

Psalm 112-114

Fear: Webster's dictionary defines *fear* as, "expect with alarm," as "anxious concern" and as "mean painful agitation in the presence or anticipation of danger."¹ Yet fear in and of itself isn't necessarily an evil or inherently bad thing, we teach our children to fear crossing the street, to fear strangers that approach them, to fear handling scissors or sharp objects. So we need to realize that depending on the context *fear* can have more than one effect on us, it can be *energizing* to us, motivating for us, protecting us; or it can be *paralyzing* to us, intimidating for us, keeping us from moving forward in a good or godly direction. Fear can be positive, or it can be negative depending upon the context.

Psalm 112 mentions fear of bad news, and fear of bad people, but there's one fear that trumps every fear and drives out every negative connotation that can be incorporated into fear and that is the fear of God. (Now to be fair I have to mention that Webster's includes the reverential awe of God in the various ways it defines fear for us.) When we speak of the fear of God we're not talking about terror in a negative kind of way, oh don't get me wrong, if you don't *know* the Lord, you lead a life of animosity *toward* the Lord than you do well to be terrified *of* the Lord. The bible declares in no uncertain terms, "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*" Heb 10:31 But to the child of God, the son or daughter of God, the one who fears or has that reverential awe *of* God and respect *for* God, those negative connotations to fear have lost their grip, they no longer have power over the child of God. The child of God has come to the realization that if we fear God, there's nothing else we need to fear.

Solomon came to that conclusion: he said, "*Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*" Eccl 12:13 There are things in life that will seek to strike fear into your heart; i.e. bad news, and bad people. The solution to overcoming those fears is found in cultivating a right relationship with the Lord. We fear *Him*, learn *of* Him, His will and His ways through His word, and of course our learning it needs to translate into our living it. Notice Vs 1 (Ps 112).

¹Merriam-Webster, I. (1996, c1993). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. Includes index. (10th ed.). Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster.

Vs1

3 Things are drawn to our attention right here in the very 1st verse that as believers we need to be about. 1st of all we're met straight out of the starting gate with the familiar exhortation unto the family of God to "Praise the Lord!" We see it over and over and over again throughout the course of the psalms, and I wish it weren't such a necessary reminder but it is, God is worthy of our praise yet how often we offer up ½ hearted, unfocused, and non-attentive praise... So the Psalms are always bringing us back to this basic attribute that needs to be a reality in our relationship with the Lord: praising Him, celebrating Him, boasting of Him!

If we would take ½ the time acknowledging the things He's *done* for us as we do the things we want Him to *do* for us it would revolutionize our praise. Every good thing you have, be it your health, your home, your car, your family, your job and/or ministry, (along with every detail that's comprised in those things individually) being born in this country, being relatively certain that you're going to get to eat or drink clean water. It doesn't matter what it is, if it helps you, benefits you, brings comfort to you, in *anyway* blesses you, it's from the Lord. James said, "*Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*" James 1:16-17 I feel like a broken record but I'm just going to say it again, we have absolutely no reason not to praise the Lord...

Praising God, it's to be a common attribute of the *child* of God, as is (notice) fearing God. Being in reverential awe *of* Him, learning what it means to lead a life pleasing *to* Him, walking in holiness *before* Him all of these things are characteristic of fearing Him, having due respect for Him. You know, one thing that kind of grates on me is when someone tells me that they have respect for me, but then do they things (willfully) that they know offends me or isn't pleasing *to* me. That's called lip service, it's not what issues forth from your lips that I'm concerned about (with regard to this context) it's what issues forth from your life, don't just say so, show so. Because when you say one thing, but then do something demonstrates completely the opposite, that's not respect, that's complete disregard wrapped in a façade; it's like a package with respect as the paper that looks nice initially but eventually gets ripped off and thrown to the side so that what the real issue at hand is can be on display or made manifest.

Now, I can say that I “fear” God, that I have a reverential awe *of* Him, nothing but respect *for* Him. But if I then go out and live my life in a manner that’s completely offensive *to* Him and in my heart I’m not being real *with* Him, than I don’t *fear* Him. It’s the fear façade, it’s lip service, God is looking for *life* service, not out of legalism and jumping through hoops (that’s religion), but because I love Him, I’ve surrendered my life (truly/completely) to Him (that’s a relationship).

Praising God, fearing God, and *delighting in the word of God*. These 3 things should be clear cut characteristics of *any* child of God. Now the ungodly *despise* God’s word, God’s commandments, the godly *delight* in them; and notice not only do they delight in them and have a desire for them, they delight *greatly* in His commandments. It’s not a drag, or a drudgery, a penance kind of necessity, it’s a delight, a desire, something we long for inwardly.

The subsequent result of these things being what? That we will be blessed tremendously: notice, “Blessed is the man,” what man? The man who worships God, fears (or stands in awe of) God, and delights greatly in the word of God (that is, seeks to fellowship and cultivate a relationship with God); that man will be blessed by.

But notice not only will he/she be blessed of God personally, the blessing will extend outward to his/her family.

Vs2-3

Couple things here briefly, #1 As we noted not only will God honor the life that’s set apart to Him individually, but He will also extend His grace toward your succeeding family. Beyond that He will also use you to be a blessing to the body of Christ generally (the generation of the upright will be blessed). Listen, the scriptures know nothing of an isolated believer who ignores other believers. To the contrary the bible has nothing but rebuke for the one who seeks to isolate themselves from the body of Christ, we’re like unto a body, different parts, single in purpose. Unity in diversity, we all need each other, we’re to bless and build up one another.

Vs3

Now we do well to create a little context concerning this Vs. with regard to everlasting righteousness, we obviously see that in Christ, God's not going to lose track of you in eternity, His righteousness will cover you perpetually. with regard to wealth and riches I would say this; God did (*under the old covenant*) say that material wealth would be one of the evidences of His blessing upon His people. That's one reason the disciples were shocked when Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to fit through the eye of the needle than it was for a rich man to get into heaven. They were all, "Who then can be saved!" Jesus was stressing the fact that with men it's impossible to be saved, but for God nothing will be impossible.

However under the *new covenant* there's no promise of material prosperity for the people of God. Our blessings are spiritual, not material. Paul said, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*" Eph 1:3 Now God has promised to meet our needs as it accords with His riches in glory (Phil 4:19), that as we seek 1st the kingdom of God and His righteousness that He will add unto us the necessities of life. But beyond that we're to be content.

Something else we should recognize is the fact that Vs 1 isn't some sorta "charm" that will ward off the troubles of life. Think about it, which of these attributes did Job not possess? He had them all, he was a man of worship, who feared God, who walked in His ways, yet the greatest trials and tribulations man has ever known came upon him. So don't think that these things are a magical shield against problems and pains in life. As a matter of fact the believer in this psalm had dark times, received bad news and had his enemies. But he also had proper perspective, knew what it meant to *trust* in the Lord and walk in the *peace* of the Lord and was able to grow in the *grace* of the Lord, giving *glory* to the Lord despite his circumstances.

Vs4

One more benefit and 3 more fingerprints in the man of God's life. As for the benefit, "Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness," what does that mean? Well, the 1st thing we realize is that dark times *do* visit the righteous; as a child of God you're not exempt from difficult days and extremely trying times. But God causes *all things* to work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28), there arises light in the darkness. The other thing this could point to is the fact that God grants discernment to those who praise Him, fear Him and study His word that others simply don't have.

When others are “in the dark” the child of God can many times see clearly. God grants us discernment through His word. We read in Ps 119, “*Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*” Ps 119:104-105 God grants discernment through the knowledge of His word.

As for the fingerprints: The man of God will be gracious, full of compassion, and righteous; “Hmmm, where have I heard of those attributes before? Oh yeah they’re attributes of God!” Here’s the point, the man/woman of God will become more and more like God, if He is *in* you than His characteristics will be made manifest and shine forth *from* you.

Vs5-9

Here’s the idea; the man/woman of God exudes Christ confidence, they have a heart that’s steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Your problems might be big but you understand that your God is much bigger than any problem that might arise; be they personal threats (evil tidings), or whatever, God is in control. Now things may not be resolved immediately, consider David, consider Joseph, these guys waited for years, but God took care of them *and* their enemies. In the 27th Psalm David wrote, “*Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!*” Ps 27:14

Vs 9 emphasizes the generosity of this man and that through that God lifted him up and honored him among his peers (the “horn” being an emblem of strength). Paul quoted Vs 9 in 2 Cor 9:9 as an example to the believers to learn to be generous in supporting the work of the Lord and how God honors the cheerful/willful giver.

Vs10

This is one of the elements of Hebrew poetry, we do the rhythm and rhyme thing, they do comparing, compounding and contrast. The righteous will be blessed, enduring, steadfast, everlasting and established, the desire of the wicked will perish. The strength of the righteous will be exalted, the wicked will melt away.

The very 1st psalm has a similar feel and flow (Let’s read it): the blessing, stability and enduring quality of the righteous, the demise and sudden destruction of the wicked.

Psalm 113

Psalms 113-118 constitute the “Hallel” psalms (or praise psalms) which were sang during the celebration of Passover, as well as Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. So obviously you’ll note the emphasis on praise. The 113th Psalm in particular issues the command to praise the Lord both at its beginning and its end. So the exhortation to praise the Lord are sort of like bookends in this psalm and sandwiched between them are reasons, and rationale as to why we should praise Him.

Vs1-3

Notice we have here *who* should praise the Lord, *when* they should praise the Lord, and *where* they should praise the Lord. Who? “The servants of the Lord” if you belong *to* the Lord, if you’ve been purchased by the blood *of* the Lord, you have a duty to give *praise* to the Lord. He’s *redeemed me*, my natural response should be to *praise Him*.

When? Both *presently* and *perpetually*, “from this time forth, and forevermore!” The bible exhorts us to pray with out ceasing, here we have a similar exhortation to *praise* with out ceasing.

From *where* should we praise Him? From everywhere, anywhere and everywhere there are believers the name of the Lord should be praised. “From the rising of the sun to it’s going down,” or another way to understand that, “From the east to the west, everywhere and in all places, the LORD’s name is to be praised.” Why?

Vs4-6

This psalm emphasizes *who* God is, and *what* He does. #1 He’s high above all nations, He is exalted in His person, He is sovereign and in control of all things at all times. #2 He is exalted in His glory, “His glory above the heavens.”

Vs 5 asks the question, “Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high?” Like Aaron was mentioning Sunday morning, who has a résumé like our God, who calls forth dry land out of the waters, who creates *all* things out of *nothing*, who calls those things that aren’t as though they are and they come to pass?

Who knows the end from the beginning? Who is like the Lord our God Who dwells on high? You see it's a matter of proper perspective, when our problems seem too big it's because our perspective of God is too small.

Now here's the beauty of it all, God is high and holy, He's high above all nations, His glory above the heavens yet though He *transcends* us exceedingly, He's still concerned for us tremendously. Vs 6 "He humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth." You guys, let that statement soak into you for a minute, the One who is perfect in every way, Holy, Righteous, exalted high above all nations, His glory above the heavens...humbles Himself...He humbles Himself. I'm not sure we fully comprehend exactly what's included in that statement and if we did we'd undoubtedly stop this service get on our faces and just worship God with all that we are. What's incorporated in the statement, "God humbles Himself..."

Of course His humility was ultimately personified in Christ, who humbled Himself coming in the likeness of man being obedient to the Father to the point of death, even the death of the cross; and when we consider the exaltation of the Lord it only serves to enhance the condescension of the Lord. Isaiah writes, "*Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, And are counted as the small dust on the scales; Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.*" Isaiah 40:15 Yet His love *for* us and His grace *toward* us caused Him to stoop down to our level, to become sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him... David said it like this, "*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?*" Ps 8:3-4

Vs7-9

Now He doesn't raise up every poor person, nor does He give life to every barren womb. But the point here is that God does marvelous and mighty things for those in need, and those in distress; the idea is that God looks upon and lifts up the humble, those who are with out hope, destitute and afflicted.

Again the ultimate application and fulfillment finds itself in the fact that God takes those who are bankrupt and poverty stricken of spirit and raises us up in the heavenly places to be seated together with Christ; from death to life, from separation to salvation therefore God is worthy of our praise! Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up, He can take you from barrenness to blessedness. Praise the Lord!

Psalm 114

This psalm is a reflection *on* and a celebration *of* God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Which of course would be appropriate to sing at Passover which was instituted at that time (Ex 12).

Vs1-8

Of course Jesus declared that from the one who would believe on Him would flow torrents of living waters which was a reference to the life changing power of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

We see here that God parted the Red Sea to free them from bondage and He parted the Jordan River to take them into the Promised Land, there would be no MT, no Sea, no nothing that would keep God from getting them where He wanted them to be. The same is true for you and it's true for me, if He's begun the work He'll be faithful to complete it; whatever it takes.

When God delivered them from Egypt and set them free to serve Him they were able to accomplish His call in their lives; bearing witness to Him (the true and living God), writing and recording the Scriptures and bringing forth the Savior into the world.

When God delivered you from the bondage of sin He set you free to serve Him, that you might accomplish His call upon *your* life; bearing witness Him, bringing glory to Him and pointing others to Him.

We need to spend time in the presence of God, it's there that the biggest problems we face melt down and turn to nothing. Notice in Vs 2, "Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion." The name "Judah" means "praise," "Praise became His sanctuary..." What does the bible say? Ps 22:3 tells us that God is enthroned upon and inhabits His people's praise; "Judah became His sanctuary" "and Israel His dominion" "Israel" means "governed by God."

What a wonderful combination is portrayed in worship and submission. Do you want God to draw near *to* you, for others to sense Him *in* you? Be a person who gives your praise *to* God and leads a life of submission and surrender *before* God...

Prayer Points:

God we've sought to take in so much; may Your word soak in and sift through us, permeating and saturating us, overflow from us to the glory of Your name. May we be a people of praise, a people who fear You, walking in awe of you and delighting greatly/pursuing diligently a relationship with You; increase our appetite and longing for Your Word. We thank You God that no matter what the need, You're greater... You're greater than any need, or any problem we may face and we give You praise...