

Psalm 144

“**Happy is that people**, that is in such a case: yea, **happy is that people**, whose God is the LORD.”
Psalm 144:15

Introduction:

1. This church embarked on a pursuit of God and godliness nearly eight years ago based on this psalm.
2. The happiness and success we have enjoyed since then should cause us to thank our Father in heaven, for we are not worthy of the least of all His mercies or of all the truth that He has shown us.
3. Yet, we must know what to pray for, wait for, and do in our pursuit of this psalm’s grand blessings.
4. This psalm, a condensation of Psalm 18 and II Samuel 22, is David’s prayer for a prosperous nation, and you will find very similar or identical language in some verses by comparing the two psalms.
5. We do not know if this was when installed as king after Saul or when installed again after Absalom, but in both cases there was a division in the nation concerning him that required God’s interposition.
6. Since the nation of Israel was the church of the Old Testament, we can adapt some here to our church.
7. Every man, pastor, or church will prosper to the degree they emulate David and the Son of David.
8. There is value to begin at the end of this psalm and work backward, for verses 12-15 are the goal!
9. The true happiness of any people begins with their relationship to Jehovah of the Bible (144:15).
10. There is happiness by God’s blessings on families, finances, employment, and security (144:12-15).
11. In the New Testament, true happiness depends on any people’s relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.
12. May the Holy Spirit lift our hearts and minds from worldly thinking to love and pursue this thought.

Outline:

- 1-2 David praises God for His political successes.
- 3-4 He humbly confesses his own unworthiness.
- 5-6 He prays poetically for God to smash his enemies.
- 7-8 He prays for deliverance from hypocrites near him.
- 9-10 He promises to creatively praise God for His works.
- 11 He prays again to be saved from hypocrites near him.
- 12-14 He lists blessings of family, economy, production, and safety.
- 15 He summarizes all as God’s blessing, but exalts God Himself.

1 Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:

- A. David opened this glorious psalm about his reign over God’s nation by blessing the LORD.
- B. The psalm ends with the LORD as God, so we make Him our God by trusting His strength.
- C. Though David was known as a mighty man of valor from the earliest days, it was by God.
- D. He made military preparations as king, but he knew God gave success (II Sa 1:18; Pr 21:31).
- E. David, though a man of war, was a gentle lover of peace ... psalmist, musician, and dancer.
- F. The people of God hate fighting, for they love peace (Ps 120:6-7; Rom 12:18; Jas 3:17-18).
- G. Every church, pastor, father, master, ruler, and husband must sometimes manage conflict, and though it is an undesirable aspect of their lives, they must do so seeking God’s blessings.
- H. We thank God for successes; we trust Him for strength; we deal with conflict, as He requires.

2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

- A. David continued by praising the LORD for all the ways in which He had provided for him.
- B. The LORD Jehovah was the source of David's goodness and good events (Ps 21:1-7; 23:6), and we should praise the same LORD for every good gift we have received (James 1:17).
- C. The LORD Jehovah was David's fortress, high tower, deliverer, and shield – providing all protection and safety against his many enemies and difficult military campaigns (Psalm 4:8).
- D. David chose to trust in the Lord rather than himself or his military arms (Ps 127:1-2; 37:3).
- E. As a church, pastor, or father, there is but one place to put your trust – in the LORD Himself; and by doing this you can secure perfect peace for yourself and those with you (Is 26:3-4).
- F. The LORD Jehovah worked the political miracle of uniting Israel under David – twice!
- G. Every church, pastor, father, master, ruler, and husband must trust for this same blessing.
- H. If you are having difficulty with enemies or rebellion in your life, then pray for this blessing.

3 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!

- A. Here is language from Psalm 8, but the sense here is not carried through to Jesus Christ.
- B. Notice the exclamation marks! David is making a strong point about his own unworthiness.
- C. David here is further exalting God's deliverances from verses 1-2 by denigrating himself.
- D. Though David was king and accomplished in many respects, he knew he was nothing at all.
- E. We must have this attitude as men, women, families, and a church before the Lord.

4 Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.

- A. Vanity is something with no value or importance or profit. The best men are vanity (Ps 39:5).
- B. There are few shadows at noon; when shadows are seen, they race out of sight and are gone.
- C. The lives of men are so brief; one generation comes, and another leaves; man is insignificant.
- D. Our insignificance makes God's grace and blessings in our lives all that much more glorious.
- E. It is our duty and wisdom to humble ourselves as men, as families, and as church before God.

5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

- A. Here is language very similar or identical to Psalm 18 in describing God's great deliverances!
- B. Mount Sinai was an event Israel and its prophets often remembered for God's grand display.
- C. David did not seek a fireworks display against mountains, but for God to destroy enemies.
- D. Notice the ownership of the heavens! Sometimes the LORD comes in judgment, not bodily.

6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.

- A. Here is language very similar or identical to Psalm 18 in describing God's great deliverances!
- B. The thunderous display of a storm was a metaphor for God slaughtering David's enemies.
- C. We do not pray enough like the psalmist, but here are words and style of an inspired prayer!
- D. In these two verses, David does not even mention his own military means or preparations!

7 Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;

- A. David now called upon the Lord for direct intervention in a matter compared to great waters, as internal dissension is much more threatening and difficult to bear than overt enemies.
 - 1. David described the treachery of these close friends as a terrible calamity (Ps 55:12-15).
 - 2. Confidence in an unfaithful man in a time of trouble is a dysfunctional pain (Pr 25:19).
 - 3. It is a shame Philistine mercenaries were more loyal than his own son (II Sam 15:17-22).
 - 4. Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, treated David far better than did King Saul of Israel.
- B. These strange children could be either strange nations around Israel or strangers within Israel.
 - 1. There is no doubt that the nations around Israel were aliens, foreigners, and strangers.
 - 2. But there is also *strange*, as in strange woman, meaning an alien or foreigner to your bed.
 - 3. A strange woman is obviously not a stranger: she is an outsider to a man's sexual rights.
 - 4. The *strange children* here are those Israelites who were aliens to Israel's true interests.
 - 5. They were strange, not to his bed or marriage, but to his godly and noble goals for Israel.
 - 6. They were strange, because their hearts were not with him as true friends under God.
 - 7. David described the Jews of Ziph, who betrayed him twice, as strangers (Psalm 54:3).
 - 8. David would not have entered alliances based on words or handshakes with pagans.
 - 9. The emphasis in the next verse is on their deceitfulness and treacherous hypocrisy, not their genealogical descent or geographical location.
 - 10. The issue here is not whether a person is a child of God or not but his inward intentions.
 - 11. David's psalms have many references to enemies of his close associates within Israel.
 - 12. David was careful about having only loyal God-fearers around him (Ps 101:3-8; 119:63).
- C. The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have often had to deal with false brethren among them.
 - 1. Consider that in the small band of twelve apostles there was a religious devil – Judas.
 - 2. Consider the troubles Paul had with false brethren (II Cor 11:26; Gal 2:4; Phil 1:15-17).
 - 3. The Lord Christ promised to send heresies to identify those He approves (I Cor 11:19).
 - 4. These brethren are eventually seen by departing from the faith (I John 2:19; Jude 1:19).
- D. God must do the work by sending His hand from above to perfectly purge His churches.
 - 1. The inspired householder told the Lord of the vineyard to cut the tree down (Luk 13:6-9).
 - 2. Until then, the householder digs and dungs all the trees and prays for the Lord to work.
 - 3. The churches of God are careful to avoid tearing up wheat with the tares (Matt 13:24-30).

8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

- A. Here are men close to David, whose speech he sought to trust, but their words were vanity.
- B. Jesus warned of those who would draw near with their lips but their hearts were far away.
- C. Consider David's description of buttery words but war in their hearts (Psalm 55:19-23).
- D. Some such men creep into churches with swelling words of vanity (II Pet 2:18; Jude 1:16).
- E. Paul warned the Ephesian elders with tears about the coming threat (Acts 20:28-31).
- F. Men have clasped hands for deals in all nations (Proverbs 6:1; 17:18; 22:26; Job 17:3).
- G. Even in the New Testament we read about the right hand of fellowship (Galatians 2:9).
- H. We extend the right hand of fellowship when we covenant together as church members.
- I. Open rebuke by a friend is far superior to the kisses of an enemy (Ps 141:3; Proverbs 27:5-6).
- J. Such hypocritical and treacherous men have been the bane of God's people in all ages.

9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

- A. In light of God's deliverances, praise is comely for the upright (Psalm 69:30-32; 147:1).
- B. These songs in the second person to God are hymns, which we are commanded to in the N.T.
- C. Singing is an important part of our church, because it is exalted in both testaments.
- D. A man with the Spirit of God will delight in singing (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).

10 It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

- A. David did not take any of the credit for his accomplishments to himself (I Cor 15:10).
- B. David knew praise is comely, and deliverance deserves much of it (Ps 50:14-15; 107:31-32).
- C. If you want a lengthy review of God's deliverances of David, read Psalm 18 carefully.
- D. God did great things for David; He has done great things for us; it should provoke songs!

11 Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood:

- A. Here comes the prayer again from 7-8, which the Spirit by repetition emphasizes as valuable.
- B. David describes internal enemies in many psalms (Ps 27:11-12; 31:11; 35:19; 42:10; 69:4; 71:9-13; 127:5; 143:12; etc., etc.). Remember just two ... Saul and Absalom! God forbid!
- C. Hypocrisy is one of the great evils of any family, church, or nation; and it must be despised.
- D. Observe that this prayer request does not end a sentence, for verses 12-14 describe the effect.
- E. A family, church, or nation are corrupted and undermined by lying hypocrites (Prov 25:4-5).
- F. David described the great blessing of brethren dwelling together in unity (Psalm 133:1-3).
- G. See verses 7-8 for a fuller explanation of the meaning of this doubled prayer request.

12 That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace:

- A. Here is a poetic description of happy and prospering families identified by their children.
- B. The simile for sons describes them as plants grown up, or mature and strong, in their youth.
 - 1. The success of a family, church, or nation depends heavily on mature, strong young men.
 - 2. The difference between wise and foolish sons is either a great blessing or calamity (10:1).
 - 3. The investment in a male child or a young man may well pay huge dividends tomorrow.
 - 4. The effort of Hannah with Samuel, and Lois and Eunice with Timothy, paid handsomely.
- C. The simile for daughters describes them as polished cornerstones – strong and beautiful.
 - 1. A godly woman with her heart right before God and priorities straight is very valuable.
 - 2. A cornerstone is a support for the whole building, and godly women make a people great.
 - 3. A woman who fears the Lord and is graciousness is truly beautiful (Pr 11:16,22; 31:30).
 - 4. Women of character, from Sarah to Jael to Anna, are a foundation of godly families.
- D. Together these blessings of sons and daughters form new family units that are outstanding.
- E. We cannot expect such glorious blessings without doing our part (Pr 22:6,15; 23:26; 29:15).
- F. When a people leave the Lord, He takes away their men and lets their women go (Is 3:1-24).

13 That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:

- A. Here is a powerful and poetic description of economic prosperity as measured by farming.
- B. What is a garner? It is a storehouse for grain, a granary. We call them silos in our country.
- C. David describes a full supply of all desirable commodities and a high return on investments.
- D. The great God operates above the laws of economics; He blesses or He blasts as He wills.
- E. When God blesses, as He did with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, your investments multiply!

14 That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.

- A. *Oxen laboring* are the means of production – strong labor is blessed productivity (Prov 14:4).
- B. The blessed God either blesses or blows against the labor of men and beasts (Haggai 1:5-11).
- C. *No breaking in* is safety from thieves breaking in to steal or enemies breaking into the city.
- D. *No going out* is safety from being forced to flee a city for danger or taken away captive.
- E. *No complaining in our streets* is domestic tranquility from all internal conflicts or wants.
- F. Note how the wise prophet Agur had prayed for convenient food to avoid such (Pr 30:7-9).

15 Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.

- A. When we seek God's kingdom and righteousness first, He takes care of all else (Matt 6:33).
 - 1. The case he has just described is blessing of families, economy, labor, and safety (12-14).
 - 2. He concluded with blessings of safety from thieves and trouble with no complaining (14).
 - 3. There is no doubt such family, financial, and political blessings cause human happiness.
 - 4. The only way for a child of God to have such legitimately is to put God first (Ps 62:10).
- B. But greater than such a prosperous case of national life is the happiness of knowing Jehovah.
 - 1. David did not contradict things he wrote elsewhere about priorities (Ps 4:7; 43:4; 63:1-6).
 - 2. Each church, pastor, family, and man must set this goal as the chief desire of his heart.
 - 3. If you think to save your life by cheating here, you will lose on all ends (Matthew 10:39).
- C. Consider David's summary of the blessings or lack thereof in another place (Ps 107:33-43).

Conclusion:

- 1. What can we conclude from this psalm for our church and families, since we are not King David?
- 2. First, we must set our ambitions and lives to the priority of delighting in God over all other things.
- 3. Second, we must trust God for His strength to bless our feeble efforts that we apply to our duties.
- 4. Third, we must praise and thank God for every good thing He has done and will do in our lives.
- 5. Fourth, we must pray for God to deliver us from hypocrites who undermine spiritual prosperity.
- 6. Fifth, we must understand that all deliverances and blessings come from heaven, and wait on God.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

II Cor 7:1

For Further Study:

- 1. The sermon, “Perfecting Holiness,” ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/perfecting-holiness.pdf>.