

The Blessed Life

Psalm I, 112

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As things fell out at the first service. There was, a little short in one of the microphones, and it made three clicks. That sounded a little bit like three pops and reminded me of the events yesterday and, a very dark moment in the life of our family, that is to say, the family of Americans and a reminder of the, discord and the woes that trouble our land at this hour and the last number of years and it reminded me again of the need to turn to God's Word to understand the way of peace, the way of the Lord. And so we are looking at Psalm I today and Psalm 112. I'm going to read Psalm 112 later. Psalm one 1 and 112 are a partnership. They're both Psalms that begin with "blessed are" "blessed is" the person, "blessed" is the man, and so we're looking at how God defines blessing today. And also a little bit of an overview of the Psalms. Listen to God's Word as I read it to you.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers. For his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He's like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields his fruit in season, and his leaf does not wither. Whatever he does, he prospers. Not so the wicked. They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

God bless the reading of His word. Please be seated.

Now this is a little summer series. If you're a visitor, we're glad to have you here and you're in a summer series on wisdom. We looked at Proverbs for three weeks, and now for about 5 or 6 weeks, we'll look at some of the Psalms, and I know that, we started Psalms last week and thanks to Jim Alexander for that. I'm going to still make a few general comments about the Psalms, and I know there's a sense of which I don't need to do that here, because this church has had marvelous teaching for many years. But I'm still going to say a few words about the Psalms in general.

The first thing is there are 150 of them, and they have two great themes. The number one command in the book of Psalms is *praise the Lord*. It appears 200 times, but the number one type of psalm is the Psalm of lament. Now the 150, 60 psalms have lamentations over the grief and sorrow. Most of this world is a prominent theme, and about half of those 60 lamentation is the main theme. So we have these two apparently disparate ideas. Praise the Lord and lament over the evil and the brokenness in this world.

The Book of Psalms is both a public and a private book of praise. In the days when this book was written, people didn't have their own Bible. They learned the Bible by having it read to them and by singing it in the Psalms. So many Psalms are corporate, but many psalms are also individual.

It's a person talking to God about what is happening in his or her life. And if you look at the Psalms, what you'll notice is that they describe every feeling, every thought, thoughts, ideas that we might think we couldn't possibly present to God. Martin Luther, almost 500 years ago said it this way. He said, ***the Psalms teach us to speak with earnestness, to open the heart and pour out what lies on the bottom of it. The Psalms give us capacity for honest speech before God. Luther went on to say this where does one find finer words of joy than in the Psalms of praise? But where does one find more pitiful words of sadness than in the Psalms of lamentation?*** In other words, the Psalms fit every condition of life. We pour out our all, our gratitude, our praise, and we pour out our disappointment, our dismay that life is not what we thought it would be.

We have Psalms like the 22nd Psalm, which Jesus recited on the cross. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I'm forsaken. God, I'm just telling you, I know you forsaken me. But I would just like to know why. Who thinks that's the kind of thing you readily say to God? It's almost an accusation.

There's another psalm, Psalm 13, that says very similar things. You've turned your face for me. Why and how long? How long, O Lord, will you turn your face from me? You don't care about me anymore. I just want to know how long it's going to last. And the Psalms say we're allowed to say that to God.

The Psalms inspired by God say, you can talk this way to God when you are dismayed. And there are Psalms that are angry. Psalm 137 is a response to the Babylonians attacking and murdering and crushing and mocking Israel. And the Psalm says, at one point, happy is he who repays you for the evil you have done. We read Psalm 139. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* Yes, that's in Psalm 139 and also in Psalm 139. Just a few verses later. Really, David says, if only, Lord, you would slay the wicked. Do I not hate those who hate you? And we're allowed to say that also. Psalm 88 calls out to God, you have taken from me my closest friends. You have deprived me my companions. Lord, why do you reject me? The darkness is my only friend.

Now 60 Psalms of lament, 59 of them and with a lifting of the mood, with praise or thanksgiving, or resting. And it's almost as if the psalmist pours out his anguish, and then he says, okay, you've heard me, and now I'm giving thanks at the end, there is one psalm that does not end with any note of thanksgiving or resolution. That's Psalm 88 and just about the last words are the darkness is my only friend, no exaltation. But please notice that he even says those words to God. He says, God, my only friend, is darkness. And I'm free to say that to you also.

What that means then is that as believers, we know that we should praise God and we do praise God. We thank God for all the blessings in our life, gladly and absolutely. But we're also able to say, I don't always feel that way at all. I don't want to praise you. I want to lament, even accuse. Now, one Christian psychologist said that people need four things. They need belonging and self-esteem and sense of control and significance. Those are the four things we need belonging, self-esteem, control, significance. And we just think briefly about the Christian life. Three of those four, obviously they're. Belonging. We are members of the family of God. We sang about that earlier. We are children of God. We get to call him father. We just saying that we belong to a family. Now most of us have an earthly family, human family and friends. But if you have no family at all, you still belong to the family of God. We have belonging and we also have self esteem. God made us in his image. If you're worried about your life that is not amounting to all that much. If your life isn't taking the direction you would like. If you're not accomplishing very much, then it's okay because you're still made in the image of God. You don't have to earn it or deserve it.

I was at two gatherings of the church yesterday, and at the first one it was a gathering of young families. And as the young families came in, I encountered a number of people in the early going that had many little ones, like five children under the age of seven, including twins, and then there were four under the age of four, and not once, but twice separately the mom said things like, I have accomplished nothing in the last three years. I have been a bad person because of sleep deprivation and disorientation. You're allowed to say that, you're allowed to say that in church and you're allowed to say, I don't feel a whole lot of self-esteem right now, but I'm still made in God's image and significance. We serve the King. When you're taking care of those one year olds, those one year old twins, you think all you're doing is feeding and changing clothes and washing clothes and changing diapers. You're serving the King. We present our children to the Lord. They're going to live. We pray, we hope, expect. They're going to live forever. And you're helping them with the foundation. Their life. It's true. We have significance. We have worth. We belong. We have self-esteem. And it's also true that we don't always feel it. And that gap between what we feel and what is accounts for the for the dual truth that the number one, number one command to Psalms is praise the Lord 200 times. And the number one type of psalm is lamentation, 60 of them. And so it's telling us we can be realistic. We can praise God realistically in the face of all the disorder of life. They're both true. God gives us language for everything. We're allowed to cry out in distress. We're allowed to say, Lord, how long will you forget me? How long will you hide my faithful face from me? And this is not from some person who has nothing going well in their life. This is King David, who was the sweet singer of Israel, wrote 73 of the 150 Psalms, a warrior of renown, a king who ruled in justice and protected his people. A man who, one of three people in the whole Bible singled out as being really good looking too. And he says, how long? We can take it all to God to speak personally? When my father died and I had a complicated relationship with my father, when my father died, I did not cry. I didn't cry and I didn't cry. My friends asked me, have you cried yet? The answer was no, I have not cried yet. And eventually somebody asked me that question and I'll say he

had the right to ask. And I said to him, Doug, that is actually his name. Doug. I'm afraid that if I started crying, I would never stop. Okay, that's a little bit of an exaggeration, I'm afraid if I started crying, I would cry for three months, and I don't know if I can give up three months of my life. And Doug said, you're allowed to cry. You won't cry for three months. And it's okay now. I wasn't living in the Psalms enough. I was afraid that I would be paralyzed. But God gives us words when we're disappointed, when we don't know what the words are, gives us those words of lament and hope in the Psalms. So if you read the Psalms, and I'm partly giving you this series because I want you to read the Psalms and spend time in the Psalms this summer and just bathe yourself in the Psalms. Spiritually speaking, when you read the Psalms of lament, one thing you'll notice is they start off with these almost dire words. You know, how long were you forsake me? When you why are you hiding your face? How long will you hide your face from me? And then 5 or 10 verses later there will be exaltation. I turn to you again. I rejoice in you. Think, how can we go so fast from this desperate woe? Go to praise of God. And I'm going to answer this, from my own experience writing songs or poems. So for a brief period of time, it'll a lot of, hard things were happening in my life about 15 years ago. And, for some reason, I had a there was a new Christian in our church, and we became friends.

And, he encouraged me to start writing poems. And, a number of them actually got published. It was very surprising to me. And by very tiny journals that 11 people read and I took it seriously, and I would work on poems sometimes for four months or two months. I'd start off, this is how I feel. And then and then I'd revisit and revisit and think and pray it over because it was hard things, you know, and you notice that in some of them, at least, there was a similar sort of a move from woe to resolution. And there would be jarring, except did I that move from woe to resolution would be jarring, except that I wrote it over a span of four months, and so of course, you can go from woe to resolution in four months. And people who study the Psalms say the same kind of thing. There's no reason to believe necessarily they were written all at once. There could have been days, weeks, months in between. And as we declare our woe to God and we keep in touch with the Lord, we slowly find ourselves moving to that spot where we've resolved that we can trust God once again. So the Psalms have the number one command praise the Lord 200 times, and 60 Psalms with a focus on lamentation, because the Lord wants us to be realistic in our praise. Psalms are realistic, world grounded praise of God. And by the way, the whole book of the Psalter starts off this way as well. Of the first 20 psalms, about half are lamentations, and the last seven are all praise. So it's almost saying, as you go through the book of Psalms as a whole, you move from woe to praise.

Jesus reflected this too, you know, the Psalms assume the world is orderly and should be order. We should feel that. And therefore, when things are disorderly or chaotic, we feel the gap between them. We think this is not the way the world is supposed to be. And then slowly we move back from assumption of order to disorder, back to order again, remove from chaos to restoration. And that's the way life of Christ went, right? First everything was good. Son of God incarnate, fulfilling the will of the father. And he's growing in wisdom and stature before God and man. And he's teaching. And people are hanging on every word, and he's healing people

and crowds are coming. That's the way it's supposed to be. And then disorder and chaos. He is healing people by the powers of evil. He's a blasphemer. He's a false teacher. Doesn't fall. Love God. We need to silence them. We need to kill him. And they don't just think about it. They arrest him. And as he said, they mock him and scourge him and kill him. But then he rises again. And so we have in the life of Christ that same move from beauty and order to chaos, to new order or restoration.

In fact, in Jesus own life, he meditates on the Psalms 15 times. He quotes the Psalms in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and 11 of them are in the last week, as he himself is in the pit of despair, he says things like, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Now he takes it to God. He doesn't say, I am forsaken, period. He says, God, I want you to tell me why you forsaken me.

So the laments are always taken to God, always expecting an answer from the Lord. And that answer comes -- the book of Philippians does the same thing. Jesus is in the very nature of God. He made himself nothing, became obedient even to the point of death on the cross. That's disorder again. But God raised him, but highly exalted him. Back to order, back to the way things are supposed to be. So that's the book of Psalms. In 11 minutes.

Now let's look at Psalm one. Psalm one is actually not lamentation or praise. It's saying, okay, in this book you're going to see in many occasions in this book, I mean, the whole Bible, the way of joy and of peace and a blessing. And there's also the way of sin described there, both there and in Psalm one it says, you need to choose the path you're going to take. If you want a blessed life, a life blessed by God, you need to take the right path. Now I know the word blessing is overused in our circles and it's overused in our culture. I don't know about you, but when I go to the grocery store and I pay for the groceries, sometimes the person who's at the checkout line will say, have a blessed day. And I think, oh, they're trying to let me know they're a Christian, right? You think that sometimes-- it's Christian code word, and that's fine. I kind of like it. But it's also true that when you use it to say, I'm a Christian, it can cheapen a little bit. So let's just make sure we define what blessing is. Blessing is not mere happiness. Now, the word blessed in both Greek and Hebrew can mean happy, but it's not mere happiness like, I just saw a great comedy special on Netflix or something like that. Or I saw I saw kids having fun and laughing, and I'm happy about that. It's the happiness that abides in the hard moments of life. Blessed are those who mourn. Jesus says, happy are those who mourn means, there is a kind of a deep settled ness that is ours. Even when life has its up and down. Blessed. Blessed is the first idea. Blessed is the man, it says, but it doesn't tell us about the blessed man. It first tells us about the person who isn't blessed. Look at the three things it says in the very first verse.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers or mockers can be translated either way.

Now I want you to notice very carefully what it says here. It starts with a walk in council. It says, *be careful whose counsel you take.* Ask yourself, what voices am I listening to? Who do I heed in

the description of the good life? Number one. Number two. How do I behave? We don't stand in the way of sinners. In the Bible, the word way means your pattern of life, your habitual way. There is a way, a pattern of life that is that of sinners. You stand in that with many other people, and you don't sit in the seat of mockers. To sit down is to take your place, like sitting down with your friends at a meal and you have a conversation. You belong to each other and so the three questions are this what is our thinking? What counts? It'll be here number one. Number two, what is their behavior? What is our way? Is it a way of sinners? And number three, to whom do we belong? What kind of people do we align ourselves with? So it's the council, the voices. It's the way of life, the pattern of life. And it's the community we belong to that's on the mind of the psalmist.

The first question we might say is what is true? The second one is how do I behave? The third one is who are my people now?

So I was home in St. Louis last week. My daughter had her 15th anniversary, and, while she's off with her husband having a wonderful time, we were watching their children and my grandson Jonah came in my office. I'm working away on a sermon there, and he comes and he says, you know, Poppa, I need something to do. I found your guitar. Can I play it? And I said, well, of course you can play it. But I also, I play my guitar about once a year, and I knew it would be terrifically out of tune. And so I played the guitar for him. I said, how does that sound? He shook his head. That does not sound good. I said, okay, let's just wait about 2 or 2 minutes or maybe three minutes and I'll tune the guitar, and then you tell me if it sounds good. And we tuned it and we played some chords, and I said, how does that sound? He said, it sounds good.

Now why did he say it sounded good? There are two reasons. The first reason is there are mathematics regarding sound and octave is, you know, got a certain number of vibrations and it kind of resonates with the human mind and the human spirit, and there's an objective reality to it, but there's also an experiential reality. Some chords sound good to us, in part objectively, but also in part because we've heard them over and over throughout our life.

And music that sounds familiar. Sounds right. Let me say it a different way. The first time I heard a jazz trio, I thought, what is that? And the first time I heard Klezmer music, I thought, what is that? And the first time I heard a Hans Zimmer soundtrack, I thought, what? But after I listened to jazz trios and Klezmer music and Hans Zimmer a number of times, I said, I really like this. I had to get familiar with it.

Now I'm not talking about myself here. I'm talking about the fact that when we hear certain ideas over and over and over again, they don't just sound familiar, they begin to sound right. And if you spend your time in the Council of the wicked, hearing their ideas over and over again, and you start walking with sinners and you start saying, scoffers are my people, it will bring you down. That's what Psalm one is saying.

I'm reading a book right now, sort of a physics of the last 100 years. Doesn't seem to be written by a Christian. Hard to tell. It doesn't seem like it. And in the book it says the universe we now

know is made of three things and three things only -- space time, not space and time. You used to think there is space and time. Nope. It's one thing. Space time. Electromagnetism. Sidebar gravity doesn't exist. I just thought you'd like to know it's only electromagnetism. Just going to tell you a number. Three particles. That's it. That's the universe. Plus chance. Not even space and time. Just space time. That's what the book says over and over again. He doesn't seem to mention God. He doesn't seem to mention anything but particles, space time and electromagnetism.

Now, if you're around this ideology or these convictions long enough, they're going to slowly push you toward the idea that the world is empty and meaningless. If you hear it once, it's one thing. If you hear it over and over again, it's another matter. And people say, oh, let's draw conclusions. All we have is particles and electromagnetism and space time. Then we're just we're just random pleasure machines. So why not just live for pleasure, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. There's no meaning to anything. And you start here in the council. And then you start walking in the way. And then you start at worst, belonging to scoffers. Scoffers come in different forms. They're scoffers, like Marx and Nietzsche, who say, if you hear anybody give you a command of any kind, just make sure you ask, what are they after? Because, you know, all ideologies you're just trying to support the powers that be. You know, capitalists, capitalists say the best system is capitalism, a market economy after they've accumulated the capital, they're just trying to solidify their position, just like those old kings, you know, divine right of kings. Guess where the idea of the divine right of kings to rule came from? It came from kings so they could support their power. That's scoffing. Don't believe anything anybody says. Everybody has an angle all day long. It's all self serving the Scoffer might not be the person who behaves the worst, but they're farthest from God.

Now there's something else. The opposite approach is the man who delights in the law of God and meditates on his law day and night. To delight in the law of God is not just to hear God's commands and obey them, to delight in the law of God. The word law, Torah actually means not just laws, but the instruction, the global philosophy of life that God gives us. And we delight in knowing. Oh, by the way, if the universe is, maybe it's true. Maybe the universe is made of space time, electromagnetism, and particles. But it's because God wanted it to be that way. And it's an awesome. If you can take those three things and make them into this magnificent world that we have. Because there is a fourth thing, and that fourth thing is the person of God. And we delight in hearing that God exists, and he made the world good, and he made it a beautiful home for his people. And we meditate on that. Meaning we don't just read the Bible, we think it over now. Sometimes in my life as a professor, I teach Greek classes and students learn to read Greek and seminaries. We teach them to read Greek and Hebrew. And one of the things that professors of languages learn is that students can get really excited about what they learn when reading Greek and Hebrew, and they'll come to class and they'll say, professor, I translated this passage. It's so meaningful, it's so rich, it's so magnificent. Why don't any of the translations say that? And we say, why don't we look at a translation and see how close it comes? And we look at the translation and it says exactly what this gifted student discovered. It's right there. Now,

that passage is one the student has read many times, but they read it quickly. They slowed down when they translated the Greek and Hebrew because it was hard for them, and they labored over it. And so they really heard it. They meditated and they grasped what they were excited about it. And that's what I hope you can do. Now, look, if you read a certain translation of the Bible over and over, you read the Bible a lot. You read the same translation all the time. You may be losing your ability to marvel at the way it's expressed. You might try reading from another translation. We have a lot of good translations right now. We use the ESV the most here, but there are other good ones. Read the Psalms in another translation. It may strike you in a fresh way and allow you to meditate on the Word of God.

Now, a couple months ago I said, when you meditate on God's Word, it means you do more than one thing. You read it, you think about it, you read it and meditate on it. You pray it over and you try to live it. And when you try to live it, then you kind of compare what you've done with what you read in the Bible. For example, here's a proverb A gentle answer turns away wrath. And you may say, I like that one. There's a lot of anger in our society today. That's what we saw yesterday in the assassination attempt. It's anger. It's kind of a crazy anger. Unloading an AR 15, not just on a presidential candidate, but on a crowd of people knowing if it's shooting off bullets in a crowded place, you're going to hit people. And they didn't care. Okay? We live in an angry age. How can I turn on my anger? What little can I do to turn away angered so that somebody says something angrily and you try to turn away their anger? And you think I tried to say something? It actually didn't work. I'm going to I'm going to meditate on this some more and pray about it, think about it, and see how I can have a gentle answer that turns away wrath and eventually may say, oh, it worked that time I did give a gentle answer. Turned away wrath. That's meditating. It's not just reading the words, but it's asking over and over again. How can I live this out? Praying the words, thinking it through, living it through. Scoffer, on the other hand, says the universe is made of time, space, electromagnetism and particles. Therefore, let's eat, drink and be merry, because tomorrow we die. Nothing to think about. Just pursue pleasure.

The man of God, verses three. And following the man of God has additional blessings. He's like a tree planted by streams of water. It's been hot around here lately. Have you noticed that? I go in a Presbyterian church. I got a yeah, that was audible. That's just amazing. Thank you. Whoever that was, shake my hand afterward. I'm gonna write this one down. It's been hot. And when it's really hot for a long time, trees start to drop their leaves. Even in the month of July. Not the ones by streams of water. They don't. The tree that is planted by streams of water does not wither. It does yield its fruit. Fruit in season. We continue to bear fruit for God as we meditate on His Word.

Now the wicked have a very different life. They're not prospering whatever they do, they're like chaff that the wind blows away. Chaff is the word for rice husks and wheat husks. It's nothing. It's insubstantial way it goes. No one cares that it's gone. It goes on to say in verse five and six. Those wicked ones that chaff, they will not stand in the judgment.

Now, I hope you all know that we're going to stand before God one day. You may have grown up in this church or another church, and you may have heard about the judgment many times. Or you may be new to Christianity or new to the exploration of living faith. And so I need to tell you that we're all going to stand before the living God who is just, and render an account for the deeds we've done in our bodies, whether good or evil. And on that day we will have no ability to stand if all we have is our works, we can stand in the presence of God because we've been blessed. And this is the way the New Testament completes the story, because we've been blessed in the person of Christ. This is what Romans 5:1-2 say.

Therefore we have been justified by faith, and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. That is to say, on the last day, if we're justified by faith in Jesus Christ, we can stand before God. God will say, I know what you've done. And we say, you know it's true. I've done it. I those thoughts, those words, those deeds, I am guilty of them. But I stand before you unafraid because I'm clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and I hope you do the same. The opposite is to be afraid of standing.

If I may tell you a personal story, years ago, when I was working on my PhD and it was a bunch of PhD people around here, and I just made a tiny bit of eye contact with one of them.

You know, it's a complicated, messy process to get a PhD. And I got my PhD in a sort of a joint program between Westminster Theological Seminary, which we support in Yale University, which we do not support. We feel very good about one very sketchy about the other, but I had a joint program and I went there for some resources, some literature, you know, documents that are hard to get ahold of in their rare book library. And I'd been there not very long when I heard that one of the people who had written on the field I cared about and abandoned it was still at Yale. And in fact, its office was right over there. Now, I knew that Professor Edmund Morgan had written these two seminal works in my field 30 years earlier, when, as a young man, I didn't care about it anymore. So I went over to his office because this is before texting and email, and I tried to get an appointment. And I had a plan. My plan was I'll make an appointment two weeks hence, a month, three months hence. Whatever hope he's willing to talk to me about a subject he no longer cares about. But I do, and I'll read his books. And I'm going to come up with a brilliant synthesis of his ideas, and I'll be very succinct, and he'll say, oh, you've read my books and understood them, and I'm going to ask him probing questions based on what's on page 192 and footnote 11 on page 78. That's my plan. I'd read the book several months earlier, so I had to review them first.

I went into the office and I said to his secretary, I know Professor Morgan no longer cares about my topic, but I do. I wonder if he might have a few minutes to talk to me. And she said, why, yes, he does. And in fact, it's office hours. you could just go on in. And I wanted to say, no, no, I'll come back in three months and, and Professor Morgan heard our conversation and waved me in. I said, no, I can't come. And he said, come on in, come on in. And then. Then I'm standing there drenching in sweat, in mute terror that all I have to say is your books are awesome. You

don't care about them anymore. I hope you do. Would you talk to me someday and please let me fall through the floor now.

I had no business there. I wanted to run. I couldn't stand in his presence. I was drenched in sweat. Then I ran away, and he decided I was an idiot.

When we stand before God, we're actually in worse condition than I was with Professor Morgan. But the good news is that God says, I know, I know how you want to run from my presence, but you can stand not because you're good or noble or righteous, because you didn't always walk in the way of the Lord. But I sent my son Jesus Christ to take your place. And when that happens, when we have that stance before God, then Psalm 112, I'm going to go through it fast. Psalm 112 is ours.

Now I'm going to tell you what the blessings are that are described in Psalm 112. Praise the Lord! *Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments* is so much like Psalm one. What are the blessings that are not specified in Psalm one, but they are specified in Psalm 112, the first blessing. Verse two. *His offspring will be mighty in the land, his generation, the generational upright, will be blessed.* We, we hope our children excel at piano and at baseball, and they excel in the Lord. And this is the first blessing of God. We don't just hope our children turn out. We know that God says, *I bless you with children who will be wise and walk with the Lord.* I know it doesn't happen every time, but that's the foundational blessing. The second blessing is material verse three, and then also as well, a little bit later in verses five and nine, verse three says, *wealth and riches are in his house.* God gives prosperity to his people. But now notice that the Bible teaches in many ways that wealth and riches can be a dangerous blessing, and we can trust our wealth, and we can rely on our riches, and it can become like a God to us. And so it says in verse five, and then we'll look at verse nine, and a second is, *It is well, with a man who deals generously and lands, who conduct his affairs with justice,* that is to say, the man whose wealthy, by God's blessing is generous gives it away. I don't live for money. I enjoy it, and I give it away. I bless other people, praise God, this church is a generous church and has been for a long time. Keep it up. It's a true blessing when you are wealthy and you love to be generous with your wealth. Verse nine says it again. We're going to pop it up on the screen.

He has distributed freely. He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. The wealthy man does not keep it for himself or herself. That's true blessing. Verse four has another blessing. Blessing number one is your family. Number two is wealth. Rightly handle. Number three. Light dawns in the darkness for the upright. Now what that means is, even in this happiest of the Psalms, there's still an acknowledgment that life gets dark. But it says specifically, light dawns in the darkness. You will face darkness. The psalm that talks about blessing more purely than any other says, oh, by the way, you'll face darkness, but here's your blessing light will dawn in the darkness. You will not be overcome by the darkness. God will give you light again, and it says it as well a couple of verses later in verses six and seven, we'll be resilient in hard times. The righteous will never be moved. He is not afraid of bad news. It does

not say you will have no bad news. It says you will not live in fear of bad news. There's all the difference in the world between terror of bad news and being unafraid of bad news. I know it's going to come. It's going to come. We're all going to have bad news individually and corporately, but we don't live in fear of it. Our heart is firm because we trust the Lord. Our heart is steady. We're not afraid. That's the blessing of the righteous.

Psalms 1 and Psalm 112 describe a way of life, but really describe two ways of life.

Even in saying, here's the blessed path, the first thing it says is, don't listen to the counsel of the wicked. Don't stand in the way of sinners. Don't sit in the seat of scoffers. Pay attention to your voice. Pay attention to your habits. Pay attention to your people. There's a false path. Jesus says there are two ways or two roads. One is easy and broad and leads to death. One is narrow, but it leads to life. Some people build on sand. Wise man builds his house on the rock. Christianity is not moralism. It does not say the wise man builds his house on a rock. It says **the** rock. What's the rock? The rock is Jesus Christ. The great confession of Peter 12 chapters later I tell you our Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, not Peter the Rock, but on the rock of Peter's confession. You are the Christ, the Son of living God. Jesus is on this rock. The words, it just came out of your mouth that Jesus Christ is the son of the living God. That's the rock. It's not moralism. We have a moral stand based on a rock.

Our society sometimes shouts at us what we ought to do, but there's no basis for it. Do the right thing. It's actually a movie with that title. Do the right thing, just do it. Nike tells us no. In Christianity, what we do rests on everything that God is and does. When we build our life on the rock, when we face the fact that life is hard but we're not terrified of it because we know there is a God. The universe is not just made of space time and electromagnetism and particles that may be the building blocks that God used, but the world is his. When we build on that rock, then blessing is ours and I hope you have it. Love it. Rejoice in it, receive it from God's hand through Jesus Christ, in whose name we are going to pray.

Let's pray. Heavenly father, I thank you for pointing us to the path of life. I thank you for Psalm one and Psalm 112, and all the psalms of lament that teach us how to cry out. And they tell us life is hard, and we can take that to you. And thank you that you also tell us that light dawns for the blessed and there's bad news. We don't live in fear of it. We thank you for all these things that ask you. Give us faith to receive it and the blessing that we don't deserve. But that is ours because it's yours. And it comes to us in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.