

Psalm 112:1-10 Wise Generosity Falls Ch. AM 6/11/2023

The Psalm is a poem of ABC's. Since our alphabet has 26 letters, an English author might write a poem with 26 lines, and each line begins with the next letter of the alphabet. It was Hebrew, so each of 22 lines begins with the next Hebrew letter. This method seems unsophisticated to us, and nearly childish, and yet that is our modern and English perspective. From the perspective of the ancient Psalm writer, to create such a poem would be an incredible accomplishment. It shows the importance of the topic, that the writer would give attention to it in this way.

Another reminder is that Psalm 112 is in the middle of a group of 3 Psalms, that each begin with the Hebrew word Hallelujah, which is found in verse 1 as "Praise the LORD!" Psalm 111 was about God and God's ways. Here Psalm 112 is about the people of God and the ways that we in our character are becoming more and more like God. That brings us to our sermon main point, which is: **In Christ, we keep receiving God's wise generosity, and we become wisely generous like God is!**

People accuse pastors of preaching on money too often. I ask you to realize how much God wants us to think about money. The Bible has more than 2,000 verses about money. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke 1 out of every 6 verses deals with money. Of the 29 parables Christ told, 16 deal with a person and his money. I am not concerned about persons out there accusing pastors. I am only concerned for you the listener to this sermon. Let me say something to you. If sermons on money irritate you, may I suggest that this afternoon you sit down quietly and talk with God about your relationship to money? Now let's dig in to Psalm 112.

**1. Like the moon is to the sun, so the Christian reflects God's character. (v.1)**

A study of Psalm 112 reveals that it is a further development of the last verse of Psalm 111. Let me read Psalm 111:10, "*The fear of The LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!*"

The blessings of fearing the LORD are many. The first gain or benefit mentioned is that fearing the LORD opens up access to wisdom. Without the fear of God, we have not even begun on the road of wisdom. But when we have the fear of The LORD, we have begun on the road of wisdom. Then, what is stated is that wisdom is more than just knowing God and fearing God in our hearts and minds. It necessarily follows that we will practice that wisdom in the ways that we actually speak and act. Only when we live it out do we show that we have gained a good understanding.

That is a problem for us. God tells us that none of us are like this. Romans 1:18, the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness of men. Romans 3:10, "*No one is righteous, no not one. No one understands; no one seeks for God.*" Then we read in Romans 3:23, "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory*

of God.” But the good news is in the previous verse, Romans 3:22, God revealed “*the righteousness of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*” Romans 3:24, we are “*...justified by [God’s] grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...*” Romans 3:25, “*...this was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins.*” And in Romans 5:10, “*while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son...*” Romans 5:21, grace reigns “*...through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” We live in a realm of grace. Grace reigns. God has been so generous to us through the redemption of Christ, and the gift of His character, His righteousness to become ours by faith!

Psalm 112 picks up on that redemption truth here in verse 1, “*Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments.*” An believing person leads an obedient life, and so yours and mine are the lives that show the fear of God. Delighting in right living is itself a reward. It is a blessing to live in a godly way.

This reminds us of the beginning of the book of Job, a book about wisdom. Job was a man of both godliness and wealth. Not just wealth. Not just godliness. Both godliness and wealth. Job was enthusiastic about his proper way of living in godly fear. It was not a burden to Job.

That is what we see here in verse 1, listen again, because here we are told that a godly person “*...greatly delights in [God’s] commandments.*” This concept was repeated by God through the apostle John in 1 John 5:3, “*[God’s] commandments are not burdensome.*” If we truly love Christ and delight in Christ, that will be seen in our obedient lives.

We saw this in Psalm 111:2, “*Great are the works of The LORD, studied by all who delight in them.*” Just as Christians delight in the works of God in creation, so also Christians delight in the words of God in His commandments. The sunset is beautiful to us, and so are the instructions of God for us. God’s will and God’s call to us for what to say and not to say, what to believe and not to believe, what to hope in and what to not hope in, what to do with our bodies and with our money, we are constantly delighted to hear from God on all of these topics.

Let me read Romans 12:1-2, but I’ll read the verses in backwards order. Start with verse 2, then go back to verse 1. Listen to Romans 12:2, “*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.*”

But that mind-renewal is not simply a brainteaser, a thought exercise, or something we sing and recite on Sundays. This mind-renewal is something that governs and propels us for what to do with our bodies and what not to do with our bodies. What we look at, and what we must not look at. What we desire and what

we must not desire. What we touch and enjoy, and what we must not touch and enjoy.

Consider the previous verse, Romans 12:1, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your BODIES as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”*

What is fundamental to understand about wisdom and about our walk with God, is that God is intensely interested in the practical details of our lives.

Again, Psalm 111:10, *“all those who practice it have good understanding.”*

Again, Psalm 112:1, *“greatly delight in God’s commandments.”*

The goal is for us to reflect God’s will in our day to day living.

The moon reflects the light of the sun.

We cannot live holy lives ourselves. If we could, we should get the glory.

God alone has holiness. He alone gets the glory.

Like Father, like son. We need to be like God our Father.

## **2. The character of the Christian is more and more like God’s. (v.2-9)**

This section begins with a consideration of what would happen if the most wealthy and influential people in the land were Christians.

What if the ones who fear The LORD were both wealthy and righteous?

What would his children be like?

They would be like God, who is both wealthy and righteous!

Listen to verses 2-3, referring to the man who fears the LORD, *“His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.”*

God is showing that He works through families. The parents pass on family godliness to the children, in addition to family wealth.

Now we need to be careful against pride and complacency. Remember the words of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:9, *“...do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.”*

But there is a healthy form of God working through families. Genesis 18:19, where the LORD said, *“...I have chosen [Abraham], that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what God has promised him.”*

Abraham was both wealthy and righteous. He was supposed to pass both along to his children, so that they could bless others.

Consider a New Testament example in 2 Timothy 1:5, where Paul said to Timothy that Timothy had received spiritual riches from God through his family, *“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”*

Back to our Psalm, the wealth may be described as the wealth of gold, but when we study it closely, we see that the true wealth is the training in righteous and godly living. The land needs men who are mighty in riches, and godly enough to share it with others. Even more important, the land needs men who are mighty in spiritual riches, and godly enough to share it with others.

I want you to see verse 3b. *“his righteousness endures forever.”*

Now look at Psalm 111:3b, *“His righteousness endures forever.”*

The phrase refers to God in Psalm 111:3b.

The phrase refers to us in Psalm 112:3b.

God does right things, and they cannot be undone.

Christians do right things, and they cannot be undone.

Moving on to verse 4, we see it is made more clear that the godly person’s godliness overflows to other people. People who seemed to be in darkness, have light dawning upon them. How? Because a Christian is relating to them out of his lovely character. What is his character? Verse 4 tells us that he or she is gracious, merciful, and righteous in character. The sunshine reflects off the moon, and gives light to those who are in the darkness! The people living in a dark and discouraging generation have the light of a believer who is gracious, merciful and righteous, and that person gets that character and strength from the only source – God Himself. This is shown by comparing Ps. 111:4b with Psalm 112:4b.

Verse 5 shows in what form their godliness is a blessing to others. Verse 5 goes on to say that the believing man or woman, *“deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs (dealings) with justice.”* Here is our theme of generosity. Generous with dollars, and also generous with spiritual resources of grace, mercy, kindness, and teaching of the truth in a gentle way.

Verse 6, the steadiness of the believer is gained from the steadfastness of God.

Verse 7, possessing wealth brings issues, such as the tasks of stewardship, the risk of theft, rivalry, and malice, and the temptation to trust in money. Those who are rich could be distracted by their wealth. But not the godly person. The Christian does not fall into fear, worry, or anxiety about his or her wealth, and he or she has the same attitude about the spiritual resources that God has given. Verse 7 is a beautiful and bold truth, well stated, *“He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in The LORD.”*

Verse 8, knowing that the Christian is often times faced with opposition, and is perpetually in a battle with the enemies of God, He is not shaken. Please notice that the promise of God in verse 8 is not better news to replace the bad news. Rather, the promise of God in verse 8 is a steady heart for people who fear God. Verse 8 describes the character of the Christian, *“His heart is steady; he will not be*

*afraid, until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.”* Those who are jealous or contend, do not capture the heart of God’s children.

Perhaps the biggest temptation with wealth is to become a miser, to keep it all, to hoard it. To store it up for ourselves.

Verse 9, we see that since God gives generously, so also the godly man or woman will give generously.

Verse 9 reads, *“he has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever...”*

This quote from verse 9 from this Psalm was quoted by the apostle Paul when he wrote the New Testament book of 2 Corinthians, chapter 9. The point that Paul was making was that Christians are enabled by God’s abundant grace to become more and more generous. Listen to 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, *“whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.”*

The man or woman who desires to build a legacy, or is interested in things that last, is the man or woman who becomes generous. Verse 5 showed that it will go well for him or her, verse 6, that he or she will be remembered, and verse 9, that his righteousness endures forever. Their deeds of generosity will never lose their value! The result of wise generosity is God is honored, the needs of the poor are met, it goes well for that donor, he is cheerful in his giving, the person is remembered, and there is joy and thanksgiving to God that spreads farther and farther.

### **3. The opposite character of the wicked. (v.10)**

Psalm 111 was about the LORD’s character, and ended with an invitation to us to respond by fearing God and gaining wisdom that leads to generosity.

Psalm 112 was about that response, and now ends by describing what happens to people who refuse the invitation to fear God and gain the lifestyle of wise generosity.

In verse 10, the wicked man sees the generosity, and the enduring legacy, and the blessing of it all, and the wicked man responds by becoming angry! He becomes so angry that he “gnashes his teeth.” But the wicked is powerless to stop or change anything about what God is doing in His generosity or what His godly

children are doing in their generosity. Instead, what happens to the wicked man is that after he gnashes his teeth, he melts away. The desire of the wicked will perish! The wicked wanted to gain for himself, but cannot. That is the end of the wicked man. Meanwhile, the godly man desires to give, to distribute, to show wise generosity to the poor of both material resources and God's spiritual resources. The righteousness of the godly man endures forever!

The action of the wicked to gnash their teeth at the righteous, is brought up in Acts 7:54, after Stephen preached a convicting message, those in the ruling council who heard the message, "...*were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.*"

But don't forget what we are told about the righteous man Stephen. Acts 7:55, "*But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*"

The man who had wise generosity, got it from God, and it led to more and more of a vision of God.

Those men who were greedy, did not respond well to the preaching of Stephen, and they stoned him to death. Ironically, it was Stephen who would live on, and it was those who stoned him to death who would themselves experience eternal death.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Praise God for His generosity. We begin where this Psalm begins. Praise The LORD! We praise God for His abundant grace and overflowing generosity to us in Christ crucified and risen. Because Jesus ascended and sent His spirit upon us, we know what Spirit is given to us, because of the words of Isaiah 11:2, "...*the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, ... and of the fear of the LORD.*" Because of Christ's redemption and Christ's spirit, we join the Psalmist in praising the LORD. Be thankful to Him. We gather to worship on Sundays, and also daily we praise God for His goodness to us.

2. Find pleasure in imitating God. Consider the words of our Lord Jesus in John 4:34, "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.*" We do the will of God. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:10, "...*discern what is pleasing to the Lord.*" We find our highest joy in doing what God does, doing what God wants us to do, and imitating God like the moon reflects the light of the sun! We are light to those around us, such as being gracious and merciful, while our culture is angry and harsh. Give away what people do not deserve. Endure the harshness and militancy of those in our generation. Remember Biblical history. Remember Reformation history. We are not the first generation to have people opposing God. Find pleasure in imitating God and giving away grace and mercy.

3. Keep your heart steady. This is the result of those who fear God. The temptation of riches is nearby. SI – years ago, an ambitious young man told his pastor he had

promised God a tithe of his income. The young man and his pastor prayed together for God to bless his career. At that time he was making \$40.00 per week and tithing \$4.00. In a few years his income increased and he was tithing \$500.00 per week. The young man came back to talk with his pastor to see if he could be released from his tithing promise, it was too costly now. The pastor replied, "How about we ask God to reduce your income back to \$40.00 a week, then you'd be restored to your previous joy in tithing \$4.00." We are told in Psalm 112 the importance of keeping our hearts steady, no matter what the markets are doing. Verse 7, his heart is firm, trusting in The LORD. Verse 8, His heart is steady; he will not be afraid. Specifically, we are told in Psalm 112 not to be afraid of opposition. We are not undone by those who desire to stop what we are doing for the Kingdom. We are not intimidated by those who gnash their teeth at us. One day, we will look with triumph on God's enemies. Keep your heart steady.

4. Be generous. Practice wise generosity. Year ago Mr. Levy, a believer from Philadelphia, was once asked how he could give so much to the Lord's work and still possess great wealth. Mr. Levy replied, "Oh, as I shovel it out, He shovels it in, and the Lord has a bigger shovel." It is only those who have given generously who have discovered this to be true. Start with enjoying your giving. See your giving as a privilege and enjoyable. Our Lord Jesus said in Acts 20:35, "*It is more blessed to give, than to receive.*" We are always giving. Christian people are not takers. We are givers. We give, and give and give. We do not give in stinginess. We do not give in foolishness. We do not fall for scams. We do not operate as bad stewards. Rather, we give in The Spirit's wise generosity. We distribute freely. We distribute money and possessions. And we also distribute the good news of Christ and the Bible's precious insights and we share everywhere wonderful truths from God's Word. We share. Why did God give you money and the gospel in the first place? We get the answer in 2 Corinthians 9:9, "*You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way...*" God in the Psalm and in the New Testament expresses His expectation that Christian people will be generous, because God is consistently, abundantly, and indescribably generous to us.