

“Blessed Are the Blameless”
(Psalm 119:1-8)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning,

We considered two things:

How Paul evangelized –

He did so out of love:

First for the Lord,

By giving himself to the One

Who gave Himself for him;

And second for his countrymen –

His concern for their eternal wellbeing

Helped him overcome

Any fear he might have had,

To go to the synagogue

To show them that Jesus is the Christ.

We need this kind of love,

Both for our Lord,

And for our neighbor,

If we are to reach out.

He also did it in a particular way:

He connected Jesus to their history –

Showing that He is the fulfillment

Of God's faithfulness to them;

We need to be able to show His connection
To what those we minister to already know:
Either from their church background,
Or from what they can see in the Creation,
That we might show them who He is.

The second thing we looked at
Was the importance of having a life
That matches the message we bring –

Paul's life was transformed –
As those who knew him before could testify,
And as he often shared in his own testimony.

David showed the life of God in his heart as well –
In the way he obeyed;
In the way he trusted;
And in the way he cared
For the wellbeing of his people –

That's why the Lord chose him
To be a picture of the King
He was one day sending to the world.

These things have to be true of us as well,
If we are to be useful to the Lord.

We saw they can be:

Both Paul and David

Didn't come into the world this way:

They had to be converted,

And they had to work –

They had *to use* the grace God gave them

To become more like Jesus.

Neither of them were perfect,

But I think we would agree,

They were much more like Jesus

Than many, if not all, we see today.

B. Preview.

Tonight, let's zero in

On how they became this way:

What they aimed at;

What their goal was.

If we could summarize it in one sentence,

It would be this:

They tried their best, by God's grace, to be blameless.

This is something that we, as Protestants,

Tend not to take as seriously as we should:

Because we know justification –

God's accepting us as blameless –

Is purely on the basis of what Jesus did –

By His grace alone –

And something we receive by faith alone –

So that it might be by grace alone and *not by works*.

Roman Catholicism, on the other hand,

Goes in the opposite direction

By making works a part of our justification –

They believe we're justified by grace alone,

But we have *to work* for that grace,

And God will only justify us,

When we become *blameless*.

We need to understand

That we are justified by grace alone,

Which we receive by faith alone,

But by a faith that is not alone –

The faith that justifies is a working faith:

The point we want to see this evening,

Is the harder we work at becoming blameless

The more useful we will be to God.

II. Sermon.

A. Our goal needs to be the same as Paul's –

The same as David's –

As Jesus: to live a life that is blameless.

1. That's what believers were seeking

Even in the Old Covenant –

As we see in the 119th Psalm.

The writer begins by pronouncing a blessing

On those who will live this way:

“How blessed are those whose way is blameless” (v. 1).

What does it mean to be blameless?

The word means to be complete, sound, whole;

It means to be innocent of any wrong;

To have integrity;

That no one can point a finger at you,

And make any charge stick.

Jesus is our example –

He’s the only One who really was without blame:

He had to be as the Son of God;

He had to be if He was to save us.

One time He challenged the Jews

To bring a charge against Him:

He said in John 8:46, “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?”

No one could,

Which is why when they put Him on trial,

They could only prosecute Him

By bringing witnesses who were willing to lie.

Our goal should be to be as blameless as Jesus –

We won't reach it on this side of heaven,

But we should want to be as much like Him as possible.

2. The psalmist isn't speaking here

Of imputed righteousness –

When we are clothed with Jesus' perfect life,

We are as perfect as He is –

That's why the Father can justify us.

He's talking about practical righteousness –

The way His life works its way out in our lives.

Look at the different ways

The writer explains what it means to be blameless:

In verses 1-3, "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, *who walk in the law of the LORD*. How blessed are those who *observe His testimonies*, who *seek Him with all their heart*. They also *do no unrighteousness*; they *walk in His ways*."

He doesn't say,

How blessed is the one

Who trusts in the Lord to justify him –

Though those who do are blessed –

But blessed are those

Who *obey* His Law/testimonies,

Who *seek* Him with their whole heart;

Who do no wrong, but only right.

Hold this standard up to David –

At least in his good years –

Isn't that what he did?

Wasn't this true of Paul?

It certainly was of Jesus.

Why did God give us His commandments?

Did He must want to inform us –

So that we would know what He wanted

If we ever decided to obey Him?

Was it to give us something to talk about –

Or argue about –

When we meet together for study and prayer?

He gave them to us so that we would do them.

The psalmist writes in verse 4, "You have ordained Your precepts, that we should keep *them* diligently."

He gave them as a blueprint for our lives –

To chart our course from earth to heaven –

To teach us what it means to be holy –

To teach us what it means to be like Jesus.

If we want to be like Jesus –

If we want to be blameless,

We need not only to keep them,

But to keep them diligently –

At all times,

With all we have.

B. There's a reason the psalmist gives

As to why we should keep them –

There are many reasons:

If we don't keep them,

The Lord will discipline us:

If we want fewer spankings,

We need to obey Him.

We should obey Him because we love Him:

Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

Our obedience is the measure of our love:

The more we obey Him,

The more we love Him.

The psalmist points to another reason:

Because of the blessing it brings:

Again, verse 1, "How *blessed* are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD."

To be blessed means,

Among other things,

To be happy

How does obedience make us happy?

The more we obey,

The more we're like Jesus:

If that's what we want to be,

Then we'll be happier when we do what's right.

The more we obey

And the less we sin,

The less shame we'll feel;

The stronger our assurance will be;

The more rewards we'll have –

These things will also make us happy.

But from what we've seen

In the lives of Paul, David,

And especially Jesus,

The more we obey –

The more our lives are blameless –

The more the Lord will use us.

The Lord chooses those

Who are blameless

To do His greatest works –

To bring Him the most honor –

That's what makes us the happiest –

But it only comes in the path of obedience.

C. And so finally, what should we do?

Notice what the psalmist did:

1. He first prayed that the Lord

Would strengthen him to be blameless:

We read in verse 5,

“Oh that my ways may be established to keep Your statutes!”

We can't do this on our own –

That's why the Father sent the Son,

That's why the Son sent the Spirit,

That's why we need to pray,

And look to Him every day for strength.

If we don't give ourselves to prayer,

We'll never reach this goal.

2. Second, he remembered the shame he felt

Each time he failed and dishonored His Lord,

And let that motivate him not to do so again:

We read in verses 5-6, “Oh that my ways may be established to keep Your statutes! Then I shall not be ashamed when I look upon all Your commandments.”

How do we feel

When we read the Bible,

And come across a command

That we've failed to keep;

Or an example of someone

Who honored the Lord,

When we haven't honored Him?

Jesus calls us to make disciples

Of all the nations.

Peter tells us to be ready at all times
To give those who ask us a reason
For the hope we have.

Paul tried to convince everyone he met
That they needed Jesus –
His fellow Jews,
The Gentiles,
The soldiers in Caesar's house,
Even governors and kings.

Stephen boldly pointed out the sins
Of the rulers of Israel,
Knowing he would most likely die –

Jesus spoke the truth to His own,
Knowing they would crucify Him.

When we compare our lives to theirs,
How do we feel?

Wanting to honor the Lord –
Rather than dishonoring Him –
Can be a powerful motive to pray
For the strength to overcome our sins
And do what He calls us to do.

3. Third, wanting to be blameless
He read God's Word

And thanked Him every time

He gave him more insight into His Word:

We read in verse 7, “I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments.”

If we want to be blameless,

We need to read God’s Word –

For His definition of what it means to be blameless –

And thank Him every time He reveals more of His truth.

4. And finally,

The psalmist resolved to do

What the Lord showed him,

While relying on His grace for the strength to carry it out.

We read in verse 8, “I shall keep Your statutes; do not forsake me utterly!”

“I will do what you say, only do not leave me to do this on my own.”

If we would be useful to the Lord,

We must resolve by God’s grace

To live as blamelessly as humanly possible.

And so,

Let’s pray;

Let’s allow our failures to motivate us;

Let’s mine His Word to learn His truth

And be thankful when He reveals it;

And let’s resolve to do what He commands,

Relying on His strength alone to do it.

What makes the difference
Between someone the Lord uses powerfully,
And someone He doesn't use much at all?

God uses the blameless,
While He sets aside the blameworthy.

If we want to be truly happy,
Let's seek to be blameless –
To be like Jesus. Amen.

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