

## Psalm 119:73-80 (JOD)

### Making Others Glad

*They that fear thee will be glad when they see me... v. 74*

How do others respond to you when you walk into a room? Do they notice you? Do you hope that you go unnoticed? Some people have a naturally shy disposition and prefer to keep a low profile. There's something actually Christ-like in that insofar as Christ was never a deliberate attention seeker. One of the things that is prophesied about Christ in Isa. 53 is that *he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him* (v. 2). Christ was not one that would naturally stand out in a crowd and he was not one to deliberately draw attention to himself.

Some people like to be seen. Many of the Pharisees in Christ's time were like that. It's a topic that Christ addresses in the sermon on the mount. So in Mt. 6 we read of those that *love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men* (6:5). He further describes them in Mt. 23 as those *that make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi* (vv. 5-7). Some people love to stand out and will go so far as to flaunt phony piety in order to do so. A wrong response to such hypocrisy would be to avoid anything spiritual for fear of thinking that all you're doing is flaunting your piety.

I think the Psalmist in this section of Psalm 119 strikes the right balance. The Psalmist in this section of the Psalm expresses a desire to be seen of men but his desire was not a desire to flaunt a phony spirituality that would only cater to his pride. He had a desire, rather, to be a blessing to others. Listen to the words of v. 74 *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me*. This is a statement of resolution and we've been noting throughout this Psalm that there are many statements of resolution. It's as if he's saying to the Lord – *Lord, I am resolved that they that fear thee will be glad when they see me*.

This resolution is expressed as a prayer in v. 79 *Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies*. So the Psalmist wanted others to turn to him and he wanted to be a blessing to them – he wanted to have a positive impact on their lives in such a way that he would make them glad. You could say that this positive statement in v. 74 finds its negative counterpart in the words of Ps. 69:6,7 *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face*.

In this instance David did not want his own reproach to become an occasion for others to become ashamed of the Lord. He evidently felt a sense of dread in causing others to be pulled down from the Lord. Oh that such a sense of dread would be more keenly felt among Christians today!

So taking these two statements together from Psalm 69 and Psalm 119 we could say that the Psalmist did not want others to be hindered by him. He did not want them to become ashamed of the Lord because of him – instead he desired that those that feared the Lord would be glad upon seeing him. Simply put – these verses express the desire to have a positive impact rather than a negative impact upon other Christians.

I want to focus this morning on the positive impact that the Christian should have on others. We should make the words of v. 74 our own resolution – *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.* This morning I would like you to consider the theme of making others glad. And the question I want to raise and then answer is simply this:

## How Can We Make Others Glad?

### I. We Must Target the Right People

Note from the words of our text that it is a particular people that the Psalmist resolves will be glad when they see him. *They that fear thee* he says *will be glad when they see me.* And again in v. 79 *Let those that fear thee turn unto me.*

Here, then, are the kinds of people that ought to be targeted by the Christian. Let me be a source of encouragement to those that fear the Lord. Let me make glad those that fear the Lord. These are the kind of people you should desire to be with. And it is unfortunately not as common a phenomenon as you would expect in Christian circles today.

You've heard me say on numerous occasions that godly fear means reverence. It doesn't simply mean that we're to be afraid of God but neither do we deny that there is an element of fright that leads to godly fear. Whenever I think on this subject my mind is drawn to Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19. We read beginning in v. 10:

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.*

Do you notice in these instructions that Moses was to convey to the people that there was nothing casual in any of his instructions. This was not a “relax and come as you are event.” It was a fearful event. God Almighty who is glorious in Holiness was going to draw near and make his voice heard. We read a few verses later in v. 16 *And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. Verse 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the*

*LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

You know the story. The Lord descended upon Mt. Sinai and the people heard the LORD's own voice as he set before them the 10 commandments. Later Moses would recount that event to the children of Israel and he would remind them of what took place immediately following such a revelation of God's glory. We find this in Deut. 5:23-28:

*And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; 24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. 28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.*

This is where godly fear begins. And where you find carefree and casual worship that really amounts to little more than worldly entertainment with a religious tint cast over it you do not find godly fear. Those that fear the Lord reverence the Lord. They find themselves compelled to bow before Christ in deep and solemn humility which leads then to praise and thanksgiving when you consider that God Almighty who is glorious in holiness has accepted us into his presence on account of Christ's atoning death.

Who, then, do we target as those that we want to make glad? We target those that reverence Christ. We target those that take holiness seriously. We target those that are genuinely humble who do justice and love mercy.

There is another category or kind of people that are found in this section of the Psalm. Notice the words of v. 78 *Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without cause.* The contrast couldn't be greater between this category of people and those that fear the Lord. The proud are arrogant. The proud think that the world should revolve around them. It's interesting, isn't it, to note how the Psalmist affirms in the very first verse of this section that God is the Creator. *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.* The proud make no such acknowledgement of God.

Their dealings are perverse. The word *perversely* means *to be bent, be crooked, bend, make crooked, to pervert.* They twist and distort God's ways and where they succeed you find sin being sanctioned and virtue being banned.

The thing, then, that a Christian must ever keep in mind (and this is so true for young people) – when you target the kind of people that you would make glad you cannot choose

to make glad both categories of people that I've just described. It will either be those that fear the Lord that you make glad or those that are proud and deal perversely that you make glad. You cannot make them both glad. You must choose between them. Sinners are glad to have you. They're especially glad to pull down Christians into sin. Listen to the words of Prov. 1. Take them as the very words of a heavenly Father to his children when you hear:

*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. 11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: 12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: 13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: 14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: 15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: 16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.*

May the Lord help us, then, to target the ones that we would make glad by our presence. But it's not enough simply to target the right people. Consider with me next, therefore, that if we would make others glad:

## II. We Must Equip Ourselves to be a Blessing to Others

In the words of our text a specific reason is given as to why those that fear God become glad. *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.* Here is the contributing factor to making others glad. They are able to perceive faith. Hope and faith are essentially the same. We think of hope as that aspect of faith which anticipates the future blessings of salvation.

Paul before King Agrippa would testify in Acts 26:6,7 *And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.*

The hope in view here was the hope of the Messiah. The very existence of the Jews was on account of that hope. They existed in order for the Messiah to come through them. For thousands of years such a hope was the source of their spiritual vitality. Here is an example of hope being realized for the Messiah has come. Our hope today is in accordance with everything that was accomplished by Christ's first coming and in everything that is connected to his second coming.

And so Paul writes in Rom. 5:2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* We anticipate the glory of God. We look forward ultimately to the glory of God. We expect that in the end it will be the cause of Christ that prevails in this sin cursed world. We rejoice to know that every knee will bow to Christ and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

This hope is further brought out by Paul in Gal. 5:5 *For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.* Here is an aspect of our justification that looks ahead. We

generally think of our justification as a present benefit and indeed it is a present benefit. But there is a future aspect to it. I love the way this is expressed in our shorter catechism question # 38 What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, - there's the future aspect of our justification – being openly acknowledged and acquitted on that judgment day.

Doesn't the thought of it fill and thrill your soul? On that day when sin will be revealed, when the secrets of men's hearts will be openly manifested and all men from the least to the greatest will give account of themselves before God – on that fearful day that deep down is dreaded by the world you will find yourself instead openly acknowledged and acquitted. I love the way Paul expresses this hope in Phil. 3:8,9 where he writes: *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

This is what it means to hope in God's word then – to hope for the glory of God – to hope for the righteousness which is of God by faith – the hope of the gospel it's called in Col. 1:23 – the hope of salvation, 1Thess. 5:8 – the hope of eternal life, Titus 1:2.

Now let me focus for a moment on a very practical aspect of these gospel blessings. Our text says *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.* We've seen a little bit of what that hope encompasses. The challenge that the text presents to us is this – when others see you can they tell that the hope of God's word is the controlling factor in your life?

Can they tell, in other words, that your life is dominated by the expectation that the glory of God will prevail? To see and hear some Christians you would think that all is lost and the devil has won. There are those that are dominated so much by all the terrible and sinful things that are going on in the world today that there's no way you could say of them that their presence makes you glad. On the contrary – their presence makes you depressed. They're so downcast and pessimistic that you would avoid them if you could do it without being blatantly rude.

It seems that all they can talk about is how awful the situation in our world is. There's the legally sanctioned sins of sodomy and abortion. There's our woeful economic situation which by their account will only get worse. There's the pathetic realm of politics that leads you to put your hope in a candidate only to discover eventually that he's like the rest of the politicians in our nation's capital. There are constant conspiracies taking place that are only going to lead to the further oppression of Christians and the sanctioning of sin.

Are those the things that dominate your heart this morning? And don't misunderstand me here. I'm not suggesting that as Christians we somehow inoculate ourselves from what's going on around us by trying to live like ostriches with our heads stuck in the sand. Nor am I suggesting that we try, as some Christians try, to adopt a form of monasticism that

compels us to build invisible walls around ourselves that would shut everything out and shut ourselves in. When you think about it – what could be more dreadful than being shut in with yourself? I'm only asking whether or not the sinful condition of the world dominates your heart or the hope of God's word dominates your heart. If it's the condition of the world then small wonder that your presence would fail to make others glad.

The problem at the end of the day is that you're being governed more by sight than by faith. You're assigning a reality to the things you see that has become a more ultimate reality than it really is. And you've assigned to the realm of spiritual truths a sort of ambiguity that practically reduces your faith to a belief in cunningly devised fables. You're being dominated by a mindset that has things completely turned around. Paul writes to the Corinthians in 1Cor. 4:18 that *the things which are seen are temporal* but you treat them as if there is some kind of eternal ultimacy to them. *But the things that are not seen are eternal* but you may be treating them as if they were so distant as to make them barely true at all.

If you would rise to the challenge of the text, therefore, and make those that fear the Lord glad by your presence then it must be the truth of God's word that comes to dominate your heart. Look at how the Psalmist prays in vv. 76,77 *Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.*

Focus especially on those words *let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live*. Is this not tantamount to praying – O Lord, let the grace and mercy and love of Christ who gave himself for me be the dominating power by which I live? Let my life be controlled by thy mercy. Let my heart be filled and thrilled with the truth that nothing shall ever separate me from the love of Christ. Let me rise above the mire and the muck of this world by appropriating to myself abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.

You see, it will be through equipping yourself in the glorious truths of the gospel that you'll be enabled to make others glad by your presence. Equipping yourself in the gospel amounts to the same thing that the Psalmist prays for in v. 80 *Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.*

And the way this is accomplished is by adopting the attitude that's impossible to escape in any section of this 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm. Have you seen a section, yet, where the Psalmist fails to express his love for the word of God? *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.*

If you delight in the word then you'll be saturated in the word. And when you're saturated in the word you'll find your heart to be so Spirit-filled that you'll break out into singing. Isn't this what Paul calls for in Col. 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

The word of Christ dwelling richly in your heart will inevitably lead to singing and singing is primarily the manifestation of gladness in the soul. Something else happens

when you delight in the word of God and it dwells in you richly. This ties in to our previous study of the previous section where we noted the correcting power, the learning experience, and the sanctifying benefits of afflictions. In that study I called your attention to a verse in the section we are in today. Look again at v. 75 *I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*

Think of this verse now as it relates to our text. *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me.* Why will they be glad? Will they be glad simply because I myself am glad? Will they be glad because when they see me in happy circumstances my gladness will rub off on them?

I believe the words of our text go much deeper than that. They'll be glad because they see that even in the midst of difficult circumstances and harsh providences you have nevertheless been given the grace to see the faithfulness of God in his dealings with you. They will see manifested in you the kind of spirit that Paul manifests in 2Cor. 4:8,9 where referring to his experience as well as the experience of his associates he writes: *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

What those that fear the Lord see, in other words, is not merely a Christian who is a "happy-go-lucky" type of person who is too oblivious to his surroundings to be effected by them – no, rather – what they see is a Christian who is ruled by the tender mercies of God enough to see the faithfulness of God even in his afflictions.

How many times have you heard stories or perhaps known the experience of going to a Christian, perhaps in the hospital who has suffered some life changing trauma. You don't know what to say to him. You don't know if words even exist that could minister comfort to him in the midst of what he's gone through but you feel compelled to try to do something to comfort him. And after visiting him you find yourself coming away blessed and encouraged because you see that though he's troubled, he's not distressed and though he's perplexed, he's not in despair.

You see so clearly that his anchor holds and his confidence in Christ has not been shaken. He's able to perceive still the grace and mercy and love of Christ and has found the grace to submit to Christ in the midst of his hardship. You come away not simply with some form of a shallow gladness but you come away with a gladness that springs from awe.

You're captivated at the greatness of God and you're awed by the sufficiency of God's grace. And the visit that you dreaded to make because of a sense of your own inadequacy you now count to be a blessing that has made you glad.

How, then, can you make others glad? The first thing you must do is target the right people. You can't make everyone glad. There's too big a divide between Christians and Christ-rejecters for that. You target, therefore, those that fear the Lord and you equip yourselves to be a blessing to them by so delighting yourselves in God's word that you learn to live your lives in the power of his tender mercies.