

- ***READ Psalm 36/PRAYER*** There are many things that the vast majority of men search for in their lives. Wealth, fulfillment, to make a difference are some that might come to mind. But I think there might be something that trumps them all and that something is happiness. People naturally seek to do those things that will bring them happiness and joy. Now, not all people find happiness in the same things. Some find happiness in family, some in possessions, some in love, and even some in other things...but I wonder...do these things bring true lasting happiness? What happens if family pass away? What happens if the possessions disappear? What happens if love dissipates? There must be something that actually brings lasting happiness, right? Let me suggest that this Psalm of David shows us where true and lasting confidence can be found.
- Before we get into the Psalm itself, notice something that is given in the heading of the psalm. It is said as with many psalms that it is for the choir director indicating it is a song. It is also indicated that this is a psalm of David, but something that is not often present is the addition that David is "the servant of the Lord." I think this plays a key portion in understanding the potential point of this psalm. It is also the reason why some refer to this song by the title "David's Song of Happy Service." As we go through this Psalm, consider David's reasoning for why it is the servant of God that is able to find true and lasting happiness.

I. The ungodly man does not find true happiness because he does not fear God.

A. Notice, firstly, the way in which ungodly man is described.

1. David writes that sin and transgressions speak directly to his heart. This seems to indicate that this man is so deep in sin that his very heart is overtaken and filled with it...it is a part of his character. **(v.1)**
2. He is also a man who has no fear or respect for God. He doesn't recognize the authority or lordship of God. **(v.1)** When anyone points out his transgressions against God's law, he is unwilling to acknowledge that such a thing even exists. **(v.2)**
3. Everything that comes out of his mouth is wicked and he is incapable of speaking that which is true. His constant living in sin and unwillingness to repent and do what is right keeps him from godly wisdom and good character. **(v.3)**
4. Even as he lies in bed where he should be resting, David says that his mind continues to plot his next evil scheme because instead of despising evil...he embraces it and lives by it. **(v.4)**

B. Consider the consequences of his actions and why he can't find true happiness.

1. Because of his pattern of living, he has set his feet as David says, "on a path that is not good." **(v.4)** He is known for exactly what is described in this psalm. When his name is mentioned in public, peoples' minds automatically make a connection between a sinful lifestyle and the man mentioned.
2. What happens when people automatically think of you as a sinful or wicked person? Well normally that would mean that people wouldn't trust you or be willing to befriend you or do business with you. Thus, this man would suffer because of his sinful lifestyle and certainly a person can't find true happiness when so many people will not trust him or want to be around him.
3. But don't forget that this man is unwilling to even acknowledge that he could be guilty of wrong so he will probably think that the problem lies with those who won't trust him or have a relationship with him.
4. Problems just continue to compound in the life of this ungodly man and he will never find true happiness.

David then switches gears and begins to focus on God and how he will bless and bring true happiness to the one who seeks to be His faithful follower.

II. God is ready and desires to bless those who know Him.

A. God's lovingkindness is a major focal point of this psalm.

1. Only twice is His lovingkindness specifically mentioned, but notice how it is mentioned. David says that it "**extends to the heavens**" **(v.5)** Then he proclaims "**how precious is Your lovingkindness.**" **(v. 7)** The NIRV states how "**priceless**" is His lovingkindness. We most often think of stones or other jewels as being precious, but even more so does David say is God's lovingkindness.
2. But what else is mentioned along with His lovingkindness? David also mentions the faithfulness of God and how it extends even to the heavens. His righteousness is like mountains. His judgements are like the deep of the ocean.

- B. God's lovingkindness is shown to those who know Him through these perfect attributes.
1. David doesn't just state these characteristics of God for fun, but he mentions them in connection with them being blessings to those who know God. *"The children take refuge in the shadow of Your wings."* (v.7) *"They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house."* *"You give them drink of the river of Your delights."* (v.8) *"With you is the fountain of life...in Your light we see."* (v.9)
 2. Those who know God are able to seek His help in the moment of trouble. They are able to be blessed by the one who gives every good blessing. They are able to find true happiness and life from the one who is the life giver. They are able to see the right way to go in this life because God is light and His Will lights our way.
 3. But...it must be realized and stressed that these blessings are for those who know God...so how can a person know God? John teaches us that knowing God comes through loving God. **(I John 4:6-8)** But what does it mean to truly love God? Jesus tells us that we express our love for God by keeping His commandments. **(John 14:15; I John 5:3)** Therefore, those who can enjoy these blessings are those who love God and keep His commandments.

So what happens when we love God, keep His commandments, and reap these rewards? Let me suggest that in doing these things we can find true happiness.

III. Those who live truly happy lives find their happiness in the Lord and serving Him.

- A. So many can't find true joy or happiness because they seek for happiness in all the wrong places.
1. Go back to what was mentioned earlier in the lesson. So many people think that happiness can be found in people, stuff, or other things of this world. However, the things of this world can easily let us down and fail to bring us any sort of happiness because of their temporal nature.
 2. The ungodly man can't ever find true happiness because he has been set on a difficult path because of his arrogance and love for wickedness in this life. David says that they are people who have fallen and cannot rise because of their sins against God. **(v.12)**
 3. So many people fall deeper and deeper into holes of despair because they just can't seem to find the happiness that they so badly desire, but this happens because true happiness in this life can't be found in things of this world. Everything can and will eventually let them down.
- B. Those whose happiness is rooted in faithfully serving Jesus will never be let down.
1. People will hurt us and let us down. Stuff will break and fail us. Things of this world just aren't built to last...but the God of heaven and the King of the eternal Kingdom will never hurt us or fail us.
 2. We are able to find happiness, even in the most difficult of times in this life, because our happiness is rooted in God and His lovingkindness that we know won't let us down because it extends to the heavens and is more precious than anything else. It is the reason why Paul is able to command that the Philippians always rejoice. **(Phil 4:4)** Even in trials they were to rejoice because the God they serve would continue to shower His lovingkindness upon them.
 3. David wants this to continue to be a blessing that is enjoyed by the faithful of God, thus he finishes out the song by requesting that God continue to shower His lovingkindness and righteousness upon the faithful who know Him. **(v.10)**
 4. He makes strong requests that he not become like the ungodly man who fails to see his sins and falls into the pathway of sin. **(v.11)** David knows that these ways will not bring joy or happiness, and he only desires to stay in the lovingkindness of God.

Where is true happiness found? David expresses in this song that happiness and joy comes through faithful service to God. As a servant of God and a man who sought His very heart, David was keenly aware of the better way of this life. May God help us to be a people who recognize the truth of this song so that we too might be able to sing it just as David did. May we be a people who rejoice always because we are a people who love and know God because we are willing to do His will in all things.