

The Righteous Man's Privilege

by James Smith

The righteous are blessed by God with wealth, honor, and happiness, and are safe because of God's gracious favor and protection.

Scripture: Psalm 5:12, Psalm 139:23, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 3:22, Ephesians 2:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 13:15, 1 Peter 1:5

Topics: "Righteous Living", "Divine Blessings"

Description

James Smith preaches on the blessings of the righteous as highlighted in Psalms 5:12. He emphasizes the importance of seeking close communion with God, striving for sincerity, sanctification, and salvation through faith in Christ. Smith explains that God blesses the righteous by making them rich, honorable, and happy, surrounding them with His favor as a shield of protection. He urges listeners to trust in the Lord, acknowledge Him, and offer continual praise for His grace and salvation.

Transcript

"For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous! You surround them with your favor as with a shield!" Psalm 5:12

When we read the Psalms of David we are constantly struck with the manner in which he sighs for, and seeks close, sensible, and heart-affecting communion with God. He cannot be satisfied with anything less than the presence of God, and the power of divine things within his soul. He knew as well as we do--what coldness, deadness, and earthliness, meant; but he could not rest while under the power of these things--he sighed, he prayed, and struggled to get into soul liberty.

He wanted to be happy in God, and to see others happy. Happiness, if not of the essence, is the ornament of true religion. Nothing impresses, affects, and wins upon sinners--like seeing the Lord's people happy. To build upon our feelings is wrong--but to be satisfied with a religion which does not produce the deepest, holiest, happiest feelings possible--is equally wrong. Faith, if it is genuine, always leads us to Christ, makes us happy in Christ, and inspires us with a desire to make and see others happy. Hence in the context we read, "Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield!" Let us notice,

First, the OBJECT of God's Blessing.

"Surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous!" Who are the righteous? They are the sincere. They all hate pretense. They dread being deceived themselves, and they will not deceive others. They often say less than they feel, from the fear of misleading those who hear them. The life exhibits the desires and aims of the soul. They frequently examine themselves to prevent self-deception; they compare themselves with the marks of God's people as laid down in his Word; and lest they should be partial they fervently pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."

Saving grace always makes a man honest, and honesty appears in sincerity. If you cannot take a man's word, or trust a man's promise--you are justified in doubting his Christianity; for unless religion makes us truthful--it does nothing for us. The religion of a liar, or a pretender--is not the religion of Christ.

The righteous are sanctified. They are separated from the world, and are set apart for God. This separation is the effect of inward operation, or the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. They are made partakers of a Divine nature--and this unfits them for the gaieties, pleasures, and carnal pursuits of the world--and prompts them to seek fellowship with God, conformity to God, and the enjoyment of the presence of God. The Lord's people are a holy people. Influenced by holy principles, they walk by holy rules--and thus appear in the beauties of holiness before their fellow-men.

The righteous are saved. Saved in the Lord. Saved by grace. Saved through faith.

They are saved from the MISTAKES into which many fall, and as prudent men, look well to their goings. They will not build on an insecure foundation. They will not trust in an arm of flesh. They dig deep and lay their foundation on the rock.

They are saved from soul-destroying ERRORS. God's written Word is their standard. They bring every sentiment to this. They try every doctrine by this. They will not be led blind-folded by pope or prelate, by priest or pastor, by antiquity or what is new; but they search the Scriptures, and compare all things therewith.

They are saved from SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. They renounce everything of their own, to trust in the blood shedding and obedience of Jesus Christ alone. They place no confidence on anything they do, not even on anything they feel--but rely on the finished work of Christ alone. Their title for heaven--is in Christ alone. Their fitness for heaven--is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. Their guide to heaven--is the Bible alone. The proof they present to their fellow men--is good works alone. They must have Christ--and all his merit; the Holy Spirit--and all his grace; the Bible--and all its doctrines, precepts, promises, and requirements; and a holy and consistent life--or they cannot claim to be considered righteous.

They are saved from SIN. The conscience is delivered from the guilt of sin; the affections are delivered from the love of sin; the will is delivered from the power of sin. And the consequence is, that the man in his life is delivered from the practice of sin. Feeling the power of God's grace, and realizing God's favor--sin has no dominion over him, for he is not under the law but under grace. Grace influences him, and the same grace teaches him, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present evil world.

Such a one is righteous, for his heart is right with God, he stands in union with Christ before God, and he daily endeavors to walk so as to please God. This is the man whom the Lord delights to honor. Let us now,

Secondly, Consider the COMPREHENSIVE PRIVILEGE. The Lord will bless him, favor him, and compass him as with a shield.

WHO will bless him? The Lord! Think of his resources--how vast, how various, how glorious. The God of the universe, who has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool--will bless the righteous! The Lord, who always acts worthy of himself, befitting the dignity of his character and the immensity of his wealth--will bless the righteous. The Lord, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, who is full of compassion, and plenteous in mercy--will bless the righteous. The Lord, of whom we may well say, "I know that whom you bless--is indeed blessed!"

Think of his PROMISES, so exceeding great and so very precious. Promises, the least of which no angel could make good. Promises, which embody the wealth of Deity, and provide for all the needs of humanity. Promises of spiritual blessings, and promises of temporal blessings; promises that provide for time, and promises that will never be exhausted in eternity; promises which include all the good things of time, and all the glorious things of eternity. In blessing the righteous, God will perform and make good all his promises.

Think of his PERFECTIONS--of his wisdom and power, his grace and justice, his faithfulness and truth, his mercy and love, his holiness and immutability, his omniscience and omnipresence, his self-existence and eternity--for all his perfections are to be employed or glorified in blessing the righteous! He will bless them like a God! He will bless them so as to bring the highest glory to his name and nature.

WHAT will he do--if He blesses the righteous?

His blessing makes RICH, for it puts the man in possession of all that is necessary to supply his needs, satisfy the cravings of his immortal nature, and raise him above his circumstances whatever they may be.

His blessing dignifies with the highest HONOR. If he blesses us, he adopts us into his family, and we become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. He unites us to the person of his Son, and we become members of his body. He constitutes us his portion, his special treasure; and calls us his jewels, and compares us to his crown! He gives us the most glorious titles, clothes us with the most gorgeous robes, crowns us with the most magnificent diadem, and entitles us to the most lofty privileges!

His blessing makes HAPPY--and entitles to heaven! Happiness results from a sense of his favor, flows from the manifestations of his love, and is enjoyed in perfection in his glorious presence.

If God blesses the righteous--he will make him wealthy, honorable, and happy, far beyond our power to imagine--or ability to conceive.

HOW will he bless?

Graciously, or with special favor. He deals justly with all; he shows special favor to some. In his favor is life. From his favor flows every good and perfect gift. To be God's favorite is an honor indeed! If God blesses graciously, he looks for no reason in the creature why he should bless--but he does so gratuitously. If any qualification is necessary in order to enjoy his blessings--he gives the qualification; or, rather, the blessing itself produces the qualification.

He will bless with protection. The righteous are in danger, as the world and hell are leagued together against them. Sin, within them; Satan without them; and trials around them--place them in danger!

They are in daily conflict. They must resist sin, conquer Satan, and overcome the world; the law in the members is ever warring against the law of the mind, and requires watchfulness, vigilance, and zeal. How needful, then, a protector, a powerful ally--and the Lord is that. "For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield."

The shield is an instrument to come between the person and danger--and the Lord's grace does this. It not only comes between, but it compasses, or surrounds the person--so that the believer is protected on all sides! His shield is strong, and cannot be broken! His shield is hard, and cannot be pierced! His shield is saving, and always keeps safe. "I, says the Lord, will be a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." Thus our safety is of the Lord--and we are saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation.

See then, who are safe--the righteous. That is, those who have received Christ by faith--who have put on Christ--who stand before God accepted in the righteousness of his beloved Son.

WHY they are safe? Because God is gracious--gracious to them--and therefore he blesses them. Blessing, he protects them efficiently, perpetually, forever.

What should they do?

They should trust in the Lord at all times--forever--because he is the refuge of his people, and has everlasting strength. They should acknowledge him, and ascribe all their salvation, from first to last, to him. They should praise him: this he requires--and this is all he requires. But it must be the praise of the heart, of the lip, and of the life. By Jesus, then, as our great High Priest--let us offer unto God the sacrifice of praise continually, which is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name.

Reader, are you righteous? Have you discovered that your own righteousness is but as filthy rags? And have you therefore renounced it entirely, betaking yourself to the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Your own obedience is--and must be imperfect; and an imperfect obedience will never justify you before a holy God. You must have a perfect righteousness--or you are lost forever; and this you can only have by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believing--the whole work of Christ becomes yours; being savingly interested in the perfect work of Jesus--you are justified; being justified--the Spirit of God is given you, to sanctify and make you fit for heaven; and as the effect of the work of the Spirit in your heart--you will live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present life.

You are righteous, and being righteous--you are safe. God surrounds you with all the perfections of his nature, and will make good to you--all the promises of his Word--and will set you before his face forever.

But if without Christ you are in danger--the greatest danger; and if you die without Christ you are lost forever!

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