WITH CHRIST AT ITS CENTER.**

With that – **Psalm 128** divides itself into **three sections**:

- **Those Who Are Blessed – vv.1-4**
- **Blessings for Future Generations – v.5-6**
- **Blessings for the Nation – v.6**

READ WITH ME NOW PSALM 128 – THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD. [Psalm of Ascent – sung by caravans of people – 3 feast days – Jesus as a boy w/ fam ...Jesus with His Apostles.]

PRAYER

II. GOD’S BLESSINGS

a. *Blessing*

It goes without saying that we all want to ***be happy*** – we all want to ***be blessed***.

The Greek philosopher *Aristotle* spoke of the prevailing world view of his day – when he wrote - “***Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.***”

The drive to be happy is an obsession in our day as well. Commercial advertising encourages us to **buy more – have more – get more – and experience more.** We have **happy hour - happy meals – and happy places.** Everyone knows that – before COVID ANYWAY - Disneyland is the **“Happiest Place on Earth.”** **That poses a bit of a dilemma for us doesn't it – since – the “Happiest Place on Earth” - is closed.**

The perennial question before mankind through all generations has been and continues to be:

- **WHAT is it that makes one happy?**
- **HOW does someone become happy?**

An article in *Psychology Today* titled – “**The Secrets of Happiness,**” acknowledges that you can't really **buy** happiness – because, it says, happiness comes **from within.** **FAIR ENOUGH.** The author writes – **notice the focus - “...it's...true that WE have the power to affect OUR own destinies, for WE are the creators as well as the creatures of our social worlds. WE may be the products of our past, but WE are also the architects of our future.”**

And if you're not happy – if you're not satisfied with who you are or what you're doing with your life – the author suggests that – **“a potent strategy is to get up and start doing that very thing [that you want to be]. Don't worry that you don't feel like it. Fake it. Pretend self-esteem. Feign optimism. Simulate outgoingness.”**
[FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE"]

In June of 2010 *Career Press* published a book titled - **Happiness Genes: Unlock the Positive Potential Hidden in Your DNA.** The introduction reads in part - **“The new science of epi-genetics reveals there are reserves of natural happiness within your DNA that can be controlled by YOU...It shows how you are biologically wired for natural happiness.”** [POP. 329M+ = 78M+ ON THE VARIOUS CLASSIFICATIONS OF PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS]

But - here is the simplest way to experience happiness. A commentary – some years ago - in the NY Times reported that - **Danish people** – have for years been surveyed and found to be the **“Happiest People in the World.”**
Their secret to happiness? – “LOWER EXPECTATIONS.”

Listen to this - “Danes have low expectations and so year after year they are pleasantly surprised to find out that not everything is rotten in the state of Denmark... So, in other words, Danish people harbor low expectations about everything, including their own happiness.”

Article after article – theory after theory – tries to answer the worlds quest to find contentment and - true happiness – **with the predictable result.**

Psalm 128 stands as the antithesis of the world's many schemes to manufacture true happiness – pointing us – to ***the one and only path to blessing and happiness.***

And – it certainly is not found in ***any commodity*** – in ***any self-help program*** – ***nor genetic predisposition.*** Although these may bring a morsel of temporary happiness – ultimately - like the house built without the Lord – so called ***“happiness”*** found outside of Christ - is ***“vanity”*** – it is ***a vapor – here today and gone tomorrow – easily replaced and easily forgotten.***

Solomon – the wisest – richest - and most powerful man of his time said it well in **Ecc. 1:14** – ***“I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.”***

So where do believers in Jesus Christ fit into this? Is it wrong for us to desire contentment and happiness? Not at all - so long as we pursue ***happiness and blessing*** from its ***true source*** – which is not in the world – but in the ***limitless blessings that God promises*** - through a ***committed life – lived in relationship with the Jesus Christ.***

“Blessing” from God is a major theme throughout Scripture and it is the focus of the psalmist's message in **Psalm 128**. The word ***“bless”*** and its derivatives are found ***516 times in both the Old and New Testaments.***

And here – in just ***six short verses*** – Solomon uses two ***different Hebrew words*** – that speak to God's blessing of His people. The two words are similar but relate to different ways in which the Lord blesses the faithful.

The first Hebrew word – in **vv. 1,2** is ***ashar*** (pro. 'aw-share) – which means ***“happy”*** or ***“blessed.”*** It's used 27 times in the *Book of Psalms* alone. ***It describes the good that comes when people do what pleases the Lord.***

- ***Psa. 2:12*** – ***Blessed are those who take refuge in Him.***
- ***Psa. 32:1*** – ***Blessed are those who are forgiven.***
- ***Psa. 40:5*** – ***Blessed are those who trust Him.***

The second word that the psalmist uses for ***“blessed”*** is ***“barak”*** – used for ***HOW the Lord blesses His people.*** ***“Barak”*** is used in the familiar ***blessing*** of **Numbers 6** – ***“²⁴ The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”***

God's blessings come to us in many ways.

- Some are **SPIRITUAL BLESINGS** – beginning with salvation.

Ephesians 1:3-6 – *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”*

- Some blessings come in the form of **MATERIAL BLESSINGS** - **Philippians 4:19** – *“And my God will supply [WHAT?] - every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*
- And - some are **IN THE HERE AND NOW** – such as the *blessing of work, home, and family* - which is the focus of both **Psalms 127/128**.
- **SOME ARE FUTURE** – in this world – through *future generations* - as well as our *ultimate – eternal inheritance in Christ*.

God blesses His people in ways the world does not and cannot understand. *Pastor Steve Lawson* calls it the blessing that is a *“positive inner attitude of the heart.”* Synonyms for God’s *“blessing”* include *“fulfillment”* – *“satisfaction”* – and *“peace.”*

It is the **BLESSING OF RESTFUL SLEEP** that God grants to those who trust Him fully for all things mentioned in **Psalm 127:2**.

It is the **BLESSING OF CONTENTMENT** that moved Paul to say in **Philippians 4**:
“I have learned in whatever situation I am - to be content... I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

It is the **BLESSING OF INNER JOY AND ASSURANCE** that Jesus spoke of in the Beatitudes in **Matthew 5**: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit – Blessed are those who mourn – Blessed are the meek – those who hunger and thirst for righteousness – the merciful – the pure in heart – the peacemakers – even those persecuted for righteousness sake and those who are reviled - persecuted and scorned for the sake of Jesus Christ. WHY? – “For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

This is what *separates true blessings from the Lord* from the *counterfeit blessings of the world*. Blessings that are - *NOT dependent on wealth – NOT dependent on health – not position or status – not luck – nor the circumstances of life*.

In fact – these are God’s blessings that *transcend* even the most difficult times of trouble and affliction – as they are - *“Preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”*

This is blessing – *emanating from the heart of a gracious and loving Lord* who - *“From His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.”* (**John 1:16**).

In **Psalm 127** – Solomon exhorted us to rely solely on the *sufficiency of the Lord* for all things and how the Lord blesses those who do.

The Psalmist in **Psalm 128** builds on that to answer the questions – **WHO ARE THE BLESSED; AND HOW CAN THEY OBTAIN GOD’S BLESSINGS?**

b. Fear of the Lord

V.1 gives us the answer to both questions – **“Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, [AND] who walks in His ways!”**

This psalm – like all the others - is written from a **Jewish cultural perspective**. Therefore, it is written from the perspective of the husband and father. However, the very first stanza makes it clear that - **“Blessed is EVERYONE...”** - man or woman – young or old - Jew or Gentile – every man - woman and child – receives God’s blessing – when they - **“fear the Lord”** and **“walk in His ways.”**

We speak often – of the **indicatives** and **imperatives** in Scripture.

The **indicatives** are those things that **God has done**. The **imperatives** are those things that **believers are commanded to do** – for which we receive God’s blessing.

James 1:22-25 calls on us to – **“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only...”** And that **“the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets - but a doer who acts --- he will be blessed in his doing.”**

In **Matthew 7:24-27** – Jesus commends those who both **hear His words and does them** – **as being wise**. And those who **hear and ignore His words** as **being fooling** and **bound for destruction**.

This is the same message here in **Psalm 128**. Although God blesses the work that He ultimately accomplishes – still - we have **responsibilities before the Lord** - that we must fulfill if we are to receive His blessing.

James Montgomery Boice explains it this way - **“In **Psalm 127** the psalmist wanted to show that all blessings are attributable to God alone. Unless God is working in us and with us, every human endeavor is in vain. In **Psalm 128** the poet reminds us that there are nevertheless several important responsibilities that rest on the person who would partake of God’s blessings. In short he must fear God and obey him.”**

It sounds rather odd to think that - **to be blessed** – **we must fear**. The context here – of course – does not mean that we should be frightened of God – **although there are those who should**.

God is a God of righteousness and justice and **Exodus 34:6-7** tells us that – although He is “**A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger...forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin - [He] will by no means clear the guilty.**”

Hebrews 10:26-31 – speaking of unrepentant sinners says - “**For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment... It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**”

But that is not the “**fear**” spoken of here. The Hebrew word we translate as “**fear**” also means “**TO STAND IN AWE.**”

Hebrews 12:28-29 tells us – “**Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.**”

Proverbs 9:10 tells us that – “**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. And the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.**”

So – how do we obtain - “knowledge of the Holy One?” One of the blessings we have already received is that - God has chosen to reveal Himself to us through His Holy Word - without which we would have no idea that there even is a God.

ONE OF THE WAYS GOD REVEALS HIMSELF IS THROUGH HIS ATTRIBUTES – THAT IS – HIS CHARACTERISTICS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND HIM AND WHO HE IS.

When we **understand them PROPERLY** – we cannot help but bow before the Lord in **reverence and awe** – we can’t help but **fear Him**. The Bible tells us that God is – above all – **HOLY**. When we talk about you and I being holy – we mean that we have been set apart **BY** God – **FOR** God. But when the Bible speaks of GOD being holy – it means that **He is over and above ALL things.**

THERE IS NOTHING AND NO-ONE THAT COMPARES TO HIM.

It also speaks to the **ABSOLUTE PURITY** of His being. There is nothing **more beautiful** – and **pure in essence** than the One True God. Twice in Scripture – in **Isaiah 6** and again in **Revelation 4** - we get glimpses into the throne room of God and with it – His **HOLINESS**. In the **Isaiah 6** – Isaiah describes for us – what he witnessed. – “**I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. ² Above Him stood the seraphim... ³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of Him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.**”

Faced with the **HOLINESS** and **PURITY** of God - Isaiah was immediately *overwhelmed* by his sin - he cried out – ***“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”***

The Bible describes God as – not just **HOLY** – but - **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**. When a word is repeated in Scripture – it is for emphasis. When repeated **three times** – it becomes a **superlative** – describing the **highest of the high** – the **holiest of the holy**. It speaks of God’s **transcendence** over all things – His **self-existence** – His **dependence on no one** beyond Himself.

Psalm 113:4-6 says - ***“The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens! ⁵ Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?”***

God is **SOVEREIGN**, He is **OMNIPOTENT AND OMNIPRESENT**. He **KNOWS ALL** – is **ETERNAL – UNCHANGEABLE – UNMOVABLE**.

He is - in Himself - **RIGHTEOUS AND JUST**. He is **MERCIFUL – GRACIOUS** and **COMPASSIONATE --- HE IS LOVE**.

When we **understand and meditate** on just who our God is – **like Isaiah** – we will be compelled to hold Him in **reverence and awe** – that naturally leads to **praise and worship** – **WE CAN DO NOTHING LESS**. Isaiah and the Apostle John in **Revelation 4** – were granted the unbelievable privilege - that you and I will have until we are called home - **TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE GOD’S MAJESTY**.

And yet – we experience His power and might – everyday of our lives. Just look around and marvel at what He has done.

Romans 1:20 reminds us that – ***“His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.”***

James 1:17 tells us that - ***He is the giver of all good and perfect gifts.***

He is the giver and sustainer of all life. **Just into the eyes of your children and grandchildren – AND STAND IN AWE OF HIM**. And we will - hold Him in **reverence and awe** in remembering how - this **HOLY GOD** who **TRANSCENDS** all creation – **CONDESCENDED** to come to earth as a lowly baby – born to die an agonizing death on the cross for sinful and undeserving men and women – like you and me - paying the death penalty that we deserved - so that one day – live forever - in the very presence of God.

To “**fear God**” – to hold Him in *reverence and awe* - is an *act of the heart*. The natural and proper response - then - is to desire and strive to - “*walk in His ways.*”

a. Walk in His Ways

So, what does it mean to “walk in His ways?”

The book of Psalms answers that question in the very first verse of the book.

Psalm 1:1 says - “*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law, he meditates day and night.*”

Simply stated - to “*walk*” speaks of *how we live our lives*. For the believer in Jesus Christ – it is our walk with the Lord that *sets us apart* from the rest of the world. It is a life lived in the *light of the Gospel* and not the *darkness of the world*.

Spurgeon said - “*It is useless to talk of fearing the Lord if we act like those who do not care if there is a God.*”

Another commentator said it this way – “*Fearing God*” *is not a bumper sticker slogan but requires godly action to be genuine.*” The life of the believer is one that **CHARACTERIZES AND EMULATES THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

So, to walk in HIS ways - we *align ourselves* – not with the world – but with Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:2 commands us [*imperative!*] – “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*”

And to walk in His ways means that we are *faithful to Jesus Christ and His word* – and *obedient to Him in all things*. Jesus said in **John 14:15** – “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*”

Colossians 2:6-7 sums up well what it means to “*fear God and walk in His ways*” – “*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*”

b. Result of God’s Blessings

i. Labor

Well – that takes us through v.1! We have spent some time in this first verse because – this psalm – **IS NOT ABOUT US – IT IS ABOUT GOD.**

Without His **grace and mercy** – **we would be lost** – **we would have nothing** – **we certainly would not receive His blessings**. The rest of the psalm describes ways in which God blesses us when we are faithful. These are **not the only** way He blesses us – but in context - these are the areas that were **dearest to the Israelites** - and **to us** – I’m sure.

V.2 speaks to the **BLESSING OF WORK** – **“You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands: you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.”**

Although it doesn’t always feel like it – **work is a blessing from God**. It is also **an expectation for those who are able**.

When God calls His servants – He gives them **spiritual gifts** – **talents** – **abilities** and **knowledge** – all with the responsibility – to use them to **serve God** – **the church** and **others**.

- **Abraham** was called away to a foreign land - to be the **father of many nations**.
- **Moses** was called away from the sheep - to **lead Israel out of bondage**.
- **Jeremiah** was called to be a prophet - **to call Israel to repentance**.
- **Peter** was a fisherman – to be a **fisher of men**.
- **Paul** was a tent maker - **turned missionary**.
- He does the same with all of us.

Work can become a **drudgery** and **unfulfilling** when we don’t accept it for the **blessing and responsibility** that it is - or when we **don’t work with the right motive**.

Colossians 3 tells us – **“²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men... You are serving the Lord Christ.”**

And our work will be **unfruitful** when we are **self-reliant** - as opposed to relying on the Lord. As we read in **Psalm 127:1** – **“Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.”**

BUT when **we fear God and walk in His ways** – **He blesses our work**. And, when He blesses our work we will **“eat the fruit of the labor of [our] hands.”** To **“eat the fruit of our labor”** means that **our work will be plentiful** – and will **provide for the daily needs of the family**.

Philippians 4:19 promises that – **“God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” THIS IS GOD’S BLESSING OF PROVISION.** And when God blesses our labor – He brings peace and stability to our homes. **THIS IS GOD’S BLESSING OF CONTENTMENT AND SATISFACTION.**

Look again at the end of **v.2** – **“and it shall be well with you.”** That is a far cry from **“eating the bread of anxious toil”** from **Psalm 127:2**.

As a result of original sin - God cursed the ground that man works. God told Adam - **“By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...”** However, when we fear the Lord and walk in His ways – hard work is still necessary – but **God honors the faithful worker** - and the **CURSE IS TURNED TO BLESSING.**

ii. Wife

V.3 speaks of the **BLESSINGS OF FAMILY** – husbands, wives, and children. **“Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.”**

Men – I doubt that any of you have ever looked lovingly into your wife’s eyes and romantically called her your “FRUITFUL VINE” – but maybe we should - since - the symbol of the **“vine”** is representative of **“all good things.”** For Israel - the reference to the **vine** conjured up the **glory days of King Solomon.** Along with the **the fig tree – the vine** symbolized **contentment – fulfillment – and peace.**

1 Kings 4:25 – written during a period of peace and prosperity in Israel says – **“And Judah and Israel lived in safety...every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon.”** The **“vine” and the grapes and wine it produces** - were also a symbol of **refreshment and enjoyment** – and even **physical intimacy** as we find in the **Song of Solomon 7:8-9.** **[you’ll have to read that for yourselves!]**

The **“vine”** is also represents the **harvest and fruitfulness.** This isn’t necessarily related to the bearing of children but that is certainly in view in this Psalm.

The phrase – **“within your house”** refers to the **woman’s apartment** – which – in the Jewish home was located at the back of the house. This is not to say that she is locked away in the home - nor does necessarily relate to housework.

To be **“within your house”** symbolizes the fact that **her heart is in her home – with her husband and with her children.** She is **content** with her God given role as woman – wife and mother **[if God has granted her children.] [today – economic necessity sometimes requires wives to work outside the home – but still her heart is first - with her home and family].**

If we were going to describe that wife from Scripture – it would be the **Proverbs 31 Woman** – especially **vv. 28-29** – **“Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.”**

In view here is MARRIAGE - as God intended it to be.

Where **BOTH husband and wife “fear the Lord and walk in His ways”** – the marriage is **loving and peaceful.**

THE HUSBAND - *loves His wife as Christ loves the church* – and gives *Himself up for her* **WITHOUT HESITATION**. He *respects her* and strives to live with her in an *understanding way* – as God created him to do.

THE WIFE – willingly and gladly *submits to* and *honors* her husband because in doing so – *she is submitting to and honoring Christ*.

LIVING - *not as two separate people* - but as **ONE FLESH – CENTERED ON CHRIST**.

iii. Children

And if God so blesses them – they will **BEAR CHILDREN**. In **Psalm 127** – the bearing of children is likened to *“arrows in the hand of a warrior. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them.”* Here - the psalmist says - *“Your children will be like olive shoots around your table.”*

The **olive tree** was a symbol of *productivity* and *longevity*. The picture here is the blessing of having children *joyfully gathered around the table - harmony and love*. **Olive trees** require nurturing and take many years to mature. But when they do – *they are strong* – they *produce good fruit* – increasing the productivity of the orchard where they grow.

Olive trees can live between 500-900 years and some that have lived as long as 2000 years. Solomon is saying here that – for the godly husband and wife - the blessing of children will be a reality today – as they grow --- with the *promise of future generations*. Then – to *emphasize the point* - the psalmist declares once more in **v.4** - *“Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.”*

III. BLESSINGS FOR THE GENERATIONS

The last two verses of **Psalm 128** form a benediction – a prayer – for God’s continued blessing for future generations to come.

V.5-6 – *“The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life! ⁶ May you see your children’s children! Peace be upon Israel!” For Israel – all blessings came from Zion – the dwelling place of God.*

This is a prayer for longevity of life for godly men and women which *reminds us that we do not live only for today*. It is an appeal that - with the blessing of long life – may come the *blessing of godly grandchildren*. I admit my bias – but I can think of few things more joyful than having – loving – and yes – spoiling - my grandchildren.

AND ALL GOD’S GRANDPARENTS SAID – AMEN!

Just last week – the Lord blessed the Hendricks and Peppers’ families with our little Ruby. As I cradled her in my arms this last week – I couldn’t help but be in ***awe of God*** – who chose Ruby for Jared and Lisa – by moving Jared and Lisa to choose Ruby. ***THAT IS GOD’S BLESSING.***

And – Sue and I are counting the days until April when we will travel to see Tevis, Juniper and Asher in Hawaii. Oh yes – Aaron and Kerstin too – of course. My grandchildren are such a great blessing. And it is – indeed my prayer – that the Lord gives me the years to watch them live and grow into adulthood.

But as a Christian man I understand what the psalmist is saying here. As much as I love my grandchildren – I am reminded that – ***BEFORE THAT*** - the Lord ***blessed Sue and me*** with godly sons and godly daughters-in-law – who fear the Lord – who God has now ***blessed with children of their own.***

And I pray – ***which is the greatest responsibility we have as grandparents*** – that one day - the Lord will call our grandchildren and bless them – that - they too - will one day will walk in the ***“ways of the Lord”*** and be ***blessed with their own godly children.*** [Mom – 8 great grandchildren]

My desire is not just carrying on the Peppers family line. That - in the span of eternity ***is of little value.*** But rather – to – by ***God’s grace and blessing*** - produce a line of godly men and women into future generations – ***THAT*** - is the ***TRUE LEGACY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY.***

This prayer also speaks to the fact that the family does not live in a vacuum – that we are part of a community. In the context of the Psalm – the ***greater community is the city of Jerusalem.*** The application for our day – ***is the church.*** 1 Timothy 3:15 tells us that ***“the household of God, ...is the church of the living God.”*** The blessings God bestows on ***godly families - blesses and strengthens the local church body.***

And – in turn – the ***fellowship of the body – blesses and strengthens the family.*** Together they grow the family of God – ***BRINGING HONOR AND GLORY TO HIM.***

IV. BLESSINGS UPON THE NATION

Finally, there is even a greater body that the psalmist prays for – ***the nation of Israel.***

For us – this pertains to the ***UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST*** - made up other local bodies of believers ***throughout the world – who share in the fellowship of Jesus Christ*** – and ***co-labor with us for the Gospel.***

[Arrest of Jim Coates - husband - father and pastor of a church in Canada.]

These last verses ***exhort us to pray*** – to ***pray for the families*** – to pray for ***local churches*** – and to ***pray for ALL God’s people everywhere – now and for all generations to come.***

V. CONCLUSION

We need to close – but I would leave you with this:

These two psalms we have looked at this morning - have spoken to us about ***God’s desire and willingness to bless His people – to bless – You and your family.*** And they do so in a very personal way. There is nothing ***[or should be nothing]*** more personal than our spouses - our children – our labor – and our church.

More specifically they ***speak to our hearts*** and about ***what our hearts desire most*** and what steps we will take to fulfill those desires. If our hearts desire is to have what the world has to offer – we will reap what we sew – ***blessings that are temporary at best – destruction at their worst*** - and – either way - ***have no lasting – eternal value.***

But when ***our hearts desire*** is aligned with ***God’s desire*** for our hearts – our minds will be transformed and – in turn – will transform our lives into the image of Christ. And - we will be blessed – along with our spouses – our children and our children’s children for generations to come.

If we are to take these Psalms seriously – which we must – we must be introspective of how we are living out our lives – today.

Psalm 127 calls on us to trust – not in ourselves – but in the - all sufficiency of Chris – to build the house of our lives. And – when we do – our house stands fast - God blesses us.

Psalm 128 begs the question – ***how and where are you looking for happiness – contentment and peace?***

Is it in the world? Is it in yourself? Or is it through the blessing of salvation in Jesus Christ and all the added blessings He bestows on you when you walk worthy of your calling?

It is the difference between – ***“striving after the wind” and fulfillment – between discouragement and contentment – between adversity and blessing – between temporal and eternal – ultimately between man’s ways and God’s ways.***

Friend – are you living your life – as the world lives theirs – ***searching for they cannot find? – striving for what they cannot achieve – living for today only to die tomorrow with no hope?***

Or – are you living your life - in the proper ***fear and reverence for God*** who is **HOLY - HOLY HOLY?**

Who – through – ***“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness”*** and who has ***“blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.”***

It hardly seems that that should even be a question – does it?

As we close – let’s listen to the familiar benediction from **Ephesians 3:20**:

***“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,²¹ to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.
[AND ALL GOD’S PEOPLE SAID] -Amen.”***