

LEARNING THE FEAR OF JEHOVAH
Psa. 34:11-16

Intro: This section begins the second part of the Psalm.

DAVID'S
FOURFOLD
ROLE:

- (1) WORSHIPPER
(2) WITNESS
(3) EXHORTER
(4) TEACHER

Although vv. 15, 16 belong more with vv. 17-20, this division has been chosen because of Peter's usage of this passage in 1 Pet. 3:10-12. From v. 15 on in Psa. 34 David is elaborating on all that he has said previously. So vv. 15, 16 give us a sampling of what this is.

In contrasting vv. 1-10 with vv. 11-22 it is important to note that David is recounting his experience in trusting the Lord in vv. 1-10 while in the latter part of the Psalm he is encouraging others to discover what he has discovered by trusting the Lord to meet his need. Thus, the message of the last section was learned in the experiences related in the first section. This is the only way we can learn it!

We find four things in vv. 11-16:

- (1) David extends an invitation (v. 11).
- (2) He then asks a question (v. 12).
- (3) Thirdly, he gives the answer (vv. 13, 14).
- (4) Finally, he elaborates on his answer (vv. 15, 16).

I. THE INVITATION (v. 11).

Here we have the teacher, the pupils, and the subject to be taught.

Out of the truth David has experienced in vv. 1-10, he now offers to teach others how he came to know the faithfulness of God.

The pupils are "children," lit., sons. It indicates that the sons of God (like John's children in his epistles) are those who are being invited to learn what David has to teach them. The very wording of the invitation limits it to the sons of God, but it also indicates that a person can be a son of God without knowing this truth in his experience.

The subject: "the fear of the Lord." Cf. vv. 7, 9. There is no doubt but that this is about the most important practical truth for believers in all of the Bible. David's answer will explain what he means by it.

"Hearken" conveys the thought of obeying what one hears. The same word is used in v. 6 (but a diff. word in v. 4).

Next follows

II. THE QUESTION (v. 12). This is a way David has of teaching--to raise a question, and then to answer it.

David knows that the question can really touch practically every child of God. However, there might be differences as to the answer.

The question means: How many of you, after carefully considering your own life, would deliberately choose ("desireth"--the equivalent of the Gk *θέλω* or *βούλομαι*) in the sense of longing after it in a way that you could not be satisfied with less ("loveth") a long-enduring life ("life") filled with individual "days" (in mass) in which you would experience the very best and be perfectly satisfied in the end?

"GOOD" =
SATISFYING,
PLEASING

GOD IS GOOD
(v. 8)

LIFE CAN BE
GOOD (v. 12)

cf. v. 10.

BUT WE
MUST
- "DO GOOD"
(v. 14).

Whether or not each child of God actually sits down to consider this question is doubtful, but everybody answers it the way they think it should be answered.

What kind of a life really satisfies? How would you answer it?

How would the world answer it?

Satan answered it for Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The rich fool answered the question (cf. Luke 12:16-21).

The prodigal son answered the question (Luke 15:11 ff.).

In many places we have the answer provided by the Lord Jesus. Do you remember his conversation with the rich man who came asking, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He was not asking how to be saved; he was asking how he could get the most out of life, how he could be satisfied in life.

"EVIL" =
DISPLEASING &
UNSATISFYING
cf. PSA. 91:16;
ISA. 55:2
(vv. 1-3).

The Lord began His answer with The Law ("Do not commit adultery," etc.). Then He said, "One thing thou lackest . . ." "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions" (Mark 10:22). (Note also our Lord's words with His disciples in vv. 23-31.)

What is David's answer?

There are six parts to his answer. Three are negative; three are positive. Two have to do with our words; four have to do with our walk.

III. THE ANSWER (vv. 13, 14).

A. "Keep thy tongue from evil" (v. 13a).

WORDS

What a place to begin! You say, "Can David really be serious?"

Do you remember what James says about the tongue in 3:2 ff.? His answer would be the same.

David says that I need to be a watchman, a guard, a keeper over my tongue so that I will never use my tongue to break up, ruin, destroy someone else-- regardless of how I might feel about them, even justifiably!

Cf. Psa. 39:1. No wonder that David prayed as he did in Psa. 141:3!

The second is related to it.

B. "And thy lips from speaking guile" (v. 13b). "Guile" is deceit, or fraud.

It seems amazing that you would have to talk to the sons of God about telling the truth, BUT YOU DO!

The first sin of the tongue leads to the second because a person who speaks evil of others is in danger of departing from the truth.

So, in teaching the fear of the Lord, David "gives the pre-eminence to the avoiding of sins of the tongue" (Delitzsch, I, 412).

A child of God who is going to get the best out of life must learn that there are certain things that he cannot do, and that this starts with the use of his tongue.

But what follows?

C. "Depart from evil" (v. 14a). It is the same word for "evil" that you have in the preceding verse.

WALK

Just as by speaking evil I can break up or ruin someone else, so by doing evil I can break up or ruin myself.

What, basically, is evil? This must be defined in connection with the next statement.

D. "And do good" (v. 14a).

In v. 8 David had said that "the Lord is good." This gives us a basic definition for good and evil. To do good means that I do that which is in harmony with the goodness of God. Or, to state it another way, I will be doing good if I do that which is pleasing to Him. Evil, on the other hand, is that which is displeasing to Him.

I must "do good" if I would "taste and see that the Lord is good."

Here is where we need the Word of God. The more I know of God, the more I will understand the sinfulness of sin--and seek to avoid it.

But this is not all.

E. "Seek peace" (v. 14b).

WAYS
RELATION-
SHIP WITH
OTHERS

Remember that David is talking to believers, and these words would have their primary meaning in connection with the relationship of believers to each other.

"Peace" - the grand word of Judaism. It is their greeting. It signifies, among other things, oneness, completeness, harmony, the bringing of some difficulty to a conclusion.

It is the opposite of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). It speaks of fellowship. Cf. Eph. 4:1-3; Rom. 12:18.

And then, as though to emphasize his point, he says

F. "And pursue it" (v. 14b), i.e., be unrelenting in your pursuit of peace, refusing to be discouraged by anything!

Why should you do all of this? What will be the consequences? Note

IV. THE ELABORATION (vv. 15, 16).

A. "The righteous" (v. 15). This is related to the word saints in v. 9. There it is positional; here it is practical.

The Lord has respect for the person first, then hears his cry. Cf. Psa. 66:18.

B. "Them that do evil" (v. 16): judgment.

"The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. 10:7).

Concl: This is what David found to be true, and this is the life that he commends as the King of Israel to the sons of God.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

274 - Trust + Obedy

112 - My Obedy to the King of Israel