

The Portrait of Godliness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 September 2022

Preacher: Walt Alexander

[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments. His offspring will be mighty in the land. The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. Light dawns in the darkness for the upright. He is gracious, merciful, and righteous. It is well with the man who deals generously and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice. For the righteous will never be moved. He will be remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news. His heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

[1 : 26] His heart is steady. He will not be afraid until he looks in triumph on his adversaries. He has distributed freely.

He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. His horn is exalted in honor. The wicked man sees it and is angry.

He gnashes his teeth and melts away. The desire of the wicked will perish. May God bless the hearing and the preaching of his word.

Many years ago, one of the men who lived with me in the seminary dorm was from the country of Rwanda. I quickly learned what it meant to be from Rwanda in those days.

In 1994, the African country was ripped apart by genocide. After a power struggle for several years, the Hutu people gained control and began killing off a smaller ethnic people called the Tutsis in Rwanda.

[2 : 41] In just over 90 days, one million people were killed. My friend, Benjamin, is a Tutsi. One night, he told me the story of his narrow escape of watching every member of his family be executed and lying as though dead until the Red Cross came upon him and rescued him.

As you can imagine, years later, my friend, and the country of Rwanda is still struggling to put things together. Struggling to piece things together, to make amends, to find a path forward. In fact, on the 20th anniversary of the genocide, an American photographer went to Rwanda to capture their attempts at reconciliation.

But rather than taking pictures all throughout the country and writing a story, he took a more ambitious approach. He carefully staged portraits of Tutsi people with their Hutu attackers.

The portraits are not friendly and not warm, but they're gripping. In one, a woman rests her hand on the shoulder of the man who killed her father and brothers.

[4 : 05] In another, a woman poses with a casually reclining man who looted her property and whose father helped murder her husband and children.

These portraits are deeply moving. They're portraits that are heart-wrenching. They tell the story of brokenness and reconciliation. This morning, we're presented with a kind of different kind of portrait in Holy Scripture.

It's a portrait of greatness. Last week, we began our series of 10 psalms studying Psalm 11, and this psalm carefully mirrors Psalm 111.

Both psalms include the same number of verses, the same number of lines, and many of the same words. Both psalms are acrostics. The idea is they trace through the Hebrew alphabet to paint a full and complete picture.

But the subject is very different. Not too drastically different, but different. Psalm 111 is focused on the greatness of God, whereas Psalm 112 is focused on the greatness of godliness.

[5 : 13] If Psalm 111 is a portrait of the greatness of God, which it is, Psalm 112 is a portrait of a godly life. And in many ways, I feel like this is why this is a tremendous gift.

Elton Trueblood once said, every man needs a perpetual vision of greatness. You know, we're not often changed by laws and commands or principles.

No one went to Leviticus and had their lives changed. We're changed by compelling visions and pictures and portraits of godliness. We're changed by the stories of Abraham and so many others. We're not primarily changed by what is taught, but by what is caught. Seeing godliness take the shape of lives like David and Ruth and Ezra and Joseph and Deborah and Abraham and many others down to today.

And so this psalm is in many ways a biblical vision for godliness, a biblical vision for how to live. We desperately need it. And so you know where we're going is aspire to live a godly life, securing a greatness that no one and nothing can take away.

[6 : 19] Aspire to live a godly life, securing a greatness which no one and nothing can take away. The first point is the relations of the godly. The relations of the godly.

But the psalm begins in the same way Psalm 111 began, as Gil already told us. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord is the way it begins.

This group of psalms, in fact, are often called the halal psalms, which just means to praise. The string of psalms emphasizing praise, admiring and exalting and adoring our personal and covenant God, Yahweh.

But whereas Psalm 111 kind of begins with its praise and tells you why you should praise the Lord, Psalm 112 turns to consider the godly man, and it turns first to the relations of the godly.

The psalm begins with his relation to the Lord. Psalm 111 ended by saying, And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. That phrase straight from Proverbs 1-7.

[7 : 27] This psalm outlines the life of one who fears the Lord. Now, it's outlining a man who fears the Lord. But we're going to unpack it like anyone who is godly is no less true of women as well.

So look down there in 1-B. It says, Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments. Now, this verse and much of the psalms is parallelism.

So the second line explains and unpacks the line before it. So it says, Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. And we might say, Amen. Obviously. But who is the man who fears the Lord?

And the second line supplements that for us. So blessed is the man who fears the Lord. So who is that man? Who greatly delights in his commandments. If Psalm 111, it tells the works of the Lord that are studied and are his delight.

In Psalm 112 right here, it's the word of the Lord and his commandments and his statutes and his rules. Like Psalm 1, the most fundamental discipline of the godly life is delighting in the law of the Lord with all your heart.

[8 : 42] Meditating on it day and night, just as Psalm 1 captures so well. What grips the life of the godly is God's will and his command.

The fear of the Lord then is not what we often think. It's not cringing dread or trembling terror. It's an eagerness to receive from the Lord.

You meditate day and night. Literally meditate means just mumble over these things. You know, we mumble over all sorts of things all throughout the day. But often not the law of the Lord.

And so meditating. So the fear of the Lord is not cringing dread. It's eagerness to receive a clinginess to God. To receive from his commands.

To submit to all he says. And then the psalmist says, blessed is this man. Who greatly delights. This man is truly blessed.

[9 : 41] This man is truly happy. This is where true happiness is. You know, nothing in life is more desired, more hard to find, and more baffling than happiness.

We all dream and strive for what we think will make us happy. Whether it's good health or good looks. Ideal marriage or success. Comfortable home or fame. But the life of the godly. In fact, I was reading a letter yesterday from John Newton.

He was writing someone a letter. This is the guy that penned Amazing Grace. He was just warning him and saying, the life of the godly is the happy life. That's right from this passage.

The life of the godly is the happy life. Fearing God is the happy life. Interestingly, a couple years ago, I was reading a study by atheist psychologist Jonathan Haidt.

That's H-A-I-D-T. Very well known. He said, would you rather be Bob or Mary? Doing this study. He said, Bob is 35 years old, single, attractive, and athletic.

[10:44] Earns \$100,000 a year and lives in sunny Southern California. He's highly intellectual. And he spends his free time reading and going to museums.

Kind of sounds like a sophisticated life. So that's Bob. He continues and describes Mary. Mary and her husband live in snowy Buffalo, New York, where they earn a combined total of \$40,000 a year. Mary is 65 years old, overweight and plain in appearance. She is highly sociable. She spends her free time mostly in activities related to church.

She is on dialysis for kidney problems. Remember who this is, Jonathan Haidt. Before unveiling the conclusions to his study, Mr. Haidt said, Bob seems to have it all.

And few readers of this book would prefer Mary's life to his. But if you had to bet on it, you should bet Mary is happier than Bob. But listen, he continued.

[11:54] He said, the first of Mary's advantages are her stable marriage and her church. This is an atheist.

He says, and I quote, people need love, work, and a connection to something larger to be happy. Now that's out of the mouth of Baysom.

Maybe. Amazing. The life of the godly is a happy life because it's not self-oriented. It's bound to the Lord. A clinginess to the Lord is connected to something larger, to fearing him, to giving attention to his word, to following the path of holiness and godliness, to loving God.

Richard Baxter says it well. Though you cannot make him happy by your holiness, lest we get these things confused, you shall find that he will not make you happy without it. Now that we'll preach.

That is so helpful. Though you cannot make him happy by your holiness, you shall find that he will not make you happy without it, without being clinging to something larger than your own little ambitions and my own little ambitions.

[13:03] The psalm continues. So it's telling us that the foundation of this godly man is this delighting in the law of the Lord. Greatly delighting in the law of the Lord. Then it flows out to his relation to his family.

Look in verse 2. He says, His offspring will be mighty in the land. Literally it says, or actually Psalm 111.2 says, Great are the works of the Lord. Psalm 112.2 says, Grand is the family of the man who fears the Lord.

The same letter is beginning there. So great are the works of the Lord. Grand is the man. There's such a strong parallel. What he's saying, because the godly don't merely meditate on the law of the Lord. The godly reflect the Lord.

God does great things, and so too the godly do great things. That's what he's saying. The world is filled with the great works of the Lord. But the parallel here is the home is filled with the great works of a godly man and a godly woman.

Their children are grand, mighty, upright, vigorous, manly. Their children are blessed.

[14:09] They're commendable. They're worthy of praise. They're living the happy life. The idea is the happy life of a godly overflows into that first circle around him, into his family, into his children, into his wife, and into her husband.

This portrait is so provoking to me. The people closest to him and closest to her are the ones most marked by their life, most reflecting the glory of God.

Now, the godly reject our culture's definition of greatness. Our culture says you've got to be true to yourself. You've got to do what makes you happy.

You can't be bound by anything except what you want. The past couple weeks, there's been a lot of celebration and remembrance of Queen Elizabeth II. Some Americans seem like they're ready to go back.

Forget why we left. But her death and funeral have shown us again a striking contrast between Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle.

[15:23] Queen Elizabeth paints a picture of a life bound by duty to her family and her country. Prince Harry paints a different picture. A life bound to his own story.

Being true to himself. The psalmist would say, don't follow Prince Harry. Follow the queen. 70-what year reign?

Faithful? Follow the path of the godly. I mean, this is one of these fork-in-the-road passages. It's meant to compel you. Follow the path of the godly. Don't be true to yourself. Who are you?

Don't do whatever makes you happy. Go home. Do your best work at home. And man, I feel like this passage is so provoking to us. Who cares how much money you have made? Who cares what the community thinks about it? Who cares what famous people you have met? Tell me about your family. Tell me about your home. Your family needs your godliness.

[16:22] Don't cheat. There. Begs the question, mom and dad, who are you? Are you the lead taskmaster? The one everyone fears running around to make sure everything is straightened up and every hair is in its proper place.

Are you the lead cheerleader? The one pushing to them to chase every athletic interest and every athletic dream. Are you the lead teacher? The one dismayed at a bee and worrying them by living in the streets if they don't finish their homework.

Or are you the lead worshiper? Are you the one leading them in the happy life of godliness? Are you the one compelling them to follow the godly life? Is that your main thing?

If a kid walks out of your house today, what would he say the main song is? What's the main verse? What's the main thing mom and dad care about? John Piper says the greatest stumbling block for a child in worship is a parent who doesn't.

The greatest stumbling block is not a youth ministry that's not tailored to his needs. Or a worship band with no fog. Or a service with too much preaching. It's as great a stumbling block as a parent who doesn't worship Jesus Christ.

[17:27] Who says with their life something is more important. What's being caught in our homes. Point two, the riches of the godly. The riches of the godly.

The psalm continues by talking about the riches of the godly. Look in verse three. The wealth and riches are in his house. His righteousness endures forever.

All throughout the Bible. When the Bible talks about the house of the Lord, it talks about how great it is. It talks about the gold and the silver that would be the glory that is in his house. The many nations, Haggai too, that are coming into his house.

And so too, when God in this verse starts talking about the house of the godly man, he talks about its splendor. Wealth and riches are in his house.

His righteousness endures. Look at Psalm 111.3. It says, Okay, we agree with that, right?

[18:26] That's God. Psalm 112.3. Wealth and riches are in his house. And his righteousness endures forever. What's true of God is true of God's man.

What's true of God is true of God's woman. God is rich and so he is rich. God is righteous and so he is righteous. Now, does that mean that the righteous always prosper?

I mean, David said, I've never seen the righteous struggling for bread. But does that mean godliness leads to wealth and prosperity? We know from Ecclesiastes.

No. And the Psalm actually says that as well. Look in verse 4. It says, As light dawns in the darkness for the upright. He is gracious and merciful.

The Psalm is warning. Yes, wealth and riches are in his house. But darkness also dawns. Cars break. Jobs are lost.

[19:30] Businesses fail. The stock market falls. But look at what it says. The godly continue to be gracious, merciful, and righteous.

Look again at Psalm 111.4. Sorry to keep you going back and forth. But they mirror each other in a very profound way. Psalm 111.4. He says, He's called His wondrous works to be remembered.

The Lord is gracious and merciful. Now, that's not surprising to us. Because Exodus 34, 6, and 7 says, The Lord, the Lord, A God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

One of the most important two verses in the whole scripture. So it says in Psalm 111, The Lord is gracious and merciful. Here it says, The godly man, the godly woman, Is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

It's almost scandalous. They're mirroring God. They're reflecting Him in the most powerful way. His central DNA of being gracious and merciful is the DNA of this man.

[20:32] And this woman. So when light, When darkness comes, And life goes sideways, They continue to reflect God in the darkness, Decline, and disaster.

Look in verse 5. He says, He continues on this theme of money. He says, It is well with the man Who deals generously and lends. Who conducts his affair with justice. Not talking about social justice.

It's talking about uprightness. It's talking about balanced scales. It's talking about treating people fair And judiciously. But the idea still is he continues to be generous.

He continues to be generous. Now Taylor hit this last week. God provided food for the Israelites in the wilderness. God commanded the Israelites to leave the food on the ground that fell Rather than gather it up while harvesting for the poor.

God repeatedly demonstrates His care for the widow and the fatherless. And so too, the godly does the same thing. Generosity is at the heart of who God is.

[21 : 33] He's endlessly, effortlessly, and continually generous. And so too is the godly man or woman. So too is God's man or God's woman.

So don't wait for days of prosperity to be generous. One of the most provoking examples of generosity In the world, but also in scripture, 2 Corinthians 8, Is the Macedonian church.

We have this for you. And this is Apostle Paul. He says, We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God. That's what we're celebrating with Lauren, the grace of God. I realize we didn't tell you what Lauren and Scott did a minute ago.

They led the TG kids for two years. They led it through a pandemic. You know, I mean, it got a little crazy. It's the grace of God. So that's what Paul is saying.

I want to tell you about the grace of God. What it did in the Macedonian church. The grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia. For in a severe test of affliction, Their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty Have overwhelmed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

[22 : 35] For they gave according to their means, As one can testify, And beyond their means of their own accord, Begging us earnestly. You ever beg to be included in the offering?

You know, Begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints. And this, not as we expected, But they gave themselves first to the Lord and by the will of God to us.

Now notice the math. Abundance of joy, Extreme poverty, Equals wealth of generosity. Now that's incredible.

Abundance of joy, Extreme poverty, And wealth of generosity. We might begin to think that we would be more generous if we had more money. But the lesson of this verse is you'll learn more about your generosity when you don't have money.

David Garland helpfully says, Those who are disinclined to be generous when they are poor are not likely to suddenly become generous when they are rich. The point is, Someone who's been transformed by the grace of God and by God is generous.

[23 : 38] How could God, How could we not, How could we image God and not be generous? We who deserve His wrath and yet have received grace upon grace.

They're so amazed at what God has done, How He's met their needs and provided for them that they freely give. We must ask the question, How does your life line up with this portrait? How does your bank account line up?

Do you give? Do you tithe? Does your money line your pockets?

Or does it overflow into the lives of many others, the lives of the community? It's provoking.

Are you a godly man, godly woman? Wonderfully, the promise is true. Light dawns for the righteous. Now this is where the prosperity preachers have a lot of fun, but it goes well with the godly.

[24 : 41] It goes well with those who are generous. That's a scriptural principle. Prosperity returns to those who give. In actuality, God loves to bless the generous with more money.

Interesting, the only time in the New Testament where Psalm 111 is referenced is 2 Corinthians 9.9. That same passage on generosity.

Look in 2 Corinthians 9.8-9, He says, God is able to make all grace abound to you so that having all sufficiency at all times, and all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. Now that's a great promise. As it is written, Psalm 111, He has distributed freely.

He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. Listen to what he said. He who supplies seed, that's the Lord, the Lord who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase your harvest of righteousness.

Now you can imagine how prosperity preachers mess this text up. So just give and you'll get more coming your way. Come on. That's all it takes. Write that check today and mail it in.

[25 : 50] We're not doing an offering after this intentionally, but if you try to give all that you have away, God will give you more. You can't out-give God is what it's saying.

You can't out-give Him. If you continue to give in darkness, God will give you more. If you continue to give in the light and prosperity, God will give you more because God knows the money He gives you will not lie in your pocket but will produce a harvest of righteousness and He loves that.

So your financial problems may have more to do with your stinginess than anything else. Point three, the refuge of the godly. Now this is where it gets really good.

The refuge of the godly. Study this in verses six through eight. These next three verses unveil the refuge. They unveil the secret to this man's life, his success.

Threading through them are three negatives. Look down there with me in verse six. It says the righteous will never be moved. Verse seven, he's not afraid of bad news.

[26 : 53] Verse eight, he will not be afraid. Now those are verses you're like, what are you talking about? Who's not afraid? Reminds me of Macaulay Culkin, you know, at the end of Home Alone, the first one I think.

He walks out, he finally kind of sees everything full circle with the man that was shoveling, which I can't go into all those details, but he walks outside, I'm not afraid anymore. I'm not, I mean who can say that?

Who can say, who doesn't have fears to keep him up at night? If you don't, I'd like to meet with you after the meeting. I can give you a few of mine and I'll give you up. Guaranteed. Who, you know, this is not, is this the result of tough skin, a strong constitution, some source of supernatural strength?

And no, it's not. That's what's about to come into our mind and help us see. Psalm seven, or verses seven through eight are carefully composed to emphasize trust in the Lord. Look there with me again.

He says, verse seven, he's not afraid. His heart is firm, trusting the Lord. Back to his heart, heart is steady, he will not be afraid. So he's not afraid.

[27 : 58] You see that, see his marching up to trust in the Lord. He's not afraid. Bad news. His heart is firm. He's trusting the Lord. Back to his heart. His heart is steady. He will not be afraid.

What it's helping us understand is the way to find refuge in God. Interestingly, Psalm 111, seven says, the word of the Lord is trustworthy, firm, reliable.

But here it says, the heart of the godly is firm. Just like the word. Psalm 111, eight, the works of the Lord are sustained forever and ever.

But here it says, the heart of the godly is sustained, is steadied. It's carefully structured in such a way to unveil the heart, the secret, trusting the Lord.

The secret is not that it is always good news for the godly. It's not good news always.

[29 : 00] The secret is not that the godly can endure bad news by some super spiritual gift. The secret is the godly know where to go and what to do with their fears.

Now this will change your life if you'll let it. How does trusting God cause our hearts to be firm? Jeremiah 17 says, the heart is deceitful above all things.

Who can understand it? Galatians 5, 17 says, the desires of the flesh wage war against the desires of the spirit. My heart's not a peaceful place, it's a battleground.

How does it become firm? How is it made firm? Derek Kidner helps us out. A little bit of a clunky quote, but helpful. Trust, he says, talking about this passage, not in a hope for return, hope for turn of events, but in the Lord.

What is promised is not better news, but a steady heart. More exactly, it is a heart made firm, established and supported by better facts than its own courage.

[30 : 18] courage. So it's not the story of a pull up your bootstrap sort of courage, but by someone who knows the better facts that make all the difference, that make a heart firm.

the better facts that make all the difference in trusting God are many, I just want to name a few. The first is that all things and all people are in God's hands.

You know, when you're battling fear, we can be led to believe that we are in the hands of enemies, in the hands of men, in the hands of time and chance, but the opposite is true.

Enemies and all men, time and chance are in God's hand. They're doing His bidding all throughout the universe. Fact two, God's power is completely boundless.

God is in the heavens as we'll study in a couple weeks. God is in the heavens, He does what He pleases. God's not bound by anything. God does whatever He wants. Anyway, none can stay His hand, Daniel 4, and say to Him, what have you done?

[31 : 26] He answers to no one. He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we could think or ask or imagine. The only limit to God's power is His own mind, His own decision, His own will, His own decree.

He's limited by no man, nothing under heaven. So He's completely boundless, but He's bound, point three, or fact three, God's bound Himself to you with a promise. This God, in whom all things are in His hands, in whom is completely boundless, has bound Himself to you with His promise. The psalmist is praising Yahweh, not some absent creator, not some distant ruler, not some eternal judge, but your covenant and personal God who has bound Himself to you with His promise. It's a powerful thing that can take place when these facts begin to become our facts. One pastor was telling a story recently of doing something we've all done before that illustrates well the power of better facts.

He was going on the anniversary getaway with his wife to the beach. He checked the weather, you know, you've got the weather right there in your hand, you know, you don't have to get onto the news. Checked the weather.

[32 : 40] He was projecting rain every day. Ever done that before you're going out of town? You're like, oh my God, why don't you stay here? At least have the sun. You know, storms every day began to grumble and complain.

He called his wife over and said, would you look at this? Rain every day. Happy anniversary, baby, you know? And his wife said, honey, that's the weather for here.

You have to toggle this thing at the top to get the weather at the beach. Of course, he toggled the thing at the top. 80 degrees, sunny every day.

Better facts make all the difference. Better facts make, the way to fight fear, the way, you want to fight fear, you want to fight fear, you want to know how to fight fear, the way to fight fear is with better facts.

There are facts that are troubling. There are definitely troubling facts. You have an accuser who would love to destroy your faith. You have chronic pain that would love to shrivel your faith. You have fears that would love to swallow your faith, for there's better facts.

[33 : 51] All things and all people are in his hands. He's completely boundless. He answers to no man and he's bound himself completely to you with his promise. He said to you, I will never leave you.

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Now, my favorite author on fear, John Flavel, helpfully says it this way. Let us view, talking about the power of God, the power of God in its relation to the promises, so that it becomes our sanctuary in the day of trouble.

So if the power of God be the chamber, it is the promise of God which is the golden key that opens it. If the power of God be the chamber, it's the promise of God which is the golden key that opens it. What I'm trying to tell you is the power of God is the chamber, it's the sanctuary, it's the refuge, it's the power of God. The name of God is a strong tower. The righteous man runs to it and is safe. The power of God is a deep basement in a tornado, it's a dry cage in the midst of a hailstorm.

It's the power of God is the chamber that you need to be in. You need to be in the chamber of the power of God but the way in is the promise of God. It's the golden key.

[35 : 08] It's what opens the door what leads you to safety, security, and strength. That's the way to fight fear. To take up the power of God, take the golden key and go into his chamber.

Go into it. Take the promise and run to him from fear. Run to him. He's the one who's powerful. He's the one who said, take up the promise, I'll never leave you. He's the one who said, I'll never forsake you.

He's the one who said, I will keep you. He's the one who said, I will go before you. And behind you. He's the one who said, I'll instruct you, teach you, and direct you. He's the one who said, I will uphold you. He's the one who said, I will fight for you.

He's the one who said, I'll renew your strength so you mount up with wings like eagles. He's the one who said, I'll give you rest. Take up the promise. You'll find yourself hiding, not in your own strength, not in what you can pull up with your own bootstrap, but in the strength of the Lord and the strength of his might.

And how much more for us who are on this side of Calvary, on this side of all that he's done for us in Jesus Christ and laying bare the riches of heaven saying, come into this chamber and eat and drink and be merry.

[36 : 17] Every promise is yes and amen in Jesus Christ. He who did not spare his own son is not going to nickel and dime us now. He's saying, come, take anything you like. I gave you Jesus to tell you.

I'm giving you everything. I'll give you everything you need. You want to, you want to get over fear? Run to this God. Run to his chamber. He's the one who said, we don't fear if God's for us. Who can be against us? Who can bring a charge against God's elect? It's God who justifies. Who can condemn? Christ Jesus intercedes for us who is like us and yet unlike us, not with sin. Intercedes for us now. What can separate us from the love of God? Can tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, a sword? No. No. Love, we get killed all day long. We'll rise up. John Calvin used to say that the godly are like palm trees. You ever seen a palm tree in a storm?

[37 : 24] Not exactly a flattering sight. You know, they're just swaying like doing a limbo or something like, you know, they're going back and forth and back and forth. But what he said, we're like palm trees. We might get banged around, but we're coming up when the sun comes up.

We're going to come back up. That's what I want to be. Isn't that what you want to be? That's the secret. That's all I got.

That's the way the heart is firm. That's the way it's sustained. That's the ticket. Look at verse 8. His heart is steady, sustained, established.

He will not be afraid until he looks in triumph on his enemies. He's not going to be afraid until then. The idea is there's an until for all your fears, worries, and distresses. There's enough in the promise to get you to the end of your fears, worries, and distresses.

[38 : 43] Isn't that amazing? Your fears, worries, and distresses have an expiration date. The promises of God do not. The Lord takes us over the line, you know what I mean?

Run to the sanctuary. There's room. Take up the golden key. Point four, the rewards of the godly. The rewards of the godly.

He ends and says, he's distributed freely, verse 9, he's given to the poor, his righteousness endures forever. The wicked sees it and is angry, gnashes his teeth and melts away.

His righteousness endures forever. What's that mean? On one hand, it means that when Jesus returns, every good deed he does will be rewarded. All his sins will be forgotten, but all his good deeds will be remembered.

But it also means his righteousness endures forever in the sense that it leaves a wake. You ever cut through a lake with a boat? The wake left behind? Well, that's the righteousness, that's what righteousness in a man's, in a woman's life does.

[39 : 55] It leaves a wake. It leaves things different. His horn is exalted. It's a vivid image.

The horn for an animal rises above his body and symbolizes strength and dignity. That's why you want a big rack when you take down a deer.

Other animals part for him. Other animals respect him and honor him, so too the horn of the godly is exalted. The life of the godly calls forth honor, praise, and respect.

But the honor is not for everyone. At the end of this psalm, there's a striking conclusion. conclusion. He says, the wicked man sees that, he sees the righteousness of the godly man and rejects it. There's no participation trophies here.

[41 : 03] Enter through the narrow gate, wide as the gate and broad as the road that leads to destruction. Why does he perish? Is it because God didn't want him or didn't offer himself, didn't invite him? No, the wicked perish because he rejects it.

He rejects it. Every man needs a perpetual vision of godliness. We need a vision.

You know, in many ways, this passage is like a fork in the road. It's the fork of the road that Jesus Christ brought to this world. What was so repulsive to so many people around Jesus Christ was the unavoidable smell of his godliness, his righteousness.

And so there's two ways to respond to a passage like this and to Jesus Christ. Rejected and perish or embrace it and live. It's a vision.

It's not meant to be like some checklist we take home and kind of nod out. Yeah, I mean, you clock out. Oh, we got these, we got these. No, it's a vision that's meant to compel us to follow in Jesus

