

## Sunday Morning Message

November 18, 2018 (Adapted from a message preached 11/19/17)

*Finding Happiness and Joy Through Reflection and Thanksgiving*

Text for Today's Message – Psalm 63

Congregational Reading – Psalm 63:4 - 7

### Introduction

*"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." (Psalm 63:5-7)*

### Introduction

You may think that this Psalm was written when King David was sitting on the throne of Israel, looking back upon all of the victories and blessings that he had received in his life. However, this Psalm was written when David was in the wilderness. It could have been when he was hiding from King Saul at the very beginning of his career, or it might have been when he was forced to flee Jerusalem because of the rebellion of his son Absalom. Either way, the context of this passage involves circumstances that were not good. David was fighting for his life, and the life of his men; yet, he was happy, he was thankful. He was happy because he knew that his life was in God's hands, and he trusted God completely. During these rough days in David's life, the thing that got David through was his reflection upon the goodness of God.

Reflection leads to Thanksgiving, and Thanksgiving brings about Praise, and Praise produces Happiness and Joy.

It is important to remember that reflection is not always involuntary. Sometimes we think about and remember things that are unpleasant, which will tend to produce the opposite effect, and even lead to depression. What I mean here by reflection is a process that you force your mind to go through. It is a voluntary act of the will, which causes your mind to think about things that will lift you up. And when you are lifted up, your joy can then be a blessing to others.

It is easy to reflect upon good things when life's circumstances are good, but it is also just as easy to be miserable when life's circumstances are not so good.

### Illustrate – Give example of good days (few)

I get a raise; I am on vacation; I just won a victory; etc.

### Give illustrations of bad days (also few)

I got fired; get a bad report from the doctor; major problem with a child; car breaks down; etc.

Give illustration of normal days (most days)

Nothing exciting happens either especially good or bad.

So, most of our days are kind of blah, some are bad. If we live “under the circumstances”, we will be kind of depressed most of the time; but, if we can learn the secret of reflection, we can experience the joys of the mountaintop every day.

It is all a matter of how we choose to think about it.

Illustration – Our happiness in many ways is a matter of perspective

A father receives a letter from his daughter who is away at Bible College studying Secondary Education and preparing for the ministry. The letter reads as follows:

Dear Dad,

I just wanted to write you and inform you that I am dropping out of college. I fallen in love with a guy named Jim, who I met at my job at Taco Bell. Jim is a great guy, though he is battling with some personal issues. He dropped out of high school in the eleventh grade in order to get married, but after a few years, the marriage broke up, and they are in the process of getting divorced. Jim has had some problems with the law, but I want you to know that regardless of what you may hear, He is not a drug dealer. He hardly ever even uses drugs any more, though he does still drink quite excessively. Anyway, we are moving in together. Could you please send us some money as Jim hasn't worked in over two years, and my job at Taco Bell can't pay for all of our expenses? By the way, I think I am pregnant.

On the next page the letter continued:

Dad, I want you to know that everything that I have written so far is completely untrue. I am not dating anyone. I don't even work at Taco Bell. But I am going to get a “C-” in my “Teaching Methods” class, and I will need a little more help with my tuition payments. I just wanted to put this bad news in a little perspective.

We can put our lives in perspective by carefully choosing what we reflect upon: Notice David's Reflections in this Psalm.

## I      Reflection Upon Present Principles (vs. 1 – 5)

David reflects upon the principle of God's lovingkindness, and it causes him to express his thankfulness for it. Then, he says that he will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. He wasn't experiencing marrow and fatness at that time, but in his heart, he was.

## **Present Principles that You and I Can Reflect Upon**

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." - (Hebrews 13:5)

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." - (Philippians 4:19)

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." - (Philippians 4:13)

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." - (Acts 1:8)

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD." - (1 Chronicles 28:20)

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." - (Ephesians 2:10)

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." - (Romans 8:28)

## **Illustrate – Who is at the center of your universe?**

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." - (Philippians 4:8-9)

## **II Reflection Upon Past Performances (vs. 6 – 8)**

David reflects upon what God has done for him in the past.

This is really the main thought of this morning's message. We need to learn to remember all of the wonderful things that God has done for us in the past:

Reflection leads to Thanksgiving; and Thanksgiving brings about Praise; and Praise produces Happiness and Joy.

## **Turn to Psalm 100**

God has been good to you and me. Though, we may have had a few dark days in our lives, we are all doing far better than we deserve.

Make a list of things to praise God for. Keep a journal that you can look back on. You can recall some of these blessings when you are going through the dark days. They will cheer you up.

Past Provision – Bible College Illustrations

### III      Reflection Upon Future Promises (vs. 9 – 11)

*"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* - (John 14:1-3)

*"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* - (1 Corinthians 15:51-58)

We have a wonderful future, not only in Heaven, but also in this life. We have the privilege of living on earth in one of the most exciting times in the history of the world. We are God's ambassadors to this lost and dying world. Think about how God can use you in the future to advance his kingdom.

I get excited knowing that even though I may have failed in the past, I still have a future. God's got something for me to do. And, He has something for you to do as well.

#### Illustrate - Poem

Forget each kindness that you do as soon as you have done it. Forget the praise that falls to you the moment you have won it. Forget the slander that you hear before you can repeat it. Forget each slight, each spite, each sneer, whenever you may meet it. Remember every promise made and keep it to the letter. Remember those who lend you aid and be a grateful debtor. Remember all the happiness that comes your way in living. Forget each worry and distress; be

hopeful and forgiving. Remember good, remember truth, remember heaven is above you. And you will find, through age and youth, that many will love you.

## Conclusion

Happiness and Joy come through proper reflection, which in turn produces thanksgiving. Thinking about the right things will cause you to realize that God is good, and life, though sorrowful and even painful at times is, for the most part, good.

David reflected upon the present principles found in the Word of God.

He also remembered what God had already done for Him in the past. Look past your present circumstance and remember how God brought you through the trials of yesterday.

Finally, David thought about his bright future with God. You and I have a bright future with the Lord. God's been good to me in the past, but it only gets better in the future. Someday, I will leave this old, sin cursed, earthly tabernacle and enter into glory. I'll be reunited with dear friends and family that have already made that journey. All of the sorrows of the past will be forgotten, and I will be with the Lord forever. The future is looking up. It may get a little rough down here at times, but it will soon be a whole lot better for the child of God.