

This is the Life!

(Greatness of Godliness, Part 3)

Psalm 37:23-26

I absolutely love that song, and putting into what our students did tonight even makes it more real! I am so thankful that I can say to the Lord, “*I am Yours*”! Can you?

Folks I want to tell you that being a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ IS THE LIFE! Why or how can we say that? You say it does too much to limit the fun; it’s too constricting? Think again. David shares some wonderful facts about those who are the Lord’s. Enjoy this as we read.

Read Psalm 37:23-26

I want to give you four words that help us to see just how great the life of a believer is,

1. Favor (with God) v 23

A. God’s direction is ever present. David, remember that he is on up in years by this time as we just read, makes an important statement that we must understand, and I pray, adhere to. The steps (way of life) of a good man are ordered, directed by the Lord. “*Well, preacher, it sounds like God has a bunch of little robots running around doing His bidding and don’t have much freedom.*” Let me correct that thought. God does NOT have a bunch of little robots; for He has given us a free will. But nevertheless, He has ordered (directed) our steps. And when we remain in those steps instead of stepping out of them – He is delighted in our way. Why is that? Because we are following His way. But when we get out of His way, we are out of His will – and consequences will follow. Go back to this morning’s message.

But when we choose to go God’s way, we are blessed with His favor and established by “*the Lord on a foundation that is the Rock—and the Rock is Christ.*”¹

B. How can we know God’s direction – and if we are following God’s direction in our lives? That is the question of the hour for many people as they seek to know God’s will. And it’s not just high school students wanting to know what God wants them to do as a career, or who to marry. Many in this economy have not only lost their job, but many their career – and you are asking what God’s will for your life is. Beloved, I want you to know that those that honor our Lord really have experienced God’s favor.

“*George Mueller, who founded five great orphan houses on Ashley Down in Bristol, England, and who knew what it was to walk close to the Lord, dependent upon Him for the daily needs of hundreds of boys and girls, and in his later years a missionary to a score of lands, used to say: ‘Yes, and*

not only the steps! Sometimes also the stops of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord!’”²

But there may be some that question if you are really experiencing God’s favor. It leads to a second point that I want to bring out. Part of the great life of the believer is not only favor but also,

2. Foundation v 24

A. Because one may be walking in the path prescribed by the Lord, it does not guarantee that it will be void of struggles – great struggles. This is truly the voice of wisdom that is coming through these verses! David, aged and experienced; tried and tested, presents a realistic picture of life. Not every day is an easy day. Not every day can be called a day of great victory. Even the righteous, the believer, suffers setbacks. But even when they come, David, the voice of experience having experienced a bunch of setbacks in his life, stated, he shall not be utterly cast down. What does that mean? It means that because of redemption, the believer always has hope that the best days are still ahead. Proverbs 24:16 states something very similar, “*For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.*”

One commentator noted, “*Though such a man may fall into trials and tribulations, he will never be engulfed by them, for the Lord holds him securely by His hand. It is also true that if a righteous man falls into sin, he will not be abandoned by the Lord, though this is not the specific kind of fall that this verse is referring to.*”³

B. Rest in the promise that God’s hand can never be broken. I have mentioned over the past few weeks that there are still a number of you that are really struggling – trying to find a job – and it can’t be found. Others have bills that are mounting and there seems to be no way out. I want to remind you again struggling brother and sister that our Lord is truly the firm foundation.

For others of you that may be sailing in calm waters right now – and things are going well, thank God. BUT, you need to store this verse and wonderful promise away. I assure you that your day, days, or season of struggles will come and you will need to be reminded that our Lord is the firm foundation. As we just witnessed a moment ago, thank God that we can say to Him, “*I am Yours*”!

I’m reminded of that hymn when it comes to this point, “*How Firm a Foundation.*”

¹McGee, J. Vernon: *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981, S. 2:739

²John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms*, Volume 1, 284.

³MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur: *Believer’s Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Ps 37:23

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said—To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?”

“Fear not, I am with thee—O be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will still give thee aid; I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

“When thru the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow; for I will be with thee thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“When thru fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply; the flame shall not hurt thee—I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes; that soul, tho all hell should endeavor to shake, I’ll never—no, never—no, never forsake.”⁴

I’m not telling you that as you leave that the storms of your life will cease. I can’t say that. But what I can tell you dear beloved brother and sister is that as God is in control of the storm; allow Him to be in control of you. And though it seems that all may be out of control, rest in our Lord’s omnipotent and gracious hand.

This is the life!

But I also want you to note another incredible comfort,

3. Faithfulness v 25

A. David was a witness of God’s continued protection and provision for His own. I want you to think of something about David, the writer of these words. “Twice he had been a fugitive and he might have said at the time that he had been forsaken and was begging bread. But he had outlived all that; he had lived long enough to get thing into perspective. He had never seen the righteous abandoned by God and any temporary shifts of fortune had all been part of the wise discipline of God to make of him a true man of God.”⁵

B. Though this is not a guarantee that the cupboard will always overflow; it is a promise that God will see you through the hard times. What David may have in mind is that of being finally forsaken, but I don’t think so. I think David is speaking of a general principle here. There have been

believers that have died because of a famine. But that is the exception.

“Exceptions do not disprove the overall principles.”⁶

Thank God that we serve a faithful God! You may not be eating out every night, or even when you’re eating at home, it may not be the best – but we can be thankful that God has provided whatever is there and enjoy His blessing.

4. Fortunate v 26

A. For the one that has the proper perspective on life, mercy and generosity are unmistakable marks. The Believer’s Bible Commentary states, “By following God’s Word he practices industriousness, thrift and conservation. By working hard, shopping carefully, eliminating waste, and avoiding extravagance, he is able to stretch his funds and thereby to help others who are in need. His descendants become a blessing because they have learned these lessons thoroughly at home and follow them throughout their own lives.”⁷

We could go back to that word, steward, that we talked about this morning. It is living in such a way, better yet; it is living with a deep conviction that you own nothing forever – but you are entrusted with God’s possessions for a short time. Use them for His honor and glory. Remember, He is coming back and will judge us on how we used what He entrusted to us.

I want to tell you that the cause of Christ is extremely limited because of believers not being faithful stewards. Instead, many are being selfish. Not only do they spend the 90% on themselves as the Lord allowed, but they also dip into the 10% that the Lord said was His in the tithe and spend it on self as well. And then, when tough times come, we blame God that we’re in the mess we’re in – and all the while He says, “*You never followed My mandates from My word.*”

I’m not sure where you may be in this whole giving issue. I pray that you are at least a tither – one that gives 10% of what the Lord has entrusted to you to His work – the Church. On top of that, I pray that you are one that desires to give out of what the Lord said you could spend on yourself for His causes – that’s called an offering.

⁴Osbeck, Kenneth W.: *Amazing Grace : 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Kregel Publications, 1990, S. 14

⁵ John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms*, Volume 1, 284.

⁶MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur: *Believer’s Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Ps 37:25

⁷MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur: *Believer’s Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Ps 37:26

“Well, I want to give for a people thing, not a building thing.” I have a question for you. Do you have a mortgage, or have you ever had a mortgage? Many will have to answer yes, and most don't really mind that they do. And they will pay on that note for 15 or 30 years – and not really seem to mind. You know, I've yet to hear a mom or dad say, *“I don't like paying for wood and brick and sheetrock. I want to pay for clothes for my kids and food in their bellies. That's what directly affects them.”*

But when asked why they pay that mortgage they may say, *“That's where my family lives.”* And the more they think about it, they may say, *“Besides, that's more than a house, that's our home. Yeah, we eat food, but we have some good time around that table. Yeah, we have furniture, but we hang out and love on each other as we sit on that furniture. There's a lot of memories in that house! I'm grateful for the things I was able to instill within my children in that house so when they walked out into the world, they were ready to face it and not bow to pressure.”* And might I also add that some would say, *“We had to move to another house because our family got bigger. We needed more room!”* Others will say, *“Our family is going to increase and we're making room right now.”* And they get to it, not thinking a thing about it.

Might I suggest to you that all of these are reasons we could say of this house here? I'm grateful for the fellowships we have enjoyed inside this house. I'm grateful for the memories we have been able to make with more people inside this house. I'm grateful for the many times we have opened God's Word in order to know how to walk in this world and not bow to its pressure. I'm forever grateful for the babies the Lord has brought our way! And I'm just telling you that more are to come – many more are to come! Listen, as long as Jesus tarries, we need to see it as more time for us to work inside this house to grow us up and to work outside this house to reach out to as many as we possibly can with the hopes of bringing many more into the family of faith. That's why we are here. THIS IS THE LIFE!

But I wonder, can you say that you've experienced this life? Have you been confronted with the fact that the Lord of all the earth knows that you would be here on this earth and gave His Son just for you? Can you honestly say, *“I am Yours?”*

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