

“Count Your Many Blessings!”

Psalm 103:1-5; Philippians 4:8-9

Intro. – Often God’s creation serves as some of the best illustrations to principles found in His Word. Recently I found but another example of this. The Robin, that red-breasted bird whose appearance announces the arrival of Spring, is one of few birds that sings cheerfully *come rain or shine*. Yes, when other birds are silenced by dreary, rainy days, the reassuring notes of the Robin can still be heard.

Let me use this to illustrate the will of God in our lives. God wants and desires contentment from and for His people. He wants this *come rain or shine*. He has provided the blessings to make this possible. In a sense He has given us rain coats (e.g. a blessed assurance) to help us be content even when trials come our way. In short, we have every reason to be like the Robin = *singers in the rain*.

But, dear brethren and friend, you know as well as I that we all have been *weepers in the sunlight* rather than *singers in the rain*. Instead of our theme song being “Joy in Serving Jesus,” we’ve all one time or another have broken out with a resounding verse of *Gloom, Despair and Agony on Me*. What causes this phenomenon? Why are you and I at times discontent? In short, it stems from the same reason there is so much discontent in the world – too many get wrapped up in their troubles/trials and forget their blessings.

Purpose: to better understand that growing in happiness means counting our blessing not our trials

The mad pace of our times and its tensions have put pressure on us to concentrate on the negative (i.e. troubles) to the neglect of the positive (i.e. God’s blessings). Note: not advocating Norman Vincent Pealism...; instead, looking to our two texts where we learn our need to concentrate on counting our blessings, not our troubles. This counting takes place in two main areas:

I WE ARE BLESSED PHYSICALLY

- Philippians 4 alludes to and Psalm 103 specifically states our need to take inventory of God’s blessings
- Psalm 103:2 says, “*forget none of His benefits*” & Philippians 4:8 “*...think on these things!*”
- what are some of these “benefits” and “things” physically speaking?

A. We Have the Necessities

1. Food is a necessity – without be physically impossible to exist unless you believe the following:
 - a. Illus. – UPI story tells of Willey Brooks, age 47 of Larkspur, CA. He is the founder of the *Breatharian Institute* states the need to live only on air... food is poison. Brooks claims he had gone for 19 yrs without any food... Article went on to explain how he was recently caught going into a 7/11 store buying junk food.
 - b. we have abundance of food to the point we have a national obsession of loosing weight
 - c. fact remains that none of us here are on the verge of starvation; yet, often take for granted.
2. Clothing is another necessity – without it modesty wouldn’t be... elements too much handle...
 - a. we have clean and comfortable clothing... clothes go beyond this to “in style” – only in America can you get a brand new pair of blue jeans that look like their 10 yrs old...
 - b. nothing wrong with being “in style” but when we become troubled because we don’t have a certain “brand name” clothing we’ve crossed the line of counting our blessings...
3. Shelter is also a necessity – without it our existence wouldn’t be...
 - a. how blessed we are to have a roof over our heads that makes for clean, dry, comfort environment whether it be a modest dwelling or something extravagant.
 - b. yet, how often do we see and hear of envy, jealousy arousing from such discontent...

The point = our needs are being met. Discontent comes only because we forget our necessities are met!

B. We Have Luxuries

- “He that is content has enough. He that complains has too much.”
- 1. Not only blessed with physically necessities, we have above and beyond = luxuries
- 2. Illustrate what I mean with the following statistics:

- a. if your annual income exceeds \$500 you are in the upper 10% in world wealth\
- b. if you have more than one room, electricity, running water, phone, tv and any kind of auto whatsoever, you are in the upper 5% of the world.
3. In view of this we hear and say ourselves, “We’re barely able to make ends meet.” The point is, look at the ends we do make!

B. We Have Freedom

1. Thankful to be a part of a country known as “the land of the free and home of the brave.”
2. Thankful to be a part of a country “conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that ALL men are created equal.”
3. Realize there is a lot wrong with America... but, there remains a lot right with her too. Recognize the blessing of a free nation as being a blessing from God

Thus, it is time we start doing what God’s Word says: think and forget not! Only by counting our physical blessings will our physical troubles be put in proper perspective.

II WE ARE BLESSED SPIRITUALLY

- our texts specifically address our need to take constant inventory of God’s spiritual blessings
- Psalm 103 gives a beautiful summary to what these are:

A. Our Sins CAN Be Forgiven (v 3)

1. Note: not some or many or most but ALL
 - a. if so much as just a little sin remained unforgiven we would be just as unfit for heaven and fit for hell as though the whole weight of sins remained.
 - b. when God forgives our sins, He does so according to the extent Christ bore those sins on Cross!
 - c. Christ not only bore some, many or most, He bore them ALL and paid for their penalty.
2. This alone explains how a righteous and holy God CAN forgive sins – 1 John 1:7 “...and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
3. We now must accept this “gift” and come in contact with the blood of Christ – we do this at baptism (1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:1-4; Titus 3 etc.)...

B. Our Diseases CAN Be Healed (v 3b)

1. Note: this is not a promise for good health – it is something even better than that!
2. Sin literally sicken/dominates our bodies and minds – e.g. what is pride but lunacy, anger but fever, lust but leprosy? Fact matter is we love what we should hate and hate what we should love.
3. Romans 7:24-25 “*Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*”

C. Our Lives CAN Be Redeemed (v 4)

1. As David often had his life redeemed (bought back) we too can be purchased again if we so choose!
2. What we are brought back FROM is described as a *pit* i.e. we can pass from death to life in Christ!

D. Our Lives CAN Be Crowned (v 4)

1. *Mercy* = what your wife/husband, driving instructor etc. give you when you deserve justice!
2. Unlike Satan who has no mercy/compassion, through Christ we are loved with no greater love!

E. Our Lives CAN Be Satisfied (v 5)

1. Not with riches or many things; instead, with *good things* = wise!
2. God knows us better than we know ourselves – His blessings meet our REAL needs = needs spirit!

F. Our Lives CAN be Renewed (v 5)

1. Certainly this speaks of God’s promises sustaining our quest for Him!
2. Through His Spirit, Word, His *faithful* people—encouraged and given renewed strength!

3. Isaiah 40:28-31 *“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”*

Conclusion: A brilliant mathematics professor was walking across the campus of the university one day. He was so absorbed in thought that when a student greeted him, he passed by without responding. But, after going a few steps, the professor turned and said, “Pardon me, young man, could you tell me the way from which I came?” The young student dutifully pointed in the right direction. “Thank you,” said the professor, “Now I know if I’ve had my lunch.”

The professor was so intent upon solving a problem, everything else was secondary. How vividly this illustrates the dilemma we get into when we forget and don’t think about the blessings of God.

It has been said that every person lives in one of two tents: conTENT or disconTENT. If we are ever going to grow in happiness, we must begin now to count our blessings, not our troubles.