

# GOD'S SIMPLE TRUTHS (02).

November 30, 2008.

## Introduction.

A few years ago, in one of the places we lived, I greeted a lady from the neighborhood with my usual, *"Good morning. And how are you today?"* The answer I got gave me a bit of a jolt. The answer was, *"Blessed and highly favored."* I went inside quickly and called to my wife with some urgency, *"Wifey, wifey."* She responded with, *"What? What?"* And I said, *"You wouldn't believe whom I just met."* She said, *"Who?"* I said, *"Mary"*. She said, *"Mary who?"* I said, *"the virgin Mary."* She said, *"Who?"* I said, *"the virgin Mary. And you wouldn't believe it."* She said, *"wouldn't believe what?"* I said, *"she lives right on our street."*

I got a bit of a jolt for two reasons. Firstly, that was the first time I ever had someone respond to my greeting in those words. Secondly, I would simply say that the person who made the claim was not spiritually fit to make such a claim. Over the years I have discovered that this has become quite a normal response from women and men. Let me take just a moment to give you a little biblical insight into this statement. In *Lk.1:28* the angel greeted Mary as follows, *"Greetings, favored one."* If you have a Bible with marginal notes you will see that *"favored one"* also means *"richly blessed."*

*"Favored one"* is a passive verb. The verb tells us that God chose to bestow special grace upon Mary. But I want you to note the kind of grace it was. This verb was also used to describe the granting of divine grace or favor for a special vocation or task. In this sense, Mary is no different to John the Baptist who was chosen to be the forerunner to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Elijah who would precede the Lord's coming into this world. (*Lk.1:17*). In view of John's vocation we are told that God did something special for him. The angel told Zacharias that John *"will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in*

his mother's womb." (*vs.15*). Mary's task was that she was God's chosen instrument for bringing His Son into the world. The dream of every Israelite maiden was to be chosen as God's instrument for this task. Mary was God's choice. The details of the encounter between Gabriel and Mary in no way suggest that there was any special worthiness in Mary. The emphasis in the text is that God's choice of Mary was purely an act of His sovereign grace.

This morning I want to turn your attention to the question : Who is the blessed man or blessed person? You hear people saying, "*I am blessed. God is blessing me.*" And as they have been saying in recent times, "*I am blessed and highly favored.*" What does God have to say about this in His revealed word? And how much do God's revelations and man's claims agree?

### **Explanation Of Words.**

I want to begin our study by looking at the words used in the Old & New Testaments that are translated by the English words "**ble**ss or **ble**ssed." The first Hebrew word is **barak** which means "*to bless; kneel; salute; greet.*" This word is used to invoke special favor on a person. When God is the object, the context is invariably one of worship and praise. When people bless God, they offer Him praise for who He is and what He has done on behalf of those He loves. (**Renn**).

The second Hebrew word is **eser**. We are told that this word is always used to refer to people and never used of God. It describes a person in a state of bliss and the idea in it is, "O the bliss of..." This word affirms the blessed state of all those who submit themselves to God in obedient devotion to Him. (**Renn**). Blessedness is not deserved; it is a gift of God. The expression "blessed is the man" evokes joy in God and gratitude to God.

Outside of God's blessing, man is cursed. From the world's perspective a "cursed" man may seem to be blessed because of his material prosperity. A "cursed" man may also seem to live a meaningful life. But from God's perspective the "cursed" man's life lacks the prosperity that really counts and his life is meaningless, that is, his life does not produce the end that really counts. (cf. *Psa.1:4*). In all the O.T. verses we will be looking at in this study the Hebrew word **eser** is used.

The N.T. has two primary Greek words. The first is **eulogeo**. The basic meaning is "to speak well of someone." With reference to God it means to praise God, that is, to speak well of God with ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving to Him. With reference to men it means to invoke God's blessings upon them, which is God's action in their lives or God's intervention to accomplish His will in their lives. This may mean praying for a person's welfare; praying that God would intervene and turn around their lives.

To bless food means that the food would bring physical good to those eating it and as they eat it they would praise God for His goodwill in providing. When God is the subject of the verb it means that God has distinguished you with favor; that God has acted in your life to accomplish His purposes; that God acts for our good as He sees our need and not necessarily as we may desire.

The second N.T. word is **makarios** and its usage focuses on the believer's state in Christ. "To be **makarios**, blessed, is equivalent to having God's kingdom within one's heart.... **Makarios** is the one who is in the world yet independent of the world. His satisfaction comes from God and not from favorable circumstances." (Word Study). **Makarios** was commonly used by the Lord Jesus Christ. He promised a state of blessedness to all who live out the virtues of godly living as expressed in the Beatitudes. And He offers blessings to those who follow Him and who genuinely seek after God.

## **The Blessed One Described.**

We come now to examine those statements which describe those who are truly blessed. I want to begin by taking you through the Psalms and looking at a number of verses. We begin *Psalms 1*.

*Psa.1:1*

**Psa.2:12**

*Psa.32:1-2*

**Psa.40:4**

*Psa.41:1-2*

**Psa.65:4**

*Psa.84:4, 5, 12* (**Prov.16:20**, "blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.")

**Psa.94:12**

*Psa.112:1* (**Prov.28:14**, "How blessed is the man who fears always,  
but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.")

**Psa.119:1-2**

*Psa.128:1*

**Psa.144:15b**

*Psa.146:5.*

### **1). Whose God Is The Lord.**

It is not my intent to expound to you all these verses. As you would have noticed, a few of them can be grouped together. I want to begin with *Psa.144:15b*, "How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!", "*whose God is Yahweh!*" We may also translate : "Oh the bliss, oh the supreme happiness of the people whose God is the Lord!" The word "blessed" is plural and thus intensified. A literal translation would be, "*Oh the blessednesses; oh the supreme happinesses*". The note

sounded is one of supreme jubilation. I want you to keep in mind that in the verses we would be looking at the word “blessed” is normally plural.

The blessed man is greatly blessed and supremely privileged because the greatest of all blessings belong to him. The greatest of all blessings is to have the Lord as one’s God. In the words of **Plumer**, “*not Baal, not Ashtaroth, not living or dead men, not angels, but the self-existent, independent, eternal, unchangeable Jehovah.*” This truth can be stated in another way : The greatest of all blessings is to know the Lord. **Jer.9:23-24** says, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the Lord.”

Why is this the greatest of all blessings? One answer is that all the blessings we will be looking at flow from this fact that the Lord is your God; that you know the Lord. How can this greatest of all blessings become yours?

Most people, regardless of their religion, simply assume, for one reason or another, that the Lord is their God. I will not spend time looking at these reasons. I will simply say the assumption is wrong. The Jews were God’s chosen people. They were the descendants of Abraham. They were the inheritors of the covenant given to Abraham. They were very highly religious. They boasted to Jesus, “We are Abraham’s descendants.... Abraham is our father.... we have one Father, God.” (**Jn.8:33, 39, 41**). But Jesus said to them, you are dead wrong, “you are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.” (**Jn.8:44**). The same false assumption the Jews made is the same false assumption most people in the world are making. They are assuming that the Lord is their God and Father. They may even declare with the utmost confidence that the Lord is their God and Father. But Jesus’ answer to them will be, “*you are dead wrong, you are of your father, the devil.*”

The Lord does not become your God by physical and / or spiritual inheritance. The Lord does not become your God because you say He is your God. The Lord only becomes your God by virtue of salvation in Christ. In ***Jn.17:3*** Jesus said, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." To know God is to enter into an intimate personal saving relationship with Him. To know God and His Son Jesus is to receive from Him the free gift of eternal life. (cf. ***Rom.6:23***). When this happens the Lord becomes your God. When this happens the Lord also becomes your heavenly Father. If you do not have salvation in Christ, the Lord is not your God and you are not a blessed person. You are an idolater and on your way to face the eternal wrath of God. Are you a blessed person? You are a supremely blessed person only if the Lord is your God.

## **2). Forgiven.**

This brings us to our second point. Please turn to ***Psa.32:1-2***. "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." This passage is repeated in ***Rom.4:6-8*** where Paul argues from the example of Abraham that the justification of the ungodly is not by works but by faith. The word "blessed" is plural and the idea is, "*Oh the blessednesses; oh the supreme happinesses*" of the one whose sins are forgiven. Let us note the following now.

Firstly, sin is described by means of three different words : transgression, sin and iniquity. While each word has its peculiar emphasis, they are used synonymously. "Transgression" is an act of rebellion against God's authority. "Sin" is the act that intentionally misses the mark. The mark or standard is God's expressed and revealed will. "Iniquity" means "*corrupt, twisted, crooked.*" This word is also associated with the conscious and intentional intent to do wrong. The three terms put together specify the full dimensions of human evil.

The three-fold description of sin is met with a three-fold description of forgiveness. Three verbs are used. These three verbs show us that the full dimensions of human evil are met with the full dimensions of God's forgiveness. The verb "forgiven" is literally "*carried away*" and describes the act of the removal of sin, guilt, and the remembrance of sin. "Is covered" is the gracious act of atonement by which the sinner is reconciled and the sin is now a matter of the past. This being the case, the Lord does not bring it up anymore as a ground for His displeasure. "Does not impute" expresses God's attitude toward those forgiven as "*justified*". Our sins have been imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness has been imputed to us. By virtue of this act God declares us to be legally and permanently justified or righteous. Once again, the three words, taken together, emphasize the completeness of the divine deliverance from evil that we receive.

The forgiveness of our sins in Christ presupposes repentance and confession. In vs.5 the psalmist said, "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin." Confession and repentance must be devoid of deceit. God knows everything that is in your heart. He knows when professed sorrows for sin are genuine and when repentance is true. And He knows when they are not.

Note the double emphasis, "Oh the blessednesses ... Oh the blessednesses." "*Oh the supreme happinesses*" of the man who knows that God has forgiven His sins once for all, who knows that God will never bring up his sins again for judgment, who knows that God has covered his sins with the blood of Jesus, who knows that God has wiped away his sins and clothed him in the righteousness of Christ.

This forgiveness the psalmist is speaking about is the same forgiveness Jesus and His apostles proclaimed. This is the same forgiveness we are commanded to preach. This forgiveness is not a future forgiveness. This forgiveness is a present forgiveness. You can have this forgiveness right now. Your only hope of escaping final judgment is to receive this forgiveness right now. If you stand in the final judgment without having received the forgiveness of your sins in Christ in this life, it will be too late for you.

There will be no forgiveness in the final judgment. The final judgment is the place of final sentencing. If you stand in the final judgment without forgiveness in Christ you are cursed, cursed for all eternity. Are you a supremely blessed person? Can you say at this very moment that your sins are forgiven in Christ?

We can couple *Psa.32:1-2* with *Psa.2:12*, “Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” Divine wrath is coming with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are the object of that coming wrath, you will perish. To “perish” is the very opposite to having the forgiveness of your sins and eternal life in Christ. (cf. *Jn.3:16*). Your only hope is to take refuge in the Son of God. Wrath is coming. “Oh the blessednesses, oh the supreme happinesses of those who take refuge in the Son!”

The blessed man is supremely privileged and greatly blessed because the Lord is His God and because the Lord has forgiven His sins. As we have seen in past studies, this forgiveness is total. The blessed man will not be charged with sin in the final judgment. Paul wrote in *Rom.8:33*, “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the One who justifies.” God has declared you legally righteous. God has imputed to your account the perfect inviolable righteousness of His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **3). The Lord’s Chosen.**

The blessed man is greatly blessed and supremely privileged because the Lord has chosen him. *Psa.65:4* says, “How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You to dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple.” In *2Thess.2:13* Paul wrote, “we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation....”

Note two things here : (1) Paul's ongoing thanksgiving; (2) the Christians are described as "beloved by the Lord" because of God's sovereign and gracious choice of them for salvation. Note this carefully. The Lord chose you. You chose the Lord because He first chose you and drew you to Himself. The blessed man is beloved by the Lord and chosen by the Lord. The Lord has chosen him to bring him near to enjoy the Lord's presence. *Psa.73:28* says, "But as for me, the nearness of God is my good."

*Psa.84:4* says, "How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising you." In *Psa.65:4* the emphasis is on the Lord bringing you near to Him. In *Psa.84:4* the emphasis is on you drawing near to the Lord by means of your regular and devout attendance to the Lord's house. Are you a supremely blessed person? You are if you know that you are beloved by the Lord and chosen by Him?

#### **4). Disciplined By The Lord.**

The blessed man is greatly blessed and supremely privileged because the Lord disciplines him. *Psa.94:12* says, "Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and whom You teach out of Your law." The first point I want to make here is that the foundation of the Lord disciplining His people is the instructions they receive from His word. For this reason He has given pastors and teachers to His people. The greatness of this blessing is often overlooked by the people of God and that is a serious mistake.

The second point is that the Lord's discipline and chastening are the proofs that He loves you and you are His child. *Prov.3:12* says, "whom the Lord loves He reprove, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights." In *Jer.30:11* the Lord said to Israel, "For I am with you,' declares the Lord, 'to save you'." How does He do this? He said, "I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished." *Heb.12:5-8* repeats these truths found in the O.T. And it added the very serious warning that if your life is without the Heavenly Father's discipline, then you ought to become very concerned. It means you are not a child of God. Are you a

supremely blessed person? Do you know the Lord's discipline and chastening in your life? If the Lord is not disciplining you, you are not blessed. You are cursed.

### **5). Delighting In The Lord.**

Please turn to *Psa.1:1*, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" *"Oh the blessednesses, oh the supreme happinesses of the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked."* That which is negatively stated in *Psa.1* is positively stated in *Psa.119:1-2*, "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart."

We saw earlier that this **"blessedness"** is a free gift of God. But it must be promoted by two kinds of activities : disassociation from the wicked and association with God. *Psalm 1* describes for us in brief the mindset of the wicked, the lifestyle of the wicked, the fruit of wicked man's way of life and the end of his life. The end is, "the wicked will perish.." *Jn.3:16* makes it clear that **"perishing"** is the opposite to receiving eternal life in Christ.

The three lines in *vs.1* are poetically synonymous. They do not represent an intensification of evil. They profoundly portray for us the full picture, the totality of evil. A passage in which this same style is found is *Deut.6:6-7* which says, "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." This passage emphatically portrays for us the totality of the father's responsibility to teach his children God's word.

In *Psa.1:1* we find three sets of words : (1) “wicked ... sinners ... scoffers”; (2) “walk ... stand ... sit”; (3) “counsel ... path ... seat”. The word “wicked” describes those who are the enemies of God and therefore also the adversaries of His people. *Jas.4:4* says, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

In our recent studies on idolatry we saw the word “adulteresses” is correct. The word “friendship” speaks of treating the world with kind regard and affection. (cf. *1Jn.3:15-17*). It also implies conformity to the mindset, thinking, principles, aims and goals of the world. (cf. *Rom.12:1-2*). When the Christian becomes a friend of the world he is making himself a friend of those who are his enemies. The enmity of the world is something you may never fully understand until persecution really begins to take place in this country. This is why in a free society it is so easy for Christians to treat the world with affection and compromise with the world.

The noun “sinners” describes those who miss the mark or standard of God’s revealed will. This missing the mark is habitual and not accidental. “Scoffers” are the self-sufficient who act with haughty pride and who refuse instruction from both God and men. They treat God’s law or word with contempt and scoff at the ways of the righteous.

The three verbs, “walk ... stand ... sit”, are perfect tenses and in each case emphasizes what the godly must never be involved with. The words “counsel ... path ... seat” draw attention to the realms of thinking, behaving and belonging, in which a person’s fundamental choice of allegiance is made and carried through. (**Kidner**).

The verb “walk” means to follow the counsel, advice, plans or schemes of the wicked. Bear in mind that “the counsel of the wicked” is rooted in a mindset whose presuppositions are not rooted in God’s revealed will. To “stand in the path of sinners” is to become an active sharer or participant in their way of life. To “sit in the

seat of scoffers” is to identify oneself with them and to join in treating God’s law with contempt and mocking the ways of the righteous.

The man who is described as greatly blessed is not guilty of the sinful activities described in *vs.1*. Instead, he delights in the law of the Lord, and in God’s law he meditates day and night. The “law of the Lord” is the word of God and refers to the instruction that comes to us from God. The law of the Lord is the revelation of the will of the Lord as recorded for us in the Bible. The purpose of God’s revelation is to help man live in harmony with God’s will.

The verb “delights” expresses all that makes the man of God happy. The law is more than his delight; it is his chief desire. (cf. *Psa.119:47, 97, 127*). The believer’s delight is not only in knowing, studying, and memorizing the word of God but especially in doing God’s will. The doing of God’s will has to do with the application of God’s word to everyday life and to every aspect and details of your everyday life. *Psa.40:8* says, “I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart.” Jesus taught us to pray, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (*Matt.6:10*). And He exhorted to “seek first [God’s] kingdom and His righteousness.” (*Matt.6:33*).

The verb “meditates” refers to the mind pondering over God’s word; habitually reflecting on God’s word and its application to life. **VanGemeran** wrote, “*Meditation is not the setting apart of a special time for personal devotions, whether morning or evening, but it is the reflection on the Word of God in the course of daily activities. Regardless of the time of day or the context, the godly respond to life in accordance with God’s word.*” Even where there is no explicit command or exhortation, the godly person has trained his heart to speak and act with wisdom. According to *Prov.3:1-6*, the wise man receives instruction from God’s word, writes it on his heart, and wholeheartedly trusts in the Lord with all his heart in all his daily activities.

The purpose of meditation is clear from *Josh.1:8* which says, “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” This meditation is not merely an intellectual exercise. Most importantly, it is the study of the will of God for the purpose of doing it. “Day and night” points to the fact that the godly man’s practical dependence on the word of God is unbroken.

Brethren, the point is this : the man or woman who is supremely blessed and highly favored is the one whose mind and godliness is rooted in Christ and His word. Paul said in *Tit.1:1* that the knowledge of the truth, God’s revealed truth, leads to godliness. From a negative standpoint the godly man’s godliness is marked by a separation from the world’s mindset, lifestyle and influences. His godliness is not half-hearted or filled with gaps. His godliness is at work in his whole life.

The prosperity of the godly man is, first and foremost, spiritual. His spiritual life is like a luxuriant tree bearing the fruit of godliness in words and works. The wicked will not be able to stand in the final judgment. The wicked will fall under the weight of the judgment of God. The godly man will remain standing. But let me add here that the prosperity of the godly man may also be material. God prospered Joshua in the task He gave him to carry out. He didn’t prosper Joshua just for the sake of giving him material prosperity. God prospered Joshua in keeping with God’s will for Joshua’s life. The successful accomplishing of God’s will for Joshua’s life was designed to bring glory to God.

My dear Brother and Sister in Christ, if you want the “blessednesses” of *Psa.1* in your life, I would urge you to pay careful heed to *Psalm 1* and to live out *Psalm 1* before God in this world.

## **6). Fearing And Obeying.**

The man who is greatly blessed and supremely privileged is the man who fears and obeys God. *Psa.112:1* says, "How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments." *Psa.128:1* says, "How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways."

The concept of fearing God is a very important subject in the Bible and I will not attempt to do an exhaustive study today. Suffice it to say that the fear of the Lord speaks of reverence and awe for God, of having a healthy respect for God and of being afraid of God. There are those who hold the view that Christians must not be afraid of God. The Lord Jesus disagreed with that view in *Lk.12:4-5*.

I have demonstrated to you in past studies that fearing God, obeying God and loving God go hand in hand. The two verses I am using from the *Psalms* show us that fear God and obeying God go hand in hand. Obeying God is rooted in greatly delighting in His word. "Great delight" is the expression the Bible uses to describes a man's deep affection for a woman. He greatly delights in her. The man who fears God greatly delights in His word and, as a result, he obeys God's word. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (*Jn.14:15*). The man who fears God conducts his life according to God's ways, according to God's revealed will.

Do you fear God? Do you love God? Do you greatly delight in God's word? If you do then you are greatly blessed and supremely privileged.

## **7). Trusting God.**

This brings us to our final point. The greatly blessed and supremely privileged man is the man whose trust is in the Lord His God. *Psa.40:4* says, "How blessed is the man

who has made the Lord his trust, And has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood.” The “proud” are those arrogant people who have a high view of themselves and their positions. They are the people whom we put into God’s place when our trust in God begins to dwindle.

“Falsehood” is literally “*lies*”. The word refers to putting your trust in ideas that are lies; in plans that are rooted in lies; in promises that are lies; and in people who are liars. The word also refers to putting your trust in idolatries. The Christian is called upon to put his trust in the Lord. In the context *vs.5* gives us the reasons why we must put our trust in God. He is the God of wonders, that is, He is the God of the extraordinary; He is the God of the difficult. Several times we are told in God’s word that nothing is too difficult for the Lord to do. (*Gen.18:14; Jer.32:17, 27; Zech.8:6; Matt.19:26; Mk.10:27; Lk.1:37; 18:27; Rom.4:21*).

*Psa.84:12* says, “O Lord of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in You!” “**The Lord of hosts**” is the same as “*the Lord Almighty*”. He is the living God who has all power at His disposal. Hence the reason why our trust must be in Him.

The man who is greatly blessed and supremely privileged is the man  
 whose God is the Lord;  
 whose sins are forgiven;  
 who is beloved and chosen by the Lord;  
 who is disciplined by the Lord.

The man who is greatly blessed and supremely privileged is the man  
 who has taken refuge in the Lord;  
 whose strength is in the Lord;  
 who greatly delights in God and His word;  
 who fear and obeys God;  
 whose trust is in the Lord;  
 whose hope is in the Lord.

Is this you? If this is you, then you are a Christian man. If this is you, then you are a Christian woman. You would notice I divided them into two groups. The first group focuses on what God does. The second group focuses on what you are doing, what you are striving after. Brethren, I urge you, take time in the week ahead to meditate of these truths found in the Psalms and may it please the Lord to make you, in every sense of the word, blessed and highly favored.