

Focus Upward and Focus Outward (2 of 5)

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Date: 29 March 2020

[0 : 00] Welcome back to Message 2 from Braemar Baptist Church. This is from Psalm 112, verses 1 through 9, and I'm entitling it Focus Upward and Focus Outward.

Psalm 112. Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land.

Each generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. Even in darkness, light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous one.

Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely they will never be shaken. A righteous man will be remembered forever.

He will have no fear of bad news. His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure. He will have no fear. In the end, he will look in triumph on his foes.

[1 : 10] He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. Psalm 112, verses 1 to 9.

Think with me about this individual described in the psalm. What does it say about them? If we look at verse 8, actually, let's go back to verse 7.

It says, He will have no fear of bad news, because his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, so he has no fear.

We can also see in verses 5 and 9 of the psalm that he is a generous individual who lends freely and gives open-handedly.

One of the damaging ways that crisis can impact our psyche is that it can make us self-centered and self-absorbed, both as individuals and even as a society.

[2 : 08] If there are only two left on the shelf, I'm taking both. After all, I need to look out for number one, which is myself and for my family. Jesus pushes back against that mindset.

He encourages us to stay focused on the needs all around us, even in times of crisis. If we look at Luke 6, verse 38, Jesus says, Give, and it will be given to you, a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap.

For with the measure you use, it will be measured unto you. Amen. Strive to not permit the urgency of the moment to overwhelm your core biblical values.

In fact, it's in times like these that we discover what we really, truly believe. I watched a woman in the grocery store yesterday buy the maximum permitted number of several different canned goods, go through the checkout aisle, and then put them into the food bank box.

All of them. Before leaving the store. What a truly humbling experience. One that won't make the news, and one that I hope is being replicated in stores across our city.

[3 : 35] Let me encourage each of us to push back against the temptation to become self-centered during this time, and instead, to strive to be focused upward and outward.

It's a really, really great way to live. Lord, I pray that you would bless me today with a spirit of generosity as I remember how incredibly generous you have been to me.

Amen.