

June 3

Scriptures: Read Psalms 111 & 112

Key Verse: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...”. (Psalm 111:10)

Overview

Psalms 111 and 112 are acrostic psalms (all sentences begin with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet) that are identical in structure. They have been called “the twin psalms”. Undoubtedly they were composed by the same author, but that is unknown.

Psalms 111 is a congregational hymn of praise for God’s righteous works, faithfulness and compassion. What are God’s works? They are the marvelous, powerful, just, and truthful things He does to save and redeem us (111:7, 9a). The greatest was sending His Son Jesus to provide us with redemption through His blood. How has He caused His words to be remembered (111:4a)? The Holy Scriptures were written to be studied by all who love Him and take pleasure in learning more about Him (111:2). They are those people who have a healthy fear of the Lord and are the ones who exclaim: “Holy and awesome is His name” (111:9b). The psalmist affirms that this fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 2:10; 3:13-18; 4:5-9; 8:11; James 1:5; 3:13,17). Because they respect the Lord so much, they delight in His Law (112:1) and are prompted to study His Word more. This way they gain knowledge discernment, and a good understanding, that they may do the Lord’s commands and please Him (111:10).

The Lord’s holy and righteous character gives rise to His grace and compassion upon mankind. He is ever faithful to supply the needs of those who fear Him (111:4b-5), just as He is faithful to His covenant, which the psalmist illustrates by restating how God brought the children of Abraham into the Promised Land (111:6b). A major theme of the book of Psalms is that God’s mercy endures forever. In this psalm we learn that in addition His righteousness, praise, and precepts will also endure forever (113:3, 10b).

Psalms 112 begins by expanding upon the closing thought of Psalm 111. The perspective of Psalm 112 is different from 111, yet there are parallels. The previous psalm emphasized the righteousness of God who is to be feared. This psalm emphasizes the righteousness of the godly man who fears the Lord.

The psalmist continues by describing the godly person’s qualities. He will receive the blessings that those who are faithful to the covenant enjoy. He will prosper with enduring riches (Prov. 8:18) and have many descendants (cf. 37:25-26). He will be like a light in the darkness, for he will radiate the Lord in his life (34:5; 2 Cor.3:18; 4:6). Just as the psalmist said in the previous psalm about the Lord being “gracious and full of compassion” (111:4b), so the same is said about the righteous man at the identical point in the psalm (112:4b). The person who loves and follows the Lord will become like Him. As he daily walks with God, he will become more like His image and partake of the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:3-8). This must be the goal of every believer: to be more like Jesus. To accomplish this, we too must greatly delight in the Word of the Lord, and practice what it teaches (111:10; 112:1).

The godly person will be gracious and generous in both giving and lending to help the poor, since he reflects the divine character of God who enjoys giving blessings. He will be honoured and exalted, but this is not the motivation for doing so. It is because of his love for God that he can also love others. When problems come his way, he will not be afraid, since his faith is steadfast and his confidence is in the Lord.

Prayer

Father, we Your children delight in Your works as we study Your Word and rejoice in Your great and precious promises. Thank You for Your perfect love that casts out all fear. We put our trust in You again this day and fear no evil, for we are sheltered in Your everlasting arms.