

Read also Revelation 19:4-10

Read Ps 111, *The Message*

Another title for this sermon might be “The good life begins when we are awed by God.”

Do you ever sort of hurry through your bedtime prayers? Or, do you pick up your Bible and then set it down again thinking, I don’t want to do that today? Or, when you do read the Bible, or come to church, or do something for the church, does a little voice inside you ever urge you to “be cautious”?

I mean, the verse at the end of the Psalm I just read says, “the *fear* of the Lord.” Do you ever let that word fear scare you? Maybe I shouldn’t get myself into this Christian thing too deep. I might accidentally make a commitment that later I ask myself, *why in the world did I do that?*

This Psalm says God is your greatest asset, but I can tell you that if you are like me, there’s something that whispers God is also potentially your greatest liability. After all, there is some accountability with God; and we can never be totally sure how things will come out.

Think about the asset of having a credit card. And then there’s the liability when the bill comes. It’s such a privilege to have a credit card. But it can be such a problem at the same time.

Think about the asset of going on a diet with one of those plans where you know exactly what you can eat to lose weight. And then think of the liability when you can’t have a cookie after church when we enjoy Lemonade on the Lawn.

Part of living by faith is working out these tensions – God as your greatest asset and at the same time, a liability.

Think about the asset of all your sins being forgiven by God! It’s a wonderful gift! But then there’s the liability of having to forgive someone you are really mad at. It can be just so discouraging to be a Christian all the time! ☺

So how do we do it? How do we balance between living in everyday life and also belonging to God’s eternal world? Jesus tells us we are to be in the world but not of the world.

It’s the tension of being comfortable in life but not staking all your claims here – We are not to park it here as if this is all there is!

So how do we keep that vision every day? How do we remember the awesomeness of God? This Psalm helps us.

Years ago Oprah had someone on the show who kept a gratefulness journal. I can’t remember her name, but she said, “It’s not about what you are going to get, but it’s about what you have.”

This Psalm is about what we have with God.

It's not about the future "zinger" that God is going to hit us with. It's not about the burden of being a Christian. It's simply about those things we HAVE NOW; the gifts, blessings, and bonuses of belonging to God.

God always gives us gifts. It's a matter of seeing them clearly; of jumping for joy because of our blessings.

King David, who wrote many of the Psalms understood the value of jumping for joy over God. Once, his men brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. The ark was like a large memory box. It contained the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments on them, a jar of manna, the food the Israelites ate in the desert, and other things that helped people remember God's great miracles. The ark had been captured by an enemy nation, the Philistines.

Well, David was so excited to have it that he stripped down to his tee-shirt and boxers and put together a band and he danced and leaped before the Lord and the ark in a parade down the busiest street of Jerusalem. And his wife was watching from an upstairs window and she got very disgusted. Later they had a huge fight over it. "You sure honored yourself today . . . what kind of king are you, dancing around, shamelessly exposing yourself!"

But he had a different view, "In God's presence I'll dance all I want . . . more recklessly even than this! Because God has been so good to me!

He believed God was an asset in his life, and he needed to remember who gave him the victories.

St. Augustine said we all need to dance around and praise God. He said, "O Lord, our heart is restless until it rests in you."

Our need for worship is innate in us, and examples are all over the Bible. Now you may not be very experienced at that as a Presbyterian. But we can learn!

Watch the children in our congregation and you will see what I mean by worship.

Let's look at the blessings, the things in our God-given gratitude journal:

1. Splendor and beauty mark his craft – God simply does things in a beautiful way.
 - Have you been to a national park or simply on a hike?
 - The beach?
 - The San Diego zoo? The variety of plants and animals takes my breath away

God's gifts to you are for you to stop and be in awe. They are given for no other reason than for you to enjoy them, and praise God.

2. His generosity never gives out –
 - More than one person in this congregation has shared with me that you began giving an offering to God and immediately experienced God's provision in a significant way.

- Last year a man from a church in Arlington just showed up and fixed our sign and put spotlights on our tower. God just did that for us FOR NO REASON other than His love and generosity.
- Last week FPCD received a large anonymous gift that certainly blesses our budget. I'M ENCOURAGED!

These things lift us out of the dust and to the divine. Have you noticed and praised God? God is blessing you.

3. God's miracles are his memorial –
 - A memorial is an object which helps us remember something. Our nation is full of them. Lincoln Memorial; Washington Memorial; a tombstone is a memorial.
 - God's memorials are miracles. We praise God for the miracles we have experienced! They lift us out of the dust and to the divine.
 - You have to stop and notice to be lifted up and to help others notice.

You yourselves are a living memorial, your life purpose is to make an impact on those around you that God is worthy of worship.

4. This GOD of Grace, this God of Love, to Him you are like a bride wearing the finest white linen. This is an image that reflects that you belong to God; it reflects the covenant between you and God; it speaks of devotion; how precious you are to God.

What can we say about God? He is totally, completely, and irrevocably faithful. All that He makes and does is honest and true. God is so personal and holy, worthy of our respect.

Are you feeling blessed? This Psalm says praise God! Do not hold back, seeing God as a liability, rather be grateful! You are special. You are loved.

The good life begins in the fear of GOD— Lift up your head and know the blessing of belonging to GOD. It is good to worship Him. Hallelujah!

AMEN