

Psalms

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Preacher: Buss, Charles (1913-1997)

- [0 : 00] As the Lord may be pleased to help me, I would direct you to a word in the fourth Psalm, Psalm 4 and verse 6.
- There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
- Psalm 4 and verse 6. There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
- How true is this word before us? There be many that say, who will show us any good?
- And as we would first broadly consider this, is it not a question that is asked, as it were, by many?
- [1 : 20] And yet, with what varied thoughts is this question asked? Who will show us any good?
- There be many that say this. There are many in the profane world that say, who will show us any good?
- And such will inquire and pursue their inquiries of those things, pertain to those inquiries, and yet, what is the good that they think of and call good?
- There be many that say, who will show us any good? Or they think that it is good if they can have those things which are pleasing to their carnal mind and nature.
- They may think it is good to have everything that completes, and will pursue that and inquire as to where and whence that can be found.
- [2 : 38] And they have that conception within their mind of what good is. And so, the worldly inquiries, who will show us any good?
- And however evident it is, especially in these days in which we live, as the multitudes pursue what they think is good, and as it were, with this inquiry, who will show us any good?
- It is sometimes, it has been quite distressing on the Sabbath day to see the multitudes going their own ways, and seeking after what they think is good, seeking after carnal, worldly pleasures, and desecrating God's holy day in pursuing these things.
- And yet, there is that inquiry, as it were, who will show us any good? And then, there will be the inquiry, I believe, of those who may profess to be religious.
- Who will show us any good? And they have some idea in their minds as to what is good, and they pursue that. So that, there are those, who may think it good to have some form of religion, and will pursue that, and seek good in it.
- [4 : 25] And we have instances in the Word of God of such, who thought this was good. The Pharisee thought it was good, as he went up to the temple to pray.
- He thought he had got a good religion. And, as he would have this question within his mind, it may be, who will show us any good?
- Where was he looking? He was looking to what he thought was his own goodness. And he even thought he could speak of that before a holy God.

But in all these things, whether it is with respect to the profound world, or the professing world, or how deceived to look to earthly sources, or external things, for good.

How deceived is the ungodly, the worldling, who thinks he can find good in seeking after carnal things.

[5 : 38] And why they may seem to please. And he might think, oh this is good, yet there is death stamped upon it. Yes, there is death stamped upon it.

It can afford him no lasting good. But, when he comes to that place where he needs good the most, oh then he will find it, that he has it not.

And then with respect to the merely professing man, the professing person, one with no concern about anything else but a mere name to live.

And they think that is good. How deceived is he? The Pharisee, to go back to him again, of whom the Saviour describes in the parable, we thought he had found good in himself, and in his own religion.

But, he was deceived in it. Deceived in it. And so indeed, there have been many that say, who will show us any good.

[6 : 55] But then, there is the inquiry, which springs from an exercised soul. And, again, there is this, who will show us any good.

Now, one who is rightly concerned, and one who is rightly concerned, will want to realise what is good.

and from whence that good can come, and that good whereby he shall be blessed, there is this inquiry in the heart of such.

And it is a great mercy to be brought into that experience of feeling a need of that good which the Lord now can make known to us.

And for there to be this inquiry, in the right sense of it, who will show us any good. And in the case of such a one, all the eyes will be opened to see the vanity of the other things.

[8 : 17] Yes, and the emptiness of what the world thinks is good or even great. or he will be made to see the emptiness of these things, the vanity of them.

And to be brought to the same conclusion that Solomon was brought to when he had to declare vanity of vanities, all is vanity except the preacher.

And also, as the word of God says, that man at his best state as a mere man is altogether vanity. He is vanity because he will pass away.

Yes, and whatever good he might have with regard to the things of this life, it will pass away.

It will come to an end. Yes, but now then, the eyes will be opened in the case of those whom God is pleased to deal with, so that they will see the vanity of these things, and the emptiness of them.

[9 : 37] And sometimes this will be brought home very clearly, that how vain are all things here below. but where does it bring one to?

But I want to come to this word here, which follows. For following this inquiry, there will be many that say, who will show us any glory?

We have this second part of the text, which I would see as one may be labeled, and the Lord alone can enable me. Just set this before you, and it is in the former, you will notice, of a petition, a request, and from whence come requests, such as the word before us, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy counsel upon us.

These requests will spring forth from the heart of one whom God in his great mercy has been pleased to deal with.

Yes, and now with regard to this, let us each, as we might be labeled, descend into our own hearts and examine matters there as to whether we know what it is, first to feel, the same as what is expressed in the word before us, with regard to this request, this desire, expressed here, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy counsel upon us.

[11 : 30] Now, can we understand, in some little measure, what the star is meant in this. For here, truly, it brings us to consider what is really good, and that which is good for the soul, that which is good for a poor sinner, and that which is good not only for this life, but for eternity.

And so then, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy counsels upon us. And I seek to consider it as it is before us here, as an inquiry, a prayer.

Let us first consider the substance of it, and the good that the suppliant, as it were, looks upon by our faith, and that is the light of the Lord's countenance.

The light of thy countenance. And you will notice that this is a word which is found in that blessing which God commanded Moses to speak to Aaron and with these words to bless his life.

And if you look at that blessing as recorded in the book of Numbers, I think it is the sixth chapter, and the last verses you will find that this word comes in with respect to the light of his countenance.

[13 : 36] And so that as God commanded Israel thus to be blessed, what I mean is commanded Moses and Aaron to speak that word, you see he gave them the word to give to the people as a word of blessing as were from God who was Israel's God.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Or how we have this good set before us, and this blessing.

The light of the Lord's countenance, and what is there to be considered with regard to this? God is against his face, his smile, his favour, that gracious look with which the Lord is pleased to look upon poor sinners.

and in this way God in Christ here is the light of his countenance you see the Lord is a holy God and it was revealed to Israel that he was a holy God and when they were brought to Sinai they saw then the glory of God but his countenance then was that which filled them with awe made them to tremble they had to stand afar off they dare not draw near to that mount where God was pleased to reveal himself in all his holiness and majesty and so much so that we read that even Moses did fear and quake

[16 : 19] Moses who was the friend of God but the light of his countenance bespicks his favour and now how is it then that God who is such a holy God so high so pure God who hates sin can look in favour upon upon sinners sinners sinners were full of sin sinners were being born in sin and shaped in iniquity oh it brings us to realise there is only one way whereby the Lord can show the light of his countenance and that is in and through the person and work of the dear son of God as the Lord Jesus Christ here is the light of his countenance and the light of his countenance is expressed in those words by the apostle Paul to the Corinthian church where he says this

God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ there is the light of his countenance God is revealed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ yes God who shines gracious through Jesus and what a wonderful mercy it is that the Lord hath been pleased so to do even to make known the light of his countenance in that way for this bespeaks his purposes of grace of salvation to sinners the light of his countenance it bespeaks the everlasting love in his heart as it were to poor sinners that everlasting love wherewith he has loved them oh there is that in the light of his countenance it bespeaks to his wondrous mercy yes and his pardoning grace this is the light of his countenance and it also bespeaks his watchfulness over all his dear people even the the farthest of the weakest yes and the poor wandering one the backslider for the Lord watches over his people at all times behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear them upon them that hope in his mercy to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in the coming the eye of the Lord the light of his countenance his favour but now we find that the shamist here makes this request

Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us and it comes closed home does not this what I mean is or if you know what it is to have a needy case what can meet that needy case but God's favour his smile his mercy his grace his pardon Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us yes it will be the desire of a poor sinner who has been made to realise that there is no good can be found anywhere else with respect to the need of his soul and while there are the good things of life

I mean now with respect to God's providential mercies and favours and these are good they spring from the goodness of God and his goodness to his creatures this is good that good for this life only when it comes to the soul and eternity and the need of a poor sinner whose eyes have been opened to see what a poor wretched undone sinner he is you see even providential benefits and blessings cannot meet the need of a poor guilty sinner here is the light of his countenance desire Lord lift thou up that is make it known reveal thyself upon us

Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us or it will be the inquiry of a needy sinner one who feels the burden of his sin yes he wants to know God's favour remember me oh Lord with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people oh visit me with thy salvation the light of thy countenance but then how this does fit in in the case of a forbenighted one yes one who may be brought into the dark because it speaks about the light of thy countenance Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance yes it will be the prayer of a forbenighted soul and it might please the

[23 : 28] Lord to shine yes shine with the light of his countenance and this leads us to think of that wonderful promise in the word of God in Malachi where it speaks of this and unto you that fear my name shall the son of righteousness arise with healing its wings and we have those petitions in the Psalms more than ones where the suppliant prays for this that it might please the Lord to shine yes shine upon the soul thou that dwellest between the cherubins and there is the light of his countenance shine forth yes and so let us think upon it as the inquiry that springs from the heart of a poor benighted soul and there are days of darkness it is not a strange pathway for a child of

God to have to travel even a pathway of darkness and while there is a precious truth to be considered that as I have said God's eye is upon his people at all times yet they do not always realise the mercy of this and the favour of it no but there are times when they are called to tread a dark sun path yes and ultimately it will bring forth this request from the soul and I believe the Lord brings his people into these seasons of darkness as it were to bring them to realise how they do need the Lord himself to smile upon them what half times it is the case of many that the way they go is a dark one they see not their signs they look for their evidences of grace and they cannot see them and they mourn an absent

God yes but oh it brings forth this prayer and does it bring forth from your heart is this prayer found in your heart Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us you see it is the Lord of them who can chase away the shades of night and darkness just as God has so ordered in thee his works of creation and with respect to this earth that we have the night season and the daytime but it is the Lord's appointment man may alter the clock but he cannot alter the time the sun arises this is God's work and this points to how it is with respect to spiritual things you see it is the

Lord alone who can cause the sun to shine and for the sun of righteousness to shine with healing in his wings but it pleases the Lord to do this yes and he will grant the desire of a poor soul in his own good way and time even though the darkness may be dense yet you see the Lord can chase away this darkness with the light of his countenance he can shine forth Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us yet request of a poor benighted one and then there is this case and I believe there are times when the Lord's dear people are made to realise this that when the Lord hides his face yes and you may have many questionings within and it may be you have to conclude like this that your sins have hid his face there are many earth born clouds as it were yes and there are clouds of sin and I believe the

Lord makes his people to know that sin is a hateful thing and it is that which separates between the soul and God and yea we have the word of the Lord to his ancient people in this way your sins and your iniquities have hid his face but what a mercy a poor sinner who might have to plead guilty in this way can still plead this Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us and we do see in the word of God how gracious the Lord is to these poor backsliders as they have brought to think themselves and turn again to the

[29 : 49] Lord how gracious the Lord is to returning for him the light of his countenance how wonderful it is to think that the Lord can look down in mercy and pity upon a poor returning backslider the prodigal son proved this as he returned to his father's house maybe he expected he felt to deserve his father's frown but with all his wretchedness and guiltiness he bethinks himself and he returns to his father the saviour speaks of this in the parable how that when the son will get a great way off his father saw him and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him he was the light of his countenance the light of the father's countenance upon this worthless son as it were yet one who had disgraced his father's house and yet as he returns and he returns as a penitent one you see he sees the light of his father's countenance this compassion yes and now what a word for a poor backslider one who feels he has strayed much and we must not look upon the parable son as scant as it were but oh how oft times there are backslidings of heart may be kept outwardly and that is a wonderful mercy but oh there are the backslidings of heart and this will bring darkness bring darkness and at length it will bring distress but what a mercy one can still plead yes

Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance you see the Lord in his wondrous grace has made a way whereby he can pardon sin yes and bless the poor sinner and this is to be seen in the light of his countenance but now to come to the essence of the word as it is before us Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us for the Lord to make it manifest manifest and if this prayer springs from the heart oh you will want the Lord to answer it yes even to realise his smile what else is there to be compared to this the light of his countenance surely to be favoured to realise this you believe everything else yes the sorrows of the way the daily cross the cares and anxieties what are these compared with the light of his countenance so if the

Lord is pleased to shine into your heart oh this is the greatest thing and surely it is one of those great blessings which the Lord alone can make no to a poor sinner yes and to be experienced even in measure here below the light of his countenance to feel the Lord's favour and smile upon you to realise your interest in his mercy and grace yes and this by faith to view Jesus for he is the light of the Lord countenance the Lord Jesus Christ himself he said I am the night of the world but all you do want that night to shine into your heart you want to see him as the poor sinner's light especially when there is so much darkness around and within it may be and the darkness of trial and the darkness of temptation you may feel sometimes that you walk as it were through the valley and the shadow of death and that may be dark but all just through the light of his mercy the light of his countenance the

Lord smile yes lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us and you notice in the word that follows thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their call in their wide increase now here the psalmist speaks of the Lord's favour which produced gladness in his heart and he has seen this a greater blessing than any earthly prosperity for he says thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased and here you say it this joy with a sense of the Lord's favour the light of his countenance over every earthly good in no way whatever compares to it and so then with this inquiry

Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us and in answer to this here who will show us any glory now where do we see God when we come to God's house his earthly courts is it that there might be good shown to us and who can show it the Lord alone what brings you to the house of prayer or is it that you might realise the Lord has a favour to reward you you desire to worship him and it might please the Lord to bless your soul and when you try to pray oh have you been taught to seek this good and to seek it from that other source but the Lord himself the light of his countenance and with respect to the pathway in which you have to tread the light of his countenance or is that the good you seek after remember those two disciples along the

[37 : 48] Emmaus road when Jesus himself drew near and went with them although they were in adoption experience they were reasoning about the things that happened recently they were very mystified they were tried and they were set at heart the Lord Jesus Christ in his wondrous wisdom and compassion and pity as the risen Lord drew near and went with them yes and he came in with them and spoke to them and he spoke his truth to them and at length their understandings were enlightened and their eyes were opened yet they saw the light of his countenance yes and what a wonderful effect it had upon them causing them to say they did not our heart burn in us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures or they had enjoyed the light of his countenance yes as he revealed himself to them and when at length he did break the bread to them and they were made to realise that it was indeed

Jesus while he vanished out of their sight yet they had to realise how their hearts had been blessed had been warmed had been touched had been softened yes and their faith had been strengthened the light of his countenance his presence his presence you go back into the old testament and dear Moses the man of God oh how he earnestly sought this the light of the Lord's countenance yet when they were passing through a very solemn time Israel had sinned sinned against God had felt an idolatry and the Lord had made known his holy displeasure to Israel with regard to this and we find that

Moses pleads before the Lord and he pleads for the light of his countenance his pardoning mercy the revealings of his grace to an unworthy people and that the Lord would remember his countenance Lord if thou art the light of thy countenance upon us if thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence said Moses or he wanted to feel the Lord's presence with him and only in this way could he continue the light of thy countenance yes for the Lord to reveal himself in all his love and mercy to make known the blessings of his salvation the light of his countenance and when you analyse this request here the request of a poor sinner for the light of his countenance surely there is something in this request that goes to show that the

Lord is preparing this one for the light of his countenance in other words preparing this one for heaven for where is to be seen the light of his countenance in the fullness of it but in heaven yes there to see Jesus to see him as he is and without a veil between you see here below as the apostle says we see through a glass dark and here while the Lord in his great mercy is pleased to grant to his dear people at times a little help by the way some visit of his mercy and in that sense it is the light of his countenance the

Lord has not designed that his dear people shall live in the blessing of this continually in the thought sense of it but as it was with the disciples of old the Lord Jesus Christ revealed himself briefly to them yes speaking now of the Lord Jesus Christ after he rose from the dead we read how he visited his disciples and those true believers here and there and there were great visits he vanished out of their sight there were brief visits and now it is so here we know yes brief visits and yet it brings you to feel as the hymn writer did more frequent let thy visits be or let them longer last but it is that which is to come the light of his countenance is heaven and you see poor sinners are prepared for this first thou made to long tonight yes and desire the

[44 : 25] Lord's favour to see his grace and mercy and the glory of his grace in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and to feel that interest in these things but the fullness is yet to come the light of his countenance in the fullness of it means heaven there be many that say who will show us any good Lord lift thou the light of thy countenance upon us let thy mercy come also unto me O Lord even thy salvation according to thy word Amen