

The Blessedness of the Righteous

by Thomas Reade

The sermon emphasizes the blessedness of the righteous, who find their source of joy and protection in the Lord and his promises.

Scripture: Psalm 3:8, Psalm 32:1, Isaiah 43:11, John 14:1, John 15:1, John 16:22, Romans 8:18, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 1 Peter 1:8

Topics: "Righteous Living", "Salvation Assurance"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches about the blessedness of the righteous, emphasizing that true salvation belongs to the Lord and that His blessing is upon His people. The sermon highlights the peace and security found in God, the importance of trusting in His promises, and the joy that comes from having a saving interest in Christ Jesus. It encourages believers to find contentment and happiness in the love of God, to persevere through trials with faith and hope, and to rejoice in the blessings of Providence and the promises of eternal glory.

Transcript

36. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

"Salvation belongs unto the Lord; your blessing is upon your people." Psalm 3:8

Moses, who saw with inspired vision the blessedness of the righteous, might well exclaim while blessing the children of Israel; "Happy are you, O Israel who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord!" "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long."

Man makes many attempts to save himself, but "Salvation belongs unto the Lord." "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior." "I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins." Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, who shall save his people from their sins; therefore Jesus is Jehovah. Oh! that I may unite in heart with David- "But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them sing joyful praises forever. Protect them, so all who love your name may be filled with joy. For you bless the godly, O Lord, surrounding them with your shield of love."

If we have a saving interest in this redemption which is by Christ Jesus, how calmly may we repose on the promises of God; how quietly rest under the shadow of his wings. When the shades of night advance, we can say, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for you only, Lord, make me dwell in safety." If

surrounded by enemies; "I will not be afraid of ten thousands that have set themselves against me round about." If living in times of national convulsions; "God is our refuge therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." When threatened with persecution- "When I am afraid, I will trust in you." When awaiting the hour of dissolution; "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me."

The man who can thus possess his soul in patience; who can thus confide in the faithfulness, power, and love of God, is truly blessed. In the midst of storms he enjoys a calm; and when men's hearts are failing them for fear, he can lift up his head, knowing that his redemption draws near. In times of national degeneracy, when, in the expressive language of Micah, "the best of them is a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge;" when the caution is given; "Trust not in a friend, put no confidence in a guide; keep the doors of your mouth from her that lies in your bosom;" and when "a man's enemies are the men of his own house;" in such a time of iniquity and trial, the believer can say with unshaken confidence; "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be light unto me."

Truly this is the triumph of faith! The believer's sky is not always free from clouds, but though unseen, the sun is still in the heavens. Jesus ever lives, the Sun of righteousness never sets. The beams of grace on earth, and the beams of glory in heaven, shine with undiminished luster. Faith can pierce through the darkening vapor, and rejoice even in a cloudy day. "There is not a case of discouragement for which the word of God does not provide a remedy. There is no darkness which Christ cannot remove; no guilt which he cannot take away; no corruption which he cannot subdue." Oh! what a Savior is Jesus Christ.

Well might Peter say- "Unto you therefore who believe, he is precious." How precious is the blood, the righteousness, the intercession of Christ. What a mercy, that there is a fountain opened, not sealed; that we, have an Advocate with the Father, not an accuser. For these blessings we should offer unceasing praise. Our Christian experience must have long since taught us, that this world is not our rest; that here joys and sorrows are mysteriously blended together; but that in Christ is peace, and in heaven is unsullied bliss. True happiness is inseparable from the love of God in Christ. How can earthly things, however splendid or profuse, which "perish in the using," satisfy the desires of an immortal mind? Wealthy people are not, by consequence, happy, simply because they have wealth. A glare is thrown around them, which dazzles the eyes of common beholders; but the eye of faith can discover vanity and vexation of spirit beneath the gaudy equipage, the lordly mansion, and the show of wealth.

Oh! that the peace of God which passes all understanding, may now and ever be my portion. There is something extremely delightful in enjoying the blessings of Providence, not only as pleasant in themselves, but as the gifts of covenant love. This gives a double relish to all the innocent enjoyments of life. But Jesus has said, "Whoever of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple." When tried by this touchstone, O what worldly alloy will be found in our hearts, in the midst of much religious profession. Lord! make me sincere; make me wholly yours. Whatever I love, may it be in subordination to my love to you; and never allow me for one moment to set up an idol in my heart. Reign in me as the Sovereign of my soul. Sway all my powers, until mortality be swallowed up of life.

That man is truly blessed who can say with David, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance." With the Lord as our portion, we shall have abundant cause to sing, "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage." Our gracious Savior, of whose resurrection this Psalm is strikingly prophetic, will show us the path of life, and finally, through his sovereign grace, lead us into his presence,

where is fullness of joy, and place us at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore. Should the doubting Christian ask- And can all this blessedness be mine? Can such a sinner as I be admitted to this glory? Is it not rather a pleasing dream? Jesus himself answers the question, to all who truly love him; "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 you may be also." Thus all is "substantial and sincere." If Christ is our portion; if we persevere unto the end, he will receive us to himself, as His portion, in the day when he makes up his jewels.

Oh! that I may have grace to lean only on the hope of his heavenly mercy. Jesus can cause the swelling Jordan to open its waters before me, that I may have a safe passage into the celestial Canaan. At that eventful hour, Faith can make a cheerful heart, and Hope a smiling face, while Love sheds its sunshine of delight over the soul. John Newton beautifully observes, that "Faith is nothing else than the soul's venture. It ventures to Christ, it ventures for Christ; and it ventures in Christ." While possessing this simplicity of faith, I may boldly venture, like Peter, on the boisterous lake, and feel its liquid pavement to be as a rock beneath my feet.

To the true believer, afflictions are blessings in disguise. If the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, shall we shrink from the Cross? It has been well remarked, that "God had one Son without sin; but, that he has none without suffering." The school of the Cross is the school of light, and there must all the children of God be taught, to fit them for the perfect state of glory. An ignorant person, who sees the mariner heaving such a weight of ballast aboard his ship, would suppose he intended to sink her at sea. Just so, whatever the world may think, the troubles and trials of the saints shall never sink them, but keep them from being overturned by every squall, that they may arrive with safety at the haven of rest, having their anchor fixed "within the veil."

Every trial is intended for my good. My foolish heart would be too much attached to earth if the spade were not inserted to loosen the fibers, and disengage the root, that when transplanted, I may bear a richer fruit in the Paradise above. My heavenly Father, whose love and wisdom are infinite, knows exactly what I need, and how much suffering is needed to promote the spirituality of my mind. Shall I then repine at his dispensations of love? To say practically from the heart, "May Your will be done," is not the result of nature, but of grace. How blessed, how peaceful is the believer, who can thus drink into the spirit of his Redeemer!

A murmuring spirit increases every evil. It doubles the affliction. It adds a sting to sorrow. If our hearts are in heaven, the trials of earth will be light and momentary, for love can sweeten every care, and lighten every cross. A Savior's love disarms affliction of its sting.

Oh! that we may learn wisdom by every dispensation of Providence; and yield more fruit by every application of the pruning knife. The divine husbandman prunes every branch in Christ, that it may bring forth more fruit. Whatever makes us more like unto God in his communicable perfections, whatever brings us into a nearer communion with him, through faith in his beloved Son, must increase our holiness and augment our happiness. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of grace and glory. "It should be joy to us, that the eternal Son should come to seek and save us; that he has made a full atonement for our sins; that he has conquered sin and death; that he lives as our Intercessor and Advocate with the Father; and that he will come again to perfect and glorify his persevering believers.

Those, therefore, live below the use and end of the Christian Revelation, who are not filled with spiritual joy. Believers should rejoice in their happy relation to God the Father, as his adopted children; in their happy relation to the Son of the Father as being members of his mystical body and co-heirs with himself; in the pardon of their sins; in the sanctification of their natures; in the prospect of grace and glory that will be revealed at the return of their Lord and Head from heaven. Were they confirmed in their holy faith, how would they rejoice. "The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

O, God of my salvation, enable me to glorify you by an unshaken faith in your promises; and an undeviating walk in the way of your commandments. Under every trial, may no murmur escape my lips, no hard thought of you be indulged in my heart. As love is inscribed on all your dispensations, so may love be visible in all my actions. Give me daily to experience the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; unto whom you will impute no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deception.

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