

BLESSING OF HIS PRESENCE

Wednesday, February 21

Reading: Psalm 21

Psalm 21:6 *Surely you have granted him unending blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence.*

7 *For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.*

Psalm 21 continues the thoughts and themes of the previous psalm. While Psalm 20 was a prayer before going out to battle, Psalm 21 is a prayer of thanksgiving after the battle had been won. God had answered the prayers lifted up in the previous psalm. From this psalm we should learn the importance of thanksgiving and the blessing of God on a life that is focused on Him.

Again, David remembers that his victories come through the Lord's strength (21:1, 13). This is the first blessing we need to grasp. God's strength is the only way we can have the joy of victory in our lives.

Next David refers to the blessing of answered prayer (21:2, 4). When our hearts are in tune with God our heart's desire will be His desires, not our own. Prayer is not manipulating God to get what we want. It is shaping our hearts to His heart.

David also speaks of the "unending blessings" that he has received from God (21:3, 5-6). This included the honor of serving as His king in Israel and the greatness His victories have brought among the people. But for David, the thing that brings him the greatest pleasure is "the joy of Your presence." Are you seeking God for what you can get or are you excited simply to come into His presence and let Him delight you with His Word and in prayer?

The king realizes that his unshakable trust has nothing to do with his military might or personal wisdom. It is because of God's "unfailing love" (21:7). When troubles come, we far too often resort to our own wisdom and means. We leave God as a last resort when all our plans fail. But if we throw ourselves on God's unfailing love first, many of the pains and consequences of the trial fade away.

The last part of this psalm (like many of the psalms) sounds vindictive to our western ears. But we must remember that the nations who opposed David were really opposing God. They wanted to wipe Israel from the earth and stamp out the name of God. David is merely the instrument of God's judgment. They are God's enemies and they plot evil against the Lord. Both the Old and New Testament instructs us that "Vengeance is Mine, says the Lord" (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30). We are not to be looking for revenge but leave it in the hands of God. In His time, God will punish His enemies.

So what has this psalm taught you about thanksgiving and praise? What lessons have you learned about what it means to seek after the joy of His presence? Take some time today to shape your own thanksgiving psalm and praise the Lord for His blessings.

THRU THE BIBLE Reading: Leviticus 19-21; Mark 10