

Psalm (Quality: Average, Quiet)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 February 1974

Preacher: Howard, Kenneth (1921-1992)

[0 : 00] Thank you.

And at the third verse, the first psalm, at the third verse.

However, in order that we shall have the context clearly in mind, I will read from the first verse. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scorn.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his seed.

[1 : 38] His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Now the great question that is raised by this psalm is the question, how can a man be happy?

Truly happy? Blessedly happy? Happy with that blessedness that derives from God?

Of course, it's a vital question. It's a question that lies near every man's heart. For men are interested in nothing so much as the question of their own happiness.

Only, of course, there is the difference in the understanding as to what happiness fully is.

[2 : 47] Blessed, blessedly happy is the man. Blessed, blessedly happy is the man. And it is surely of some significance that in this, the very first of the psalms, this book that so plumbs the depths of all the healings and experiences of the human soul, that the psalmist should take up this subject, and that he should here argue that there is a true and there is a false happiness.

There is the authentic and there is the counterfeit. There is the genuine and there is the spurious. And because this is the case, there are therefore two ways brought before us in this psalm by which happiness may be sought.

There is the common or majority and the Christian or minority work. And the psalmist's method is to throw these two ways into contrast.

And as he goes through this brief psalm, he spares nothing to emphasize and to stress the utter difference between.

So, in order to bring us up to the third verse, which is our text, let me just comment on the first two verses.

[4 : 40] In the first verse, you notice that the psalmist is wholly negative in what he says. In the first verse, he expounds, exposes, and explodes.

the worldly man's way of happiness. He shows that it's hollow, that it's empty, that it's false.

That it's false in its thinking because it rests on ungodly counsel. That it's false in its practice because it belongs to the way or the manner of life of sinners.

and that it's false in the position it takes with regard to the only one in whom true happiness is to be found, in that it sees God and grace and gospel from the state of the school.

so, because the promised happiness is not produced.

[6 : 27] That, it seems to me, is the gist of the psalmist's message in the first verse. But then you'll notice when he comes to the second verse, in holy poverty, here in the second verse, he expounds the godly man's recipe or way of happiness.

It is something, he says, that comes out of the law of the Lord. And that expression, the law of the Lord, in this context means the word of the Lord.

The revelation that God has made in his word of grace and salvation. And so rich, so full, is this source of authentic blessedness or happiness, that a godly man's delight is to engross himself in the meditative day and night.

Well, here you see, the beginning is the sheer contrast as to the method, the means, to happiness.

And it leads, in the case of the ungodly, to utter failure, and in the case of the godly, to delighting and true blessing.

[8 : 00] But now when he comes to the third verse, the psalmist continues this contrast, but he changes his angle of approach to the sentence.

In the first two verses, he has contrasted, as it were, the way, the means, the methods, employed by men as ways and means to happiness.

But now in verses 3 and 4, he seems to say, well, no, all right. I'll prove my point even further. And I'll do it by showing you the difference between the end products.

I'll set before you an exhibition, you see, I'll give you two exhibits. He says, I'll show you a man who actually gets this authentic, godly happiness in the way of grace and God.

And I'll show you another man who gets what he regards as happiness in the worldly way and method.

[9 : 23] And in this exhibition, he sets before us these two specimens, psalm, end products. He does it by way of two illustrations.

He says, Christian is like a tree and the non-Christian is like a evil child.

Here they are. Here's your exhibition. The one, the tree, is alive. The child is dead. The one is useful, the other is useless.

Blessed is the man like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.

his leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. There he is. There's the end product of the man who gains this authentic, blasphemy, this supreme happiness.

[10 : 38] But on the other hand, here's the other man. The man who's gone about getting his happiness from the counsel of the ungodly and the way of the sinner and the seat of the scorner.

The ungodly he says, I'm not saying, but the light is charred which the wind drives him around. Well, you see, once again, the contrast is obvious.

It couldn't be more complete. It couldn't be more total than it is. A tree in flourishing heaven.

A evil child. Well, we shall, I think, need all our time to concentrate on the tree this evening.

This man whose happiness is illustrated by the life of a tree. This Christian man whose delight is in the law of the law.

[11 : 45] Look at you, the Lord. He says, he can't. He not only glorified you, he glorified you.

Look at you. And he says, I'll explain the truth in two ways why this man eats what he does.

The first great thing that he sets before us is this, that a Christian's happiness, a godly man's happiness, is explained by the way in which he has become a Christian.

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. What is he saying? Well, you see, he's saying in the first way, that one becomes a Christian.

One becomes a gracious person as a result of something done to him. He doesn't say, this man shall be like a tree.

[13 : 05] He says, this man is like a tree planted. No, trees, whether seed or sapling, don't plant themselves.

A bird drops or the wind blows the seed, it's something done to the tree. If a sapling is planted, then it takes a man to dig the hole, takes a man to put it in, takes a man to dung it, takes a man to make it firm.

Trees don't plant themselves. Like a tree can. And you see, this is the essence of the biblical message.

The Christians do not create themselves. A gracious life is not self-driven. Nobody's born a Christian.

Nobody's a Christian by nature. Nobody like Topsy just grows up in some automatic way into a Christian. Nobody by reason of his family or his ancestry or his nationality or race is a Christian.

[14 : 25] But indeed, nobody is a Christian by anything he does. Even though he's free, by doing the best thing, by reading the word of God and praying and coming to the house of God.

Hurrily good habits and I, I am not condemning. Obviously. God has done. My dear friend, if not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy Lord's demand, thou must change.

The tree is planted and planted by another. The Christian is sucked by what another, namely God, has done.

For you see, when you come to consider the matter, there is absolutely nothing in all the steps and stages by which a man becomes a Christian, becomes a God-liver, that isn't God-liver.

Who said that there should ever be such a Christian, such a thing as a Christian? God. Who devised the plan of salvation?

[15 : 49] God. Who worked it out in history, first in an elect nation and then in an elect person, his son?

God. Who condemns sinners in their sin? God. Who calls them by his grace? God.

Who adopts them into the heavenly family? Who showers every blessing and joy upon them and gives them the anticipation of heaven itself?

God. Like a tree, planted, yes, and planted by a man.

You remember how Isaiah puts it in the beginning of the 61st chapter when he speaks about the spirit of the Lord God coming upon the anointed one to preach.

[16 : 48] What's it all for? What's it all about? For is it that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the God?

God? God who makes anyone a Christian and the least of his people is able to say we are his one of the Christians.

And the most mature and mellowed of his people have got to say, I am what I am. I'm the greatest God. Nothing to boast of.

All done for him. All done in him. He's like a tree plant. The plant of the war. That's what accounts for his happiness.

How he became God. But let me look again at this. And I am constrained to say one becomes a Christian only as the result of a certain prior work of preparation.

[18 : 07] Like a tree planted. Before the tree is planted it has to be created. It has to be nurtured.

It has to be brought to a fit stage and state of growth, maturity, and health before there's any point or any obvious in planting it at all.

No forestry man goes out and puts wheat, diseased saplings into the plantation. Oh, there's a lot of work to be done before he goes out, before he begins to plant it.

and my dear friend what a picture this is of the fact that before a sinner can be planted in the Christian faith, in the Christian church.

He needs a lot of preparation. He needs in particular a new nature. And the question that arises is how can he get it?

[19 : 14] can't make it himself. He doesn't get it by imitating other people, not even by imitating the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, not by living a good life, not by following the Sermon on the Mount, as though such a thing were possible.

His old nature, his rock riddled with sin, inherited from his natural forebears and his origins. That he has to get rid of.

Because it's only pure, strong, healthy trees that are the plantings of the Lord. And so such a person has to be prepared, has to be made ready for this life.

In other words, there is a work of the Holy Spirit of God by which a sinful man is made ready and fit to be planted in the kingdom of grace.

That work is what our fathers were once to call a law work. What is perhaps more generally called nowadays a work of conviction, a work of heart exercise which is painful and tedious and difficult, but absolutely indispensable, for it's the preparation that has to be done.

[20 : 51] What does this preparation involve? Well, of course, the first thing it involves is a breaking down of the old nature.

thing is disturbing, grosser. Ground has to be broken up, lifted, sifted, made ready.

The man finds that he goes on for years undisturbed as the religious man and then something, something turns him upside down.

Someone turns him upside down but he doesn't recognise the person at the moment. The spirit of God is in lousing him from the sleep of death.

He wants to resist but he finds he can't. His soul is in a state of turmoil. He can't rest. His old landmarks are gone. He's in the melting pot.

[21 : 57] He's in agony. He's in the soul. That's it. The callow ground is being broken up. It's being prepared.

It's a painful process. Oh my friends, do you know anything about this? What then?

Well, while a man is still in this condition, the holy spirit leads him. to the truth.

The truth about God, the truth about himself, the truth about God's ever-blessed son, the same.

Before you arrived at this point, many of you I'm sure can go along with me in this description of the experience. Before you arrived at this point, my friend, you didn't care about God.

[22 : 58] But when you got to this point, you cared most acutely about God. Before this point, you saw nothing of his majesty and his holiness, but now it is his holiness and his righteous law that is revealed to you.

Before you got to this point, you never looked at yourself and saw yourself as vile and evil. You never saw yourself like that. You saw yourself as a good fellow.

God. Now, all upside down, you're beginning to see the truth. The scales are going, the light is dawning. Here's this preparatory work of the Spirit of God.

He's bringing you into the truth. He's showing you the truth. The facts of the situation that you never knew before. You're a lost sinner before a holy God and that God has supplied a saviour for you in his Son.

And he the Spirit of God said to you, believe on the Lord Jesus and life and thou shall be. And you know the difference between the preacher's answer and the Spirit of God saying.

[24 : 17] Or do you know something about this? You can't be planted in the kingdom of grace, in the kingdom of God, until the Spirit of God has done this preparatory work, showing you the truth.

What else? What then? Well, when the Holy Spirit has done this work, the next thing he does to him and for him is to give him a spirit of good heaven.

Up to this point, you were proud of your Spirit, you enjoyed it, it was a pleasure. But at this point, you will win it. You hate it, you detest it.

Before this point, you were proud of your pride. You were ready to boast what you were before God and man. At this point, you abominate your pride.

You hate it. You loathe yourself for ever being and doing such things which you were and you tell God your master. Here's this spirit of dependence coming.

[25 : 25] Here's this preparatory work going on. What then? Well, then, now, this thing is to give a saving place.

It shows you that that is not something with which you were born, but something that he bestows and gives. And having given you that gift of saving faith and shown you the truth as to the only way of salvation, you place that faith in the Lord Jesus alone.

And he must be you. No, it is the spirit of God who does prepare to be well. And it has to be done.

Man becomes a Christian only as a result of this prior work of preparation. He's like a tree planted, yes, but planted only when it's ready to be planted, when the sifting and the sorting, the giving of this new nature, this healthy, holy, wholesome nature that is imputed to him in the Lord Jesus Christ, he does.

this is what it comes for a godly man. The way in which he has been made a child of God is as a result of something done to him.

[27 : 00] It's after a new preparation, but there's something else the psalmist sets before us here, and that is this, that one becomes a Christian only under certain conditions.

He's like a tree planted, you don't plant it where? In theory, at least, you can plant a tree anywhere.

You can plant a tree in the desert. You can plant a tree on the top of a mountain. He's lost. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

Planted in the place where nutriment and life is not only present but absolutely guaranteed. If you plant a tree anywhere else it may or it may not survive.

But if you plant a tree on a river's bank with the rich loam, it will unquestionably survive and grow and run.

[28 : 21] Where then is this Christian planted? Where then is this exhibit the psalmist is setting before us planted? or he's planted in spice.

He's grafted into Christ Jesus. Born originally in Adam, now he's planted in Christ by the rivers of many more than the river.

And what does he find in will in Christ find death of earth? The Christian finds that his roots can go down and down.

He finds that there's no question, there's no problem about barrenness. He finds that he's not the case of the seed that shrivels up because of no death of earth.

Why not? Because the soil into which he is planted is the soil of the divine house.

[29 : 33] Because the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him. Because the fullness resides in Jesus, our head. And because, my friends, because you cannot measure the depth of all the richness of such granted into deity.

And this Godly man, this gracious man, receive new life from this divine stock, from the vastness and the infinity of the divine that is in Jesus.

Yet there are that's what he finds in life. What else? Well, in Christ he finds also living water.

It's one thing to have life, it's another thing to sustain life. But you see, here is a tree planted by the rivers of water that runs down its roots.

earth. Yet, even into the waters of the river itself, it isn't removed even one degree from the source of supply.

[31 : 01] And as natural life depends on water, so spiritual life depends on spiritual water. water. And so it comes to pass, that whithersoever the river cometh, there shall be life.

And the sinner, prepared by the gracious Holy Spirit of God who is planted in Christ, finds there's not only death of earth, there's abundance of water.

The man who draws the whole of his nutriment is strength from God Christ. What else?

Well, it seems to me the psalmist also says this, that in Christ there is an endless supply. If one thing to have an abundant supply, it's another thing to be sure that that supply will not terminate.

But it's permanent and ongoing. he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

[32 : 11] Have you noticed the apparent contradiction there? I say apparent, but it is only apparent. He shall be like a tree, singular, planted by the rivers.

Blue. How would you go about that one tree on the bank of the river?
What's the song about?

Though surely he is saying that the river of which he speaks is a great, and a wide view, it's not a ten, it's not a seven, it's an Amherst, and a Nile, and a Mississippi, all rolled into one, with all their tributaries away back, covering hundreds and thousands of miles of insulin, all pouring their water into the one great trunk, so that the one thing that is absolutely certain about you is that you have never run by.

that's the picture, being planted by the rivers of water. The source of life and nutriment that is provided for, a redeemed sinner in Jesus Christ, is something that's endless.

That's what he finds in Christ, the well of water springing up and whoever lasted. It makes him say, thou, thou of life, the fountain art, pleaded every take of thee, rise thou up within my heart, spring to all eternity.

- [34 : 02] It reminds him of what another hymn writer says when he says, when all created streams aren't dry, thy fullness is the same.
- he can never be. A tree planted by the rivers water and everything wither this river knows his life.
- That's what explains the God in life. That's what explains his life. These are the conditions that guarantee his life.
- He is Christ. So you see, his happiness, his gracious happiness, this authentic Christian happiness that is specifically described as blessedness, is something that's explained in terms of the way by which a man becomes a Christian.
- And it can all be summed up like this. He has done nothing and it has all been done for him.
- [35 : 28] He like a tree, planted in the kingdom of grace by God the heart, prepared for planting by the spirit of God and nourished in everything by the ever-blessed Son of God.
- And so you see, his happiness is derived from a gracious, harmonious work of the triune God.
- happiness born of God, the amazing of a Christian and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.
- So that's the first great thing that the psalmist says to us here. this is how the authentic Christian blessedness or happiness is explained. This is how a man not only glorifies God, but enjoys God.
- It explains by how the life of grace was ever been planned. So I come to the second main thing the psalmist says, and that is this.
- [36 : 55] A Christian's happiness, a God demand happiness, is explained by what he is, now that he isn't.
- What he is, now the work of grace is done in its initial sense of regeneration. What he is, he's what makes me blessed, what makes me happy.
- Well, then the question is, what is he? What is a god man? What is a Christian? Well, the first thing it seems to me, the psalmist says before us that he ever is this, that a Christian is a person who functions properly.
- Notice please what I'm saying. I'm not saying that he's a person who functions perfectly. We have seen an end of all the things, and there is no the things. In the place.
- But essentially, and in principle, a Christian is a person who functions as man was meant to function when God made him in the first place.
- [38 : 16] And although a Christian may approximate in greater or lesser degree to this great ideal, he does at least approximate to it.
- What do I mean? Well, you see, this is what the psalmist says. The first thing the psalmist says about the tree is this, that there's a certain type of activity about the tree.
- he bringeth forth his fruit in his season. And that is the function of the tree.
- You can use trees for all sorts of reasons. A screen of you you don't want to have, a hold together unstable soil that's sloping, improve a landscape, you can use trees for all sorts of things.
- That is what trees are for. The function of a tree according to the first chapter of the book of Genesis is the dare fruit. And the function of man as God made him is the dare fruit for God's glory.
- [39 : 28] The fruit of a holy life. The fruit of a life that glorifies God and obeys him and therefore enjoys. man by nature.

He does not function properly like that. He functions. He brings forth. Oh, yes, we know to our own bitter, constant experience, man by nature brings forth.

What does he bring forth? It's all of sin, it's all of self, it's all of the devil. You see, that is the problem.

The man of the world, the natural man, is spiritually maladjusted. That's why he's unhappy. He is spiritually maladjusted.

He isn't functioning as he should do. He's out of joint. He's out of joint with his own soul. He's out of joint with his neighbors. And worth of all, he has a joint with his neighbors.

[40 : 35] He's like a deceived body. All its functions, all its movements, all its motions, and all. He's a take of null function.

God demands his arms like a healthy crew. He's like a healthy body. Each member working in harmony with the rest, functioning properly, and he brings forth out of his heart and life, that which is God's purpose and God's sight, in life, the proper ability.

And that leads me to say this, in this proper time, there is a certain ordinance about a godly man's life.

And this is what causes and creates this authentic happening. A certain ordinance. God is the God of salvation is the God of nature and he made his food.

He spoke. First the shoot, then the bud, then the flower, then the fruit. He found all to that order.

[42 : 10] And not only that, the experts tell us that except for some very unusual factor in nature, these various stages can be almost dated in advance.

So many days, from the shoot to the bud, from the bud to the flower, from the flower to the fruit, according to the species and according to where it is being grown.

the fruit, bringeth forth his fruit in his season. No, no, the tree doesn't bear its fruit in August one year and in December and in January one year and in June the next.

No, no, in its season. There is an order in nature. And here is a matter in which the sound makes nature the pattern of grace.

which is quite right and quite proper in this way. What he is saying clearly is this, that a godly man has a life given by God that is based on order because it's done by truth, because it rests on principles.

[43 : 35] Laid in Christ reduces so much so much and the young man in Christ so much those who are approaching the stature of a full man in Christ so much there is order, there is method, there is principle in what the godly life produces.

He isn't godly by fits and starts, he isn't godly according to his external circumstances, he isn't godly according to some psychological stimulus to his emotions, does he?

As this man takes in the nutriment that's in the rivers of living water, so he bears fruit in his feet.

So it's right to expect a man in Christ to bear more fruit in a baby. It is right to expect those who have been longer on the road to produce more fruit than those who have been less tired.

Let a Christian grow cold towards Christ and the fruit of his life will be written. Let him neglect the sources of his strength in Christ and he'll bring forth, he'll bring forth.

[44 : 59] But it will be likely to him. But the principle, and that's all I can say, the principle laid down for us here is that the life of the godly man is something orderly, secret, production of races, of Christian character, and this also is what makes him happy.

This is also a feature of this blessedness that is that the whole activity is orderly, balanced, is wholesome, consciously. He bringeth forth his beautiful things.

And there's another point that it seems to me must be brought forth here, and that is this, that there is a very real productive about such a man.

He brings forth his fruit. What? Well, there are many passages of scripture which of course answer that question, but the obvious passage to which our minds go is the apostle's statement in his letter to the Galatians, where he says the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, the fruit, the mystery.

Now, my friends, these things appear in the child of love. The point I want to make about them in harmony with our text this evening is that these are fruits which are plucked by almonds, plucked by almonds.

[46 : 58] A tree does not pluck its own fruit, its fruit is plucked by almonds. And if the fruit of the spirit in you produces love, those who are in association and contact with you will pluck the benefit of your loving distinction.

And if the fruit of the spirit in you is joy, then those with whom you are in contact, contact, will pluck something of the benefit of that fruit.

If the fruit of the spirit in you is goodness, others will pluck it. If the fruit of the spirit in you is meekness, others will burn and die.

If the fruit of the spirit in you is temperance, self-control, moderation, self-possession, that is the fruit that you will take and consume by yourself, others will pluck it and rejoice in it and will benefit you.

So there is a real productiveness about a gracious man. And this indeed is the whole history of the Christian church.

[48 : 22] The fact of the matter, if we look at the history of our own country tonight, it is this, all common good in our country has been brought from Christian work, Christian men, fruit of Christian life, hospitals, where did they come from?

The church. Schools, education, where did it come from? The church. Philanthropy of any kind. Where did it originate? People of God, the poor law, the end of slavery.

Is all the proof that there is to mine? Just so is he hidden in the question. So you see, if you ask the question, why is the godly man happy?

It is also explained, says the psalmist, in this way, because he's a person whose function proper than people. At least, he approximates to the way in which God means men to hunt.

His life produces that which God means in the universe. He's like a church, planted by the feathers of water that bringeth forth his fruit.

[49 : 37] universe. But then he's in other things, this. Godly man's happiness is explained by what he is, now he is a godly man.

Well, that leads us to say this, following the psalmist in our text, this godly man is a person who has no potential here of the future.

that is what I'm saying. I'm not saying he has no fear of any kind. I'm saying he has no essential abiding dominating fear.

Of course, it's like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His lead also shall not work.

though all the Lord's trees are evergreen. The deciduous shed is the evergreen retains its fruit.

[50 : 42] What does it mean? What is he saying? What he means, what he's saying is this, that what God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost does in planting a sinner in his kingdom, can never be happy, can never be evil, can never be the best.

And this is where rises the true happiness of the child of God. If your happiness, my friends, depends on circumstances, it will come and go, and go most likely when you want it most.

But a Christian's happiness is inviolable because its source, its source is in the world. No essential fear of the future.

Are you questioning that? Are you saying, well, what happens if bad news comes our way? These terrible days in which we are living, what happens if bad news comes our way?

Oh, listen, this is what the psalmist says in Psalm 112, he shall not be afraid of evil times. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, his heart is established, that's his position.

[52 : 08] A terrible ground may come, but this tree never loses its name. Storm may roar about me, my heart, my natural heart, may load me.

God love me. And can I be afraid? No, of course. Let the winds come, let the blisters roar, planted in Christ, and in the evil day, however evil it be, my love, my leave, shall not be.

I might be. I may fail. This wretched man that I am by nature may fail. The life that I have by Christ is right to me.

Thou not mine. No sense would be in the future. Are you still questioning it?

Are you saying, well, then, what about increasing age? If anxiety arises over increasing age, what then? Because this is common.

[53 : 27] Young people hate the thought of approaching middle age. And middle age people get apprehensive about old age.

Old age begins to feel uncomfortable about death. love. But, beloved, the glorious thing about this gospel of the grace of God, the glorious thing about this Christian life is that it prepares a man for anything.

It prepares him for any stage, any period. It prepares us for decadence. It prepares us for sin in it. It prepares us for the days when we can hardly move or think or know after a natural way and manner what we are doing.

Listen, listen to the psalmist in Psalm 92. He says, the righteous shall flourish like a palm tree. He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish and the courts of our drach. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

[54 : 47] They shall be packed but bloody. He once has drawn his verses from them and indeed he has multiplied. And you know what David said, I have been young, now am I old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken?

This man who's planted in Christ is a man who has no potential to have the good he may still have his natural apprehensions.

He will while he's in the body. And he knows that those natural apprehensions about natural things are nothing but there is a life that he has.

He has no life, no spirit, no earthquake, no ending of the heavens, not even death. It shall but shall up his soul from the love of God and Jesus Christ.

Nothing can jam up that river of the water of life and prevent its waters flowing through it. It will cause it.

[55 : 59] Shall it. No central fear of the future that's another mark of it. But then I come to this final point.

The Christian says the psalmist and this explains his blessedness, his happiness. He's a person who is a here and now.

That is to say he is a person who has a settled, defectful email. I'm not saying, I don't think the psalmist is saying that he doesn't get concerned about the things.

But whatever the concern, whatever the trouble, there is a basic here and now. And in a sense, of course, this is the test of the whole matter.

Because the future is to a great extent unknown. But the present is with us. The present is only too real. But whatever comes to pass on the earth, says the psalmist, the Christian man, has all the comfort he needs to make it listen.

[57 : 12] And whatsoever he do it, so prosper, how can you say it, how dare you say it.

what about that godly man who failed in business, who's no part of the way. What about that godly man whose family was distressed, who's no part of the way.

Whatsoever he doeth, so can't see it. For our poor, unic little mind, that can't see beyond being people.

I must answer all these questions in one verse from the Apostle Paul, because of the matter of Jacob John. Before the Apostle Paul says in Romans 8, 28, what the psalmist says here, he knows that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.

Beloved, don't you know that God's in need with his people? Don't you know that God has covenant engagements with his people? To turn everything that happens to them, joy and sorrow, success and failure, triumph and calamity, and the means of grace and means of blessing, pains for their spiritual good, whatsoever and life.

[59 : 07] Let it involve him, let it cast him down, let it raise him up, let it humble him, whatsoever he doeth, shall work for the cross to heaven, but the shall.

God is a God who turns every tragedy into ultimate life, every calamity into ultimate life.

Here, then, this Christian man, this godly man, having to rest on what the world calls success, this godly man, is a man who's going to be blessed and prospered in the good hand of God as much as much by his calamities and his adversities, as much by his achievements and success.

God is not simply governing his prosperity, God shows him, and so, his happiness doesn't come and go, he's at peace, basically in heart, though the incidental circumstances of his life and affairs may cause him to flutter, may cause him to be concerned, momentarily and from time to time, he's done.

There is this settled vision that arises from the fact that we know that God's all mighty act, governs everything, but he's out there, turn.

[60 : 43] Well, well, there's the evidence, says the government, there's the end, look, isn't it, nothing, isn't it, Winston?

There's the exhibit he sets before us, this man who has this blessedness, this happiness in the Christian world, always in the tract of the Christian family.

The story of that will come to you by tract. The explanation of Christian happiness is the all of God.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, plants the tree, prepares it for planting, nourishes it when it is planted. Do you see yourself there?

I didn't say, do you see yourself there to perfection? Do you see yourself approximating, in measure, in degree? Do you see some of these things in degree and in proportion?

[61 : 49] you count yourself a Christian by what you've done? Do you count yourself a Christian by what you've done?

can you do that?

do you do you not vote in self- you count yourself a Christian by what you've done as you count yourself a Christian by what God has done well I suppose the answer to that question is in what you are now godly man functions properly in his season lost his essential fear of the future he knows the ends of the ages are in God's hand he's a priest basically a priest here and now knowing that whatsoever he's doing he'll prosper under the good hand of his God and so there is a happiness arising from the very fact that grace is planted with him that he is what he is by the grace of God and there is a happiness that arises from the light the consequences, the outflowing, the productivity of that seed of God and of grace gladly increase and soften blessed is the man that delighted in the law of the Lord he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his seed the leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he will he shall be

God bless us God bless us God bless us may he bless his holy word and write it on our hearts by the finger and he hold us Amen Amen