Thanksgiving 2011 – Psalm 92

I. Psalm 92:1 – It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High.

It is good… What does that mean? In another place we read:

✓ Psalm 147:1 – Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

So in the first place, giving thanks to the LORD and singing praises to the name of the Most High is good in the sense that it is pleasant.

✓ Psalm 135:3 (cf. 133:1; Prov. 22:18) – Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant!

The focus here is not on our own pleasant experience that comes to us when we give thanks. Instead, the focus is on the giving of thanks itself, as a pleasant and beautiful and lovely thing. It is good to give thanks to the Lord! So we could think of pleasant foods.

✓ Psalm 141:4 – Let me not eat of their delicacies.

We can think of pleasant forms or pictures.

✓ Song of Solomon 1:16 (NRSV; cf. 7:6) – You are beautiful, my beloved, truly lovely.

We can think of pleasant words.

✓ Proverbs 16:24 (cf. Prov. 15:26; Ps. 141:6) – Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

We can think of pleasant sounds.

✓ Psalm 81:2 (NIV) – Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre.

Our physical senses may be dulled as we grow older, so that we can no longer appreciate and enjoy the pleasant tastes and pleasant sights and pleasant sounds, but that doesn’t change the fact that the music still has a delightful and lovely quality. The food is no less savory than it has always been. The flowers are still just as beautiful as ever.

✓ Psalm 133:1 – Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

The main point isn’t how happy the brothers are when they dwell together in unity. The point is that this dwelling in unity is in and of itself a pleasant, and beautiful, and lovely thing. And so it is with thanksgiving. The Psalmist wants us to see that the giving of thanks is in and of itself a
pleasant, and beautiful, and lovely thing. It is something to be desired. It is something to be pursued and sought after. The giving of thanks is a delightful delicacy. It is a lovely flower. It is a melodious music. It is altogether pleasant and beautiful. And why is this? Well the answer is that it is so incredibly right.

✓ Psalm 147:1 – Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

The Hebrew word for “fitting” can also be translated “beautiful”, or “lovely” – the same as “pleasant”! Solomon’s betrothed is beautiful in the sense that she is so desirable to him.

✓ Song of Solomon 2:14 (cf. 4:3; 6:4; Jer. 6:2) – O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

But there are other things that are beautiful and lovely simply because they are so very fitting, so becoming… so right. For example, it is not a beautiful thing for a fool to live in luxury. Why?

✓ Proverbs 19:10 – It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury.

Fine speech is not beautiful in a fool’s mouth. Why?

✓ Proverbs 17:7 – Fine speech is not becoming to a fool.

It is not a lovely thing when a fool is honored. Why?

✓ Proverbs 26:1 – Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool.

But on the other hand, a song of praise to the Lord is a pleasant, and beautiful, and lovely thing precisely because it is so very fitting, so very becoming… so very right. And so the Psalmist sums it up like this: “It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High.” The giving of thanks is a beautiful and lovely thing – because it is so fitting and so right. And why, we ask, is it so fitting and so right?

II. Psalm 92:1-4 – It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

It is the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord that makes the giving of thanks so very fitting, and therefore also such a beautiful thing!

✓ Exodus 33:18-19; 34:5-7 – Moses said [to the LORD], “Please show me your glory.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’” … The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with [Moses] there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD,
the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and *abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness*, keeping steadfast love for thousands… *but* who will by no means clear the guilty.

Forty years later, when Israel was on the verge of entering into the promised land, Moses reminded the Israelites:

✓ **Deuteronomy 7:9-10** – Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the *faithful* God who keeps covenant and *steadfast love* with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, *and* repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.

What is this steadfast love and faithfulness? It is not God’s general care for everyone, but God’s *special* care for His *chosen* people!

✓ **Psalm 25:10** – All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, *for those* who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

But for all those who reject God and His Word, instead of steadfast love and faithfulness, there is only the destruction of eternal punishment. So now listen to what the Psalmist declares:

✓ **Psalm 89:14** – Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your *throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.*

✓ **Psalm 25:10** – *All* the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness.

✓ **Psalm 36:5-6** (cf. 57:9-10; 108:4-5) – Your steadfast love, O LORD, *extends to the heavens,* your faithfulness *to the clouds.* Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O LORD.

✓ **Psalm 100:4-5** – The LORD is good; his steadfast love *endures forever,* and his faithfulness *to all generations.*

Now if God’s steadfast love and faithfulness refers to His *special* care for His *chosen* people, and if God is ruling and governing the world in steadfast love and faithfulness, and if all the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, and if God’s steadfast love and faithfulness extends to the heavens and endures to all generations, then what else can all of this possibly mean but that God is governing and ruling the *entire* world, and *all* things, for the sake of His people?

From the wind and the rain, to kings and rulers of nations, to jobs and health, to food and clothing, all the way to the smallest circumstances and details of everyday life, God is ruling and governing the entire world, and all things for *our* sake – for *your* sake, and for *my* sake! “As the providence of God in general reaches to all creatures, so, in a most special manner it takes care of His people, and governs all things to their good” (London Baptist Confession). And so all fear must give way to *thankfulness,* and all anxiety and worry must be replaced with *gratitude!*

✓ **Psalm 100:4-5** – Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.
Psalm 57:9-10 (cf. Ps. 108:4-5) – I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Psalm 117 – Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!

Psalm 57:3 – He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!

Psalm 40:11 – As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain your mercy from me; your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me!

Psalm 92:4 – It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

God is governing and ruling the entire world, and all things, for your sake, and for my sake. And so all fear should give way to thankfulness, and all anxiety and worry should be replaced with gratitude!

Psalm 92:4 – You, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

But then we stumble in doubt and unbelief. Why? Because sometimes we just can’t see the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord in the things that He has ordained. Sometimes we are blind to how in the world God could possibly be governing all things for our sake! And so we can either stumble in doubt and unbelief, and give way to fear, and anxiety, and worry, or we can grow stronger in faith, never ceasing to give thanks. And so the Psalmist writes:

III. Psalm 92:5-11 – How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts [purposes, plans, designs] are very deep! The stupid [brutish] man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever; but you, O LORD, are on high forever. For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered. But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.

Calvin says: “[The Psalmist] declares the destruction of God’s enemies to be as certain as if it had already taken place, and he had witnessed it with his own eyes… and from all this we may see how much he had benefited by glancing with the eye of faith beyond this world to the throne of God in the heavens.” Verse eight says: “But you, O LORD, are on high forever.” Even when everything seems to be turned inside out and upside down… even when our cares and griefs feel as if they will overwhelm us… even when trials and tribulations come one after the other, and even when all evildoers are flourishing… We can look with the eyes of faith beyond this world to the throne of God in the heavens, and know that even though His purposes and designs are deep – surpassing our comprehension, He is still governing and ruling the world for our sake. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before Him (cf. Ps. 89:14). God never, ever comes to us without being preceded by His steadfast
love and faithfulness. “All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies” (Psalm 25:10). “You, O LORD, are on high forever.” And so Psalm 92 concludes with these beautiful and glorious words:

IV. Psalm 92:12-15 – The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

There is no lack of steadfast love and faithfulness in God. There is no failure of steadfast love and faithfulness in God. All of His paths are steadfast love and faithfulness. Steadfast love and faithfulness have never ceased to go before Him. When we are tempted to stumble in doubt and unbelief…. when we are tempted to give way to fear, and anxiety, and worry… when we just can’t see how God could possibly be ruling and governing all things for our sake, then we must look with the eyes of faith beyond this world to the throne of God in the heavens and remember this:

✓ Romans 8:32 – He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
✓ 2 Corinthians 1:20 [NASB] – For as many as are the promises of God, in Christ they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God.
✓ Psalm 115:1 – Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!

**Teaching our Children**

✓ Reflect with your children on the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord. Our children desperately need a firm foundation in this wonderful truth! (See II. – IV.)