

END OF PSALM 127

You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

FOR MORE PAMPHLETS ON PSALMS AND OTHER READINGS
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinspire.com

PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST
IN THE
LORD *and do good;
dwell in the land and
enjoy safe pasture.*
PSALM 36: 3

PSALM NUMBER: 127

The fear of God is the way to happiness.

1. Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: that walk in his ways.
2. For thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands: blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee.
3. Thy wife as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house. Thy children as olive plants round about thy table.
4. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.
5. May the Lord bless thee out of Sion: and mayest thou see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.
6. And mayest thou see thy children's children; peace upon Israel.

The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.

PSALM NUMBER: 127

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. “Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: that walk in his ways.” The Prophet teaches the exiles, on their return to their country, how they should conduct themselves, if they wish to avoid being made captives again, and to enjoy the blessings of Jerusalem forever. A very suitable instruction for the captives of this world, who want to get back to their country; as well as for those who are on their pilgrimage to the country above, and are in haste to get there. He then says, “Blessed are all they,” be they men or women, great or small, nobles or plebeians, learned or unlearned, in one word, all without exception; then alone will they be truly happy, that is, fortunate, contented, joyful, in the very best possible temper, a thing so much coveted by all, when they really fear God; that is, when they dread offending him, and, under the influence of such fear, never fall from God’s grace, which is the fountain of all good. Now, a sign of such fear is “to walk in his ways;” because such holy fear springs from love; and the Lord says, “if you love me, keep my commandments;” and again, “he that has my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;” and again, “he that loveth me not keepeth not my commandments.”

2. “For thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands: blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee.” Addressing the man who so fears God, he begins to enumerate his blessings. Your first blessing will be, “for thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands;” you will enjoy all the property you have acquired by your industry, by the labor of your hands. Here we should reflect that the Prophet does not make happiness to consist in great riches, but in such as has been acquired by the labor of one’s hands, and they are, generally speaking, moderate. Great riches either come by inheritance, or from plunder or usury, or some other bad source. St. Jerome quotes an old saying, and a true one, “the rich man is either a rogue or the heir of a rogue;” and in Psalm 36, we have, “better is a little to the just than the great riches of the wicked;” and again, in Psalm 143, “their storehouses full, flowing out of this into that. Their sheep fruitful in young, abounding in their goings forth. Their oxen fat. There is no breach of wall or passage, nor crying out in their streets. They have called the people happy that hath these things, but happy is that people whose God is the Lord.” Holy David then addresses not only the Jews, but all Christians, when he makes happiness to consist not in great riches, but in a sufficiency: the having wherewithal to live by one’s just labor and he censures two extremes – one, that of those who live on the others entirely; and the other, that of those who will not touch the labor of their hands,

but, in a spirit of avarice, put it aside to increase their riches. They alone, then, are truly happy “who eat the labors of their hands.” It may happen, however, that some “will fear God,” and “walk in his ways,” may not be able to eat of the “labors of their hands,” and have to endure hunger and thirst, by reason of their having been despoiled, or defrauded of their labor; but that will not bar the promise made in this passage; for if God sometimes lets his friends down so low that they would be glad to satisfy the cravings of their hunger with the fragments that fall from the table of the rich, as was the case with Lazarus, he will certainly give them something better, far better, instead; and that is joy from tribulation, as the apostle has it, “you received with joy the plundering of your good;” and again, “I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations;” and the meaning of this verse will be: “for thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands; Blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee;” that is to say, you should now eat of the labor, you shall be refreshed by the joy consequent on labor and tribulation, but afterwards you shall be fattened by the fruit of said labor, by the reward in store for your good works; and “Blessed art thou” now and hereafter, “and it shall be well with thee” hereafter in the reality. This is peculiarly applicable to the pilgrims, who “rejoice in the tribulation” of want and difficulties; “for they know tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured out into our hearts.”

3. “Thy wife as a fruitful vine, on the sides of thy house. Thy children as olive plants, round about thy table.” The second blessing enjoyed by the man “that fears God and walks in his ways” consists in his having only one wife, should he ever marry; and, in marrying, that he will be influenced more by a desire of propagating the human race than by any sinful or unworthy desires, as the Angel admonished Tobias when he said, “thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust;” and Tobias himself truly said, “and now, Lord, thou knowest that not for fleshy lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity.” He, therefore, says, “thy wife,” not thy wives nor thy concubines, “as a fruitful vine,” with a large family, like a fruitful vine that sends out a number of branches, “on the sides of the house;” a domestic wife, that stays at home, looking after the business indoors, while her husband cares the business outside. This, to be sure, is a blessing to a certain extent; but to give us to understand that it is not so very great a blessing, God was pleased to withhold it from many of his most faithful and devoted friends in the married state, such as Abraham and Sara, Isaac and Rebecca, Zachary and Elizabeth; and he also inspired many with a resolution of observing holy virginity, such as it is credibly believed of the holy prophets Elias and Jeremias, and is well known of the Blessed Virgin, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, and hosts besides, who certainly would not have been deprived of the happiness had not virginity been a much superior gift. With that, though Saints who never married, or had no offspring, if they had no family in one sense they had in another, far and away beyond it. Christ, for instance, who is the head of all Saints, was never married, had no children in the flesh, yet he had the Church for his spouse, and children in the spirit, nearly innumerable. So with Abraham, who had only one child by Sara, and yet, by faith was made the father of many nations; for all the faithful

are called “children of Abraham” by the apostle. And what is more wonderful, these holy men are not only the fathers, but they are even the mothers of those whom they have brought to the faith, or to penance; for they are their fathers by reason of their preaching to them by word and example, and they are their mothers by reason of their praying and sighing for them. The same apostle calls himself father when he says, “I write not these things to shame you, but I admonish you as my dearest children; for, if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel;” and he calls himself their mother in another place, when he says, “my little children, of whom I am in labor again.” – “Thy children as olive plants round about thy table.” The third blessing, the education of the children, is now introduced. They who fear God and walk in his ways, will not only have many children, but they will be well brought up and educated, because there will be taught, from their earliest infancy, to fear God and to walk in his ways. He, therefore, says, “thy children as olive plants, round about thy table.” They will be like the choicest shrubs, the olive plants, that are evergreens, and bear most valuable fruit, and not like briars, or brambles, or shrubs that bear no fruit, and they will be “round about thy table,” that, by beholding them all together, eating with them, and living with them, you may have the greater pleasure and enjoyment with them. This, too, applies to the children in the Spirit, whom the father feeds with the word of God; and when he sees how they progress is wonderfully delighted, and, with the apostle, says, “my joy and my crown; so stand fast in the Lord, my most dearly beloved.”

4. “Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.”

5. “May the Lord bless thee out of Zion: and mayest thou see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.”

6. “And mayest thou see thy children’s children; peace upon Israel.” Blessing the fourth, through which the man who fears God will be joyful for the blessings conferred on himself in particular, and also for those conferred on the community in general; and he, therefore, adds, that he will be blessed by the Lord who dwells in Zion, that during his lifetime he will see all manner of good things abounding in Jerusalem, and will see his children’s children therein equally happy; and, finally, a lasting peace, that guards and protects everything, enjoyed by the people of Israel. In a spiritual sense, and in one more intended by the Holy Ghost, a happiness as far above the three last named, as the heavens are above the earth, and God above his creatures, is described; and a Prophet therefore, does not describe it by way of narration, but rather preaches and announces it to us, “behold,” he says, in addition to all I have said, “thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord,” for to him will be said, “may the Lord bless thee out of Zion;” may he bless you not only on earth, by bestowing all earthly blessings on you, but may he, furthermore, bless you from his holy mountain, from his highest dwelling place, and grant you “that thou mayest see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life;” that you may see God, in whom are all the good things of Jerusalem, “all the days of thy life,” forever, unto ages of ages; for as the soul is immortal, as is the body, too, after the short sleep of death,

when it will rise immortal, unquestionably the good things we see here are not seen all the days of our life, on the contrary they are only seen during a small portion of the days of our life, so that we may truly say, “the days of our life are few, and full of evil;” while we shall really see the good things of the heavenly Jerusalem all the days of our life, which will have no end, as will the wicked see the evil things of Babylon all the days of their everlasting death. We are not to be surprised at the Prophet having said, “mayest thou see,” instead of mayest thou possess the good things of Jerusalem, because the good things of the Jerusalem above are possessed by seeing them, as perfect happiness consists purely of the beatific vision as St. John, in his first Epistle says, “we shall be like to him,” most blessed and happy, and almost gods, “because we shall see him as he is.” Another addition to the happiness of the blessed in their country above, will consist in their beholding there “the children of their children;” that is, not only those who, through them, were born to God, but also the children of those children who, to the end of the world, shall have been brought to God, and will thus have cause of rejoicing for them all as if they belonged to themselves. To crown their happiness, they will see “peace upon Israel,” firm, lasting, and solid peace, inspiring the greatest confidence and security in all the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem for all eternity; for they will see all their enemies laid perfectly prostrate under Christ’s footstool, that is, hurled down to the lowest depths, and bound there in chains for eternity, for “the earth is God’s footstool;” and all the wicked will lie shut up under it through everlasting ages.