

PSALM 49 "House of Cards"

2024-09-15

Materialism, consumerism, wealth, luxury, poverty, need, want

- Psalm 49 is dealing with the issue beyond these challenges.
- We can be blessed with money, but ["The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil."](#) 1 Tim 6:10

Imagine how Israel could identify with this song on the topic of riches.

They were at one time accustomed to the fine tastes of Egyptian culture...creature comforts of the Gentile nation.

Israel was also God's favored nation...they knew what it was to have great blessing & provision.

As Americans, we too are familiar with many comforts most of the world doesn't enjoy...But let's remind our souls of TRUE riches.

- Let's consider what we would have if our earthly comforts were stripped away...
- Let's consider what we will have WHEN our earthly comforts are stripped away

v.1-2 For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, Both low & high, Rich & poor together.

There are no exceptions from this message

This isn't just for the high & mighty, but for the lowdown & dirty...

Not just for the princes, but for the paupers!

Not just for those with everything, but for those with nothing...and those with just enough!

v.3-4 My mouth will speak wisdom, & the meditation of my heart will be understanding.

I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will express my riddle on the harp.

Drawing from the wisdom of God, I'm gonna sing this ditty, I'm gonna drop this, it's about to get real!

This understanding gathered at the Lord's feet, brought to the Psalmist's heart while waiting upon the Lord. Much UNDERSTANDING comes by waiting on the Lord in prayer & devotion.

v.5 Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, Are we not surrounded by a culture of sin?

- The enmity of a liberal, carnal culture against a life lived in holiness.
- But why should the cloudy forecast create worry in our heart?

["For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light."](#) Ps 36:9

Jesus told us to expect these things: A bleak, bleak world before the coming of a bright, bright heaven!

- ▶ He also asked us if worrying would add an hour to our life or any inches to our height?

When the iniquity of their foes surrounded the Pharisees, they looked down in disgust. Those same sinners were looked on with compassion by Jesus.

May the church keep perspective within our heavily divided American culture.

v.6 Even those who trust in their wealth & boast in the abundance of their riches?

There's no question, it gets more comfortable as you acquire more. As you build an abundance over the years through hard work, through saving, through investing, just building upon time.

There is a great appearance of solidarity, & there becomes far less concern for the future, because everything is taken care of.

There is a peculiar irony in the fact that the greater one's financial security becomes, the greater the potential risk of their eternal security becomes

v.7 No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him--

I heard a caller on Bridge Bible Talk express his dissatisfaction that his loved ones wouldn't necessarily go to heaven with him. He had this notion that his parents should automatically go to heaven based upon his love for the Lord. He didn't like the idea of his family being split up despite their lack of salvation. I don't think any of us like that idea. But in the same way that we can't redeem ourselves, we haven't the means to redeem others.

We can't redeem ourselves

God does NOT have any paying customers or sponsors.

Mat 20:28 "... the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, & to give HIS life a ransom for many."

v.8-9 For the redemption of his soul is costly, & he should cease trying forever--

That he should live on eternally, That he should not undergo decay.

There's need for some good news here, because the redemption of a soul is costly (precious).

Siddhartha Gautama put his bid in for the redemption of a soul.

The price would be "Human desire". If one could give up desire, he surmised they could achieve Nirvana, or enlightenment. & so, through a lifetime of following the 8-fold path by

- making effort
- stirring up your energy
- exerting your mind
- striving
- manly perseverance
- endeavoring

... one may redeem themselves. & so many Buddhists expend themselves in this pursuit.

L. RON HUBBARD, founder of Scientology actually put a monetary price tag on a soul...and it's not a fixed price...

but redemption is achieved by removing engrams, or "unconscious mental images recorded in the reactive mind that has negative effects on a person's life".

Engrams are removed from the mind only by an expensive process of dianetic counseling. This

process, called “auditing,” involves the utilization of an “E-meter” (*Electropsychometer*) that indicates when a person has discovered an engram & helps the client expunge it from his or her unconscious reactive mind in order to achieve “Clear.” A person who has attained Clear may need further auditing to remove engrams held over from previous lives. Auditing sessions may cost as much as \$1,000 per hour. The recommended average audit takes about 12 ½ hours...or \$12.5K. There’s no real clarity on how many audits will be needed, & so Scientology essentially requires a blank check for one’s redemption.

FOR A MORE REASONABLE COST, one could look to Alcor Cryonics.

Cryonics is the practice of preserving life by pausing the dying process using subfreezing temperatures with the intent of restoring good health with medical technology in the future. With low monthly dues & an insurance policy, you’re all set. When the time comes, we’ll perform your cryopreservation at our state-of-the-art facilities. Patients are kept in secure, long-term cryogenic dewars until revival. Welcome to your future. All it requires is a \$100/month membership fee & a minimum \$220K life insurance policy. (When it’s time for the member to be cryo-preserved, they will no longer be paying membership fees & their life insurance policy will kick in.)

Here the Psalmist says...nope, stop trying...FOREVER!

An honest assessment of almost all world religions will always point to works righteousness... Appeasing the “greater power” through some sort of HUMAN EFFORT, essentially paying for one’s own redemption.

Paul asked the question of himself “[Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?](#)” (Rom 7:24-25)

v.10 For he sees that even wise men die; The stupid & the senseless alike perish & leave their wealth to others.

And we all see that DEATH IS INDEED The great equalizer
We all enter & exit alone...with absolutely NOTHING in tow.

["Naked I came from my mother's womb, & naked I shall return"](#) Job 1:21

The brilliant minds, the not so brilliant minds will leave their wealth behind.
The akamai will leave their magnificent homes...the lolos will leave their beer can collections

v.11 Their inner thought is that their houses are forever & their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names.

The secrets of the mind will reveal that all confidence is in their ESTATES.
I routinely will check the balance on my 403-b retirement saving...and sometimes, I sorta fold my arms & think, “wow, that’s growing nicely.” It’s very tempting to trust those resources for my family’s future...very tempting, & very natural to consider.

But that storehouse is not promised, & it’s CERTAINLY NOT FOREVER!
And God’s providence will always be there, with or without a savings account.

“ The rich man's wealth is his fortress, The ruin of the poor is their poverty. ” Proverbs 10:15

When the earthly comforts take precedence in our hearts...

- 1) We will find that abundant riches & great success offer no safety for our souls
- 2) We will find that the lack of possessions & resources in this life will only continue beyond death!

v.12 But man in his pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish.

Animal existence... simply 2 dimensional life, BODY + SOUL (lacking the BORN AGAIN SPIRIT)

Have you ever thought of how adventurous wild animal's lives are?

Think about a wolf, or a lion...man! They truly live life to the fullest!

Their only mission is relatively easy... to hunt weaker, slower, inferior prey for food & to procreate. The rest of the time it's laying out under the stars, climbing incredible vistas, drinking from waterfalls, running through beautiful jungles or deserts...okay maybe I watched The Lion King one too many times...but truly, the life of a wild beast is an adventure...they have no worries (Hakuna matata) but then suddenly that adventure just ends...they die. That mighty warrior with it's incredibly powerful legs, it's beautiful coat of fur, it's impressive jaws & fangs...reduced to a carcass, quickly forgotten in the field.

All of the pomp doesn't matter to a corpse. Even the silk lining of a casket offers absolutely no benefit whatsoever at that point.

v.13 This is the way of those who are foolish, & of those after them who approve their words. Selah.

The one who lives for this life only lives the life of a fool, like lambs to the slaughter.

“For the wages of sin is death...” (Rom 6:23)

And the little “yes-man” sheep who follow! The silent approval of the crowd. Going with the grain of the culture.

v.14 As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; & the upright shall rule over them in the morning, & their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation.

A flock destined to the grave...dumb sheep following their shepherd's voice...the Shepherd of Death! (vs-Good Shepherd)

- ❖ In Sheol, the place of the dead, they are led continually by the depravity & misery of death
- ❖ Contrast to Ps 23 where the Lord is our Shepherd, we shall have no want, His rod & staff comfort us.
- ❖ Our eternal habitation will be that of green pastures & still waters

It's a very sad thing, to consider that many are following the Shepherd of Death into Hell for eternity.

v.15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah.

So no man can afford the great price of redemption from HELL & the GRAVE, the land of the dead, where **DEATH'S INMATES** dwell... but the Psalmist declares that the impossible debt will be paid! He holds on to that blessed assurance of his Redeemer.

“...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 6:23)

For the Christian, Heaven is our true retirement! It is our retirement community!

“knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished & spotless, the blood of Christ.” 1Pe 1:18-19

“If I go & prepare a place for you, I will come again & receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:3

For He will receive me. Can you say the same?

v.16 Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased;

Jesus said it’s easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

- Many will be caught in the mist of wealth.
- Some will be held captive in POSSESSING wealth, some captive in the PURSUIT of wealth, some captive in their LACK of wealth...the trap of WANTING.
- Don’t be snared by superficial greatness. Don’t be dazzled, don’t be intimidated, don’t be sidelined by it either. Glory is fleeting. It’s all gonna burn.
- There is a place for blessing & bounty...the Lord desires to bless His people...so much so that He challenges us to see if we can’t outgive Him who will open the windows of heaven to us.

So the problem isn’t the wealth...it’s the propensity to become possessed by riches, rather than possessing riches!

I believe that’s a big part of why GOD loves giving...it balances our want

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

Have you noticed that the most blessed Christians are typically the most generous?

Pastor Chuck Smith refers to God’s principle of giving & it’s inherent blessing as a “Spiritual law.” It’s a law that often defies the laws of economics, the principles of personal finance & budgeting. Faithful giving to the Lord will always be accompanied by blessing & contentment ALWAYS!

→ It’s not something that can fully understood, however it simply stands true.

Are you not experiencing God’s blessing & contentment? Perhaps you’re not tithing.

Perhaps giving to the Lord is not a priority or a discipline in your spiritual life.

“a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; & he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” 1 Cor 2:14

Does tithing seem a foolish financial decision to you? To give 10% or more of every paycheck to the Lord? To give 10% of your tips, or your investment earnings or your inheritance...to give a tithe of your increase to the Lord? Maybe it’s because you’re thinking in the natural, & this is a spiritually appraised truth!

There is such security found in the Lord when we give to Him!

1 Timothy 6:6 *“But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.*

v.17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him.

One who dies with the most toys...DIES. Rust will destroy his Cadillac & moths will eat his Armani suits.

Luk 16:19-31

19 "Now there was a rich man, & he habitually dressed in purple & fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

21 & longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming & licking his sores.

22 "Now the poor man died & was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; & the rich man also died & was buried.

23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, & *saw Abraham far away & Lazarus in his bosom.

24 "And he cried out & said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, & send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water & cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, & likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, & you are in agony.

26 'And besides all this, between us & you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, & that none may cross over from there to us.'

27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house--

28 for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

29 "But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses & the Prophets; let them hear them.'

30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'

31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses & the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

All this man's affluence benefited him nothing

v.18 Though while he lives he congratulates himself-- & though men praise you when you do well for yourself--

A life of hard work, two fulltime jobs, a sidehustle & a diversified investment portfolio... "Well done, bravo to me!"

And THEN there is the one who will be congratulated by the Father,

'Well done, good & faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Mat 25:23

v.19-20 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish.

With EVERYTHING this world has to offer, but without understanding, we'll wind up with nothing...an empty ribcage on the the Serengeti plains.

The currency of this life has no value towards the purchase of salvation.

Spend all you have & all you don't have & all to ever be had & it will never be enough.

For years we will take great care to secure a comfortable retirement, which will last maybe 10-20 years? This is prudent & wise & absolutely advisable!
 Financial planning is certainly part of being a good steward over the resources which the Lord has given us! Even Paul sought financial security for himself, so as not to be a burden upon anyone else.

Yet with all the effort & consideration toward that decade or two of retirement, has there been any care given to eternity? Had anything ever been set aside for eternity? In the management of the financial budget, was there any "spiritual budgeting"?

The provision for the life after death had not been considered & these ones will NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN!

Jesus tells a parable of a farmer who sowed seed into the ground & it landed in different places, with different types of soil. He then points out that the farmer's seed is the word of God & that the varying soil conditions are the varying conditions of men's hearts.

One type of soil was full of thorny weeds & although the seed took root in the soil, it grew alongside the thorns & was eventually choked out by them.

Jesus explained that

"The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, & as they go on their way they are choked with worries & riches & pleasures of this life, & bring no fruit to maturity." Luke 8:14

Has the condition of your heart been overrun with the thorns of riches, & worries & pleasures of this life?

Have you built a house of cards for yourself?

Are you realizing that the redemption of your soul is costly?

Well what better day to be redeemed than today?

What better day to be enrolled in the ETERNAL LIFE RETIREMENT PLAN?

* THE GOSPEL

- God created men & women to have fellowship with Him & entrusted us with a free will to do so
- Mankind chose rather to violate God's grace & rebelled against Him, turning to sin
- The Bible points out that every single person is a sinner & we all fall short of God's perfect glory,
- This sin has separated us from our Creator God & condemned our souls to eternal separation in Hell
- So in His mercy, He provided His Son as a perfect sacrifice on our behalf
- Jesus Christ, God the Son, was born of a virgin, lived a life free of sin (though tempted in every way), was crucified on a Roman cross & buried, & three days later He resurrected from the grave to eternal life.
- Jesus said, "I am the way, & the truth, & the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." John 14:6
- He also stated, "everyone who lives & believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:26