

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN, ONE

Intro: There are three prevailing ideas about the background of this Psalm:

- 1) That David wrote it for Solomon.
- 2) That Solomon wrote it.
- 3) That it was written by some unknown person in connection with the return of the children of Israel from Captivity.

Actually, we do not know. But all three are interesting to contemplate. (Comment on each.)

Another interesting thing about this Psalm is that it goes with the two following Psalms--and has to do with the family, the home.

The Scriptures do make it clear that the word, "house," is used

- 1) Of an actual house.
- 2) Of a family. Cf. Gen. 7:1; 12:17; 35:2.
- 3) Of descendants. Cf. Gen. 18:19; 1 Sam. 20:15.
- 4) Of the nation Israel. Cf. Heb. 3:2; Isa. 46:3. This applies to other nations as well.

So the Psalm has many applications, and all of them are true. BUT THE CONTEXT WOULD SEEM TO POINT TO THE FACT THAT THE PSALMIST IS HERE SPEAKING ABOUT THE HOME!

He is concerned with two things:

- 1) Building.
- 2) Preserving what he has built.

How often man is disappointed on this latter point after feeling that he has successfully completed the building.

Let us look at the verse in detail, and then draw our deductions from it.

I. The Details of the Verse.

Two times the Heb. says, If the Lord does not build . . . ; if the Lord does not keep . . ."

To "labor" here is to work with painful effort to the point of absolute fatigue, complete exhaustion.

To "keep" is to guard, to protect. The word, "watchman," is a cognate of the word, "keep." So the "watchman" is a guard, and he is so faithful in his work that he works while others sleep, denying himself sleep, in order to keep "the city."

In other words, EVERYTHING HAS BEEN DONE AND IS BEING DONE THAT CAN BE DONE FROM A HUMAN POINT-OF-VIEW!

But, along with this is an even greater idea: IF THE LORD IS NOT IN ALL THAT IS BEING DONE, THEN THE RESULT WILL BE ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE BUILDER HAD HOPED FOR. HE WILL FIND THAT HE HAS NOTHING--THAT EVERYTHING IS EMPTY AND VAIN. HE MIGHT JUST AS WELL HAVE SAVED ALL OF HIS TIME AND ENERGY!

II. Some Important Observations.

If you just think about your life as a house . . .

Or, if you think of your family as a house . . .

Or, if you are farsighted enough to think about grandchildren, and great grandchildren . . .

Then you cannot find a more important verse in all of the Word of God because this verse is saying what other verses say in so many other places. BUT WE NEED TO HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE VERSE SO AS NOT TO BE WORKING OR PROTECTING "IN VAIN."

A. The Lord is not telling us to quit building, keeping.

Human work is not everything, but it is something. It is a vital part of what needs to be done. The person who would exclude human effort has misunderstood this verse.

B. If it is all and just human effort, the work cannot possibly succeed.

The Psalmist stands at the end of the line, and looks back. It really does not take revelation for us to understand this. History is full of illustrations.

People have worked hard. People have spent a lot of time, and money. They have employed every possible resource. BUT, IF GOD IS NOT IN IT, IT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE BEFORE IT STARTS.

Our own beloved country is a glaring 20th century illustration of this very thing. We are working hard at our problems, but they are about to consume us because we have done everything but turn to the Lord.

C. The Psalmist puts the major emphasis on what God does, not on what we do!

Read the verse carefully. The Lord is the builder. The Lord is the keeper, the watchman. I am not to ask Him to work with me; I AM TO WORK WITH HIM.

This is where most of our mistakes are made.

We make our plans. We set our goals. We employ our methods. And then we want Him to bless us. WE KNOW SO LITTLE OF THE WAYS OF THE LORD, AND SO OUR BUILDING AND OUR WATCHING IS IN VAIN. Nothing indicates what a man knows about the Word of God any more than he demonstrates when you see him at work! This is the crying need of our generation!

We are more concerned about "results" than we are about the fruit that remains. Cf. John 15:16.

- D. As we know, and as we work, our confidence must always remain in the Lord for the completion of the building and the preservation of our work.

This is where a Christian who knows the Lord can fail.

How do you manifest that your trust is in the Lord?

When you look into the Word of God, it seems that there is basically one answer to this question: By the way you PRAY!

How much do you pray? How does the time you give to prayer compare with the time that you give to your work-- whatever that work may be?

How much time do you give to talking to your children about the Lord as compared with the time that you talk to the Lord about your children? Which is more important to you?

We can tell our children what to do; can we teach them how to pray, how to trust the Lord?

IF THERE IS ONE GOOD THING ABOUT ALL OF THE PROBLEMS WE ARE RUNNING INTO TODAY IT IS THAT CHRISTIANS ARE BEGINNING TO TALK MORE ABOUT PRAYER AND PRAYING. The Lord is placing us in circumstances where we must learn this truth which may have been written as long as 3,000 years ago.

This is the reason that it must be said that the Church does not need to get contemporary; THE CHURCH NEEDS TO GET BACK TO TRUTHS WHICH WERE WRITTEN 2,000 YEARS AGO-- AND LONGER!!!!

But, before I close tonight, let me point out:

III. Other Related Scriptures.

What is stated in Psalm 127:1 is found all through the Word of God.

Note the following passages on the negative side:

- 1) Gen. 11:4-8.
- 2) Psa. 2.
- 3) Acts 5:38, 39.

It is a vain thing to work in conflict with God and His will.

On the positive side:

- 1) Gen. 17:1-8. This has to do with Abraham.
- 2) Ex. 6:1-8. This has to do with Moses.
- 3) 2 Chron. 20. This has to do with Jehoshaphat.

Concl: Could anything possibly be more encouraging, more wonderful?

What is your problem tonight? What kind of a house are you seeking to build? Is it your own life? Is it your marriage? Is it your children? Is it your business? Are you discouraged about your ministry for the Lord--your personal witness? Your Sunday School Class?

Whatever it may be, Psalm 127:1 has your answer. Get into the Word. Spend time, MUCH TIME, in prayer. Stop asking the Lord to help you; you ask Him for the privilege of helping Him! The blessings will begin to flow, and the joy of the Lord will come into your life in a way you have never experienced before.