

Staircase to God

Ps 5:11-12

1

11 But let all who take refuge in Thee be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And mayest Thou shelter them, That those who love Thy name may exult in Thee. 12 For it is Thou who dost bless the righteous man, O Lord, Thou dost surround him with favor as with a shield.

As with many Bible verses, there seems to be a big picture here, made up of smaller impacting parts.

The big picture is that whoever comes to God to abide in Him, 1 John 4, should take joy because God will protect him. What a great reassurance of confidence God offers those who come to Him.

Then when we consider the impacting smaller statements that make up the passage, we can gain a deeper understanding of the passage. There is a sequence to these statements that at first glance might not appear as important, but when we begin to look deeper into the structure of the passage, we begin to see how these underlying thoughts have a structure of their own, that there is a direction to them, a sequence.

2 I see three things in this passage that act like steps leading to God.

3 1) All those that put their trust in Thee

4 2) Those who LOVE thy name

5 3) Thou dost bless the righteous man

These thoughts, taken in their sequence, are very significant of the true path by which men come close to God and become righteous. There is a distinct order in them, and whether God intended it or the Psalmist was fully conscious of it or not, he was anticipating and stating, with wonderful clarity, the Christian sequence—faith, love, righteousness.

These three are the flights of stairs, as it were, which lead men to God and to completeness in him, or if you will allow me to wax poetic, they are respectively;

6 1) The root

7 2) The branch

8 3) The fruit

of man's relationship with God, the very foundation of the Christian's worship.

The first thought then, is that the foundation of coming to God is trust, our trust in His

X A) Existence

B) Power

C) Love

D) Promises

The word here for trust comes from the Hebrew;

Chacah

9

(khaw-saw'); a primitive root; to flee for protection [compare OT:982]; figuratively, to confide in: KJV - have hope, make refuge, (put) trust.

There is great significance in this term. In its literal usage, it means to flee to a refuge, a safe haven of protection and rest.

That is how it is used in...

Ps 25:2

10

2 O my God, in Thee I trust, Do not let me be ashamed; Do not let my enemies exult over me.

And also...

Ps 9:10

11

10 And those who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee; For Thou, O Lord, hast not forsaken those who seek Thee.

This idea of putting our trust in the Lord, fleeing to Him for refuge reinforces the idea we are pursuing. Coming to the Lord is a choice we have to make. We must choose to seek God, to flee for refuge to Him, to abide in Him, this is our responsibility, this is what we will be held accountable for when we stand before God; have we come to Him with trust in our hearts, faith in our obedience, and love in our commitment, if not, we will be rejected.

When we come to God we must first understand that as we come to Him it is not on our terms, but His. God wants to be the refuge we flee to, the root that feeds us and nurtures us. That is the analogy as seen in...

John 15:1-4

12

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. **2** "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. **3** "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. **4** "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

The branch is nothing more than a stick, without the vine, the vine is the foundation of everything the branch is or hopes to be.

What is it that keeps a man safe when he is surrounded by the walls of some citadel? Is it himself, the fact that he fled to the haven, or is it the walls behind which he crouches? We easily see that ultimately it is the walls that provide protection, but there is a sense in which the fact that he fled to them is part of the dynamic that keeps him protected. The same is true with our salvation. We can, of ourselves, do nothing to cause our own salvation, which has already been accomplished by God and Christ. Man can find salvation in none other than Christ, it is a function of being a part of Christ the Vine, of abiding in God and He in us, but in the same way that fleeing into a fort is part of the dynamic of being protected, so also the act of turning to God and placing our faith and trust in Him, is part of the dynamic of saving man from his sins.

If we would only come to understand that the very essence of our relationship with God lies in our trust in Him, then we would understand better what He asks from us in order that He may defend us.

Isaiah said...

Isa 26:4

13

4 "Trust in the Lord forever, For in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock.

And...

Acts 16:31

14

31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."

Isaiah who said, "Trust ye in the Lord forever," and Paul who said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," were preaching identically the same thing. The Lord Isaiah spoke about is the same Lord Paul spoke about.

The joy of trust is;

15

A) It brings us into contact with the omnipotence of God for our defense.

16

B) It places us into the Hands of His tenderness for our consolation.

17

C) That in our very exercise of trust in His defense, so when we feel that protection and consolation, there is a great reward.

All who choose to flee into God, to flee into the refuge of His Love, shall find joy.

The next logical step that results from our placing our faith and trust in God, because of what He does, has done, will do, all of the above, is an appreciation for all those things, a realization that we should Love him because He first Loved us.

The text says that all those that put their trust in God, also love God. Another point we must come to understand is that God's Love for us is not dependent on anything except His desire, His choice, to do so.

Rom 5:8

18

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Our love can never be anything else other than an answer to His. It can only be secondary, or maybe a better way to say that, is that, it is a reflection of His Love for us. We manifest that which is the love of God in our lives by giving to others the same measure of Love that God has given to us. And so, as our text says, "Those that love Thy Name," meaning by that, the revealed character of God, exhibit that character in our lives.

We see in our original analogy how Christ is the vine, the foundation upon which we trust and are built and we are the branch which draws from the vine all that we need. The branch is the product of the vine, and the fruit that the branch bears is a direct result of being in the vine. How we are to people of the world, our efforts in teaching and ministering to them are, or should be, a result of our being the branch to Christ's vine, a result of our love for God because He first Loved us.

The sequence then is this, we come to God seeking what He offers, we accept the facts of His existence, the majesty of His power revealed, the depth of His Love for man in sending His Son. That, by definition, is faith. Our faith moves us to the obedience that trusting in God demands, and

we begin to understand that God did all of this for us because of His Love for us and we love him in return. "We love Him because He first loved us," and we shall never know that He loves us unless we come to that knowledge through the avenue of faith.

Love follows trust. So, brethren, if we desire to be loved, we must first begin to trust. And if we want to have our hearts filled with love towards God, we must begin to practice that love towards others.

Let us choose to come to God seeking there refuge from Satan and the things of this world.

The last step in our text is the idea of the righteous man and how God responds to him. In the text, righteousness follows accepting God and placing our trust in Him, and learning to love Him as he has loved us.

Therein is the ladder to God.

Acceptance, trust, leads to Love of God, which then leads to faithful obedience resulting in...

Dikaiosune

19

Is "the character or quality of being right or just"; it was formerly spelled "rightwiseness," which clearly expresses the meaning. It is used to denote an attribute of God, e. g., Rom 3:5, the context of which shows that "the righteousness of God" means essentially the same as His faithfulness, or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His own nature and promises; Rom 3:25,26 speaks of His "righteousness" as exhibited in the death of Christ, which is sufficient to show men that God is neither indifferent to sin nor regards it lightly. On the contrary, it demonstrates that quality of holiness in Him which must find expression in His condemnation of sin.

Faith leads to righteousness in another way. When we open our hearts, Christ comes in. Trust Him and He fills our nature with the law of the Spirit of Life that was in Christ Jesus, and that makes us free from the law of sin and death. Righteousness, is attained when we cease from our own works and come to God through Christ. They that trust and love are found in Him, not having their own righteousness, but that which is of God, by faith.

1 John 2:29

20

29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

And love leads to righteousness because it brings into play the one motive in our hearts which turns duty into delight, toil into joy, and urges us to do what will please our God more than anything else. Why did Jesus Christ say, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light"? Was it because He diminished the weight of duties? No! He intensified it, and His Commandment is far harder to flesh and blood than any commandments that were ever given. But for all that, the yoke that He lays upon our necks is and the burden that we have to draw behind us is easy in that He helps us all along the way. We can have the comfort of knowing that He has born the burden and paid the price that was laid at our feet because of our sin. Our requirement, Christ tells us simple in...

John 14:15

X

15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Paul addresses this idea of doing righteousness when he describes the reward that is waiting for him in the future...

2 Tim 4:6-8

21

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul calls it a crown of righteousness, a result of being found in a right relationship with God through Christ.

So, here is a very easily applied, and a very far-reaching test for all of us who call ourselves Christians:

Does our love and does our trust culminate, in practical righteousness? We are all tempted to make too much of the emotions of the religious life, and too little of its persistent, dogged obedience. That is the trap that many in the world of religion have fallen into. They place their trust in their feelings. They want to be told how good they are and that God loves them even when they are not. This is all true, but they don't want to be told of the responsibility that each man has of faithfully keeping the commandments, all of the commandments, in obedience to the God that loved him so much that He gave His only begotten Son to save man from his sin.

The world teaches that if I feel good about what I am doing, therefore it must be the right thing to do. We have to be careful not to think that a Christian is a man that believes in Jesus Christ but does not practice righteousness in all of its ramifications.

There is only one way by which righteousness can be attained, and that is: first by faith and then by love.

Where are you on the staircase to God?