

9. "He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor: his justice remaineth forever and ever: his horn shall be exalted in glory." Blessing the eighth consists in making good use of riches, for it is through God's grace that God's friends learn the wisdom of transferring their treasures, by means of alms, to heaven, where "neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not dig through nor steal." – "He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor." The man who fears God has not shut up his wealth, nor sought to increase it, but scattered it among the poor; that is to say, gave it away abundantly, but with such prudence as to give a little to a great many, rather than a great deal to a few, thus providing the many with necessities, and avoiding the furnishing of the few with superfluities. We have the like idea in Isaias – "break thy bread to the hungry," and in Corinthians – "and if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor." We must not deny, however, that it may sometimes be more advisable to give a great deal to one; as, for instance, to give a dowry to a poor virgin, or for the building of a church, or the redemption of a captive. The man who fears God derives two advantages from such generosity; for, if he lessened his money he increased his justice; and "that justice" – that is, his good works, "remain forever and ever;" to be kept in store for him by God, from whom he will, in the fitting time, receive his full reward, for "he that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord." Then, "his horn shall be exalted in glory;" that is, he will have his reward, not only in the world to come, but even in this world he will have an increase of power and glory, signified in the Scriptures by his horn; and one's horn is said to be exalted when he becomes stronger and more powerful; and to be "exalted in glory" means for one to become not only strong and powerful, but also full of glory, such as those great men of rank and celebrity to whom all defer. This verse, then, gives us to understand that alms, instead of injuring or lessening in their means, only tends to increase their riches, power, and glory, many examples of which are to be found in the Scriptures, especially in Job and Tobias.

10. "The wicked shall see, and shall be angry: he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish." The last blessing is, that the person fearing God will overcome all envy. "The wicked shall see" the good works of God's servant, and his happiness, while "the wicked shall see," that is to say, shall reflect on the good works of the just, and their happiness, and will be tormented with envy, and "shall be angry" at their luck, "and like a mad dog he shall gnash his teeth and pine away" in grief; but, meanwhile, "the desire of the wicked," in looking for the destruction of the just, will not be granted, but with the wicked himself shall speedily "perish." Blessed and happy, then, is he that feareth the Lord, wretched and miserable is he who does not.

END OF PSALM 111

You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart. He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST
IN THE
LORD *and do good;*
dwell in the land and
enjoy safe pasture.
PSALM 36: 3

PSALM NUMBER: 111

The good man is happy.

1. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.
2. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the righteous shall be blessed.
3. Glory and wealth shall be in his house: and his justice remaineth forever and ever.
4. To the righteous a light is risen up in darkness: he is merciful, and compassionate and just.
5. Acceptable is the man that sheweth mercy and lendeth: he shall order his words with judgment:
6. Because he shall not be moved forever.
7. The just shall be in everlasting remembrance: he shall not fear the evil hearing. His heart is ready to hope in the Lord:
8. His heart is strengthened, he shall not be moved until he look over his enemies.
9. He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor; his justice remaineth forever and ever: his horn shall be exalted in glory.
10. The wicked shall see, and shall be angry: he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.

PSALM NUMBER: 111

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.” In order to induce all to lead a pious life, the Prophet proves, by various arguments, the happiness of him who fears the Lord; but as it is not every sort of fear that renders a man happy, he adds, in explanation, “he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments;” that is to say, blessed is he who fears the Lord, and through such fear takes the greatest delight in fulfilling his commandments, for “to delight exceedingly in his commandments,” means nothing more than to love them exceedingly, to feel an attachment to them, and to find a pleasure in observing them. In a word, happy is he who has a holy interior fear of God, with an exterior readiness to obey his commandments, and is, thus, truly just and pious.

2. “His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the righteous shall be blessed.” A numerous offspring will be the first blessing of him that fears God; “his seed shall be mighty upon earth;” his posterity will be most numerous, because “the generation of the righteous shall be blessed;” that is, all his posterity will be most numerous and fruitful, by reason of the divine blessing. Blessing, in the Old Testament, implies fecundity. The first blessing will not be perpetual, but it will frequently follow; for we know that Abraham and his son Isaac, and many others, were a long time without being blessed with children. But if the Psalm be understood of good works, springing from the seed of heavenly grace, the blessing will be perpetual, for not truly just and pious person, that constantly sows the seed of good works can be deprived of the great fruit that, in due time, is sure to spring from them.

3. “Glory and wealth shall be in his house: and his justice remaineth forever and ever.” The second blessing or happiness, is an abundance of honor and wealth, which, however, do not lead to sin or lessen one’s sanctity. Often it happens that riches and honors either beget pride or become the instruments of gratifying ones carnal pleasures, and then, instead of proving a blessing, they become a positive calamity. He, therefore, says, “glory and wealth in his house;” the just man will be blessed not only with a multitude of children, but also with riches and honors to share with them; but he will also (which is the most important point of all) have his mind quite uncorrupted by such blessings, for “his justice remaineth forever and ever.” This blessing, also, is not constant when there is question of the glory and the riches of this world; but if it be understood of interior glory, and the testimony of a good conscience, and the riches of faith, and that gain of which the apostle speaks when he says, “but piety with sufficiency is great gain;” that is, piety disengaged of solicitude about the things of this world when the soul is content with its position in life, then the happiness, or blessing, becomes perpetual; for it is the soul, and not the coffers, that ought to be rich. The soul is rich, indeed, when satisfied with the necessities of life, it has no further aspirations, resting quite content, as the apostle has it, with a sufficiency, which, in another Epistle, he explains when he says, “for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content therewith; I know both how to be brought low

and how to abound.”

4. “To the righteous a light is risen up in darkness: he is merciful, and compassionate and just.” The third blessing enjoyed by those who fear God is the light of prudence and counsel that shines from heaven on them in their difficulties, as also in enabling them to see through the frauds of their false brethren, and, with that, to support them in the trials and troubles of life. “To the righteous a light is risen up in darkness.” The righteous, then, who fear God, have got the light of counsel and consolation, in the darkness of their troubles and tribulations, that light being God himself, who is “merciful, compassionate, and just” who deals mercifully with the merciful, because it is but just that the merciful should meet with mercy.

5. “Acceptable is the man that sheweth mercy and lendeth: he shall order his words with judgment.”

6. “Because he shall not be moved forever.” Blessing the fourth consists in that spiritual joy that resides in the heart of those that fear God. They who fear God easily pardon any offense, because they make allowance for, “and show mercy to,” human weakness; they also readily lend to those who need it, and thus comply with that precept of the Lord’s, “forgive, and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you.” Such good works are productive of the greatest joy; while, on the contrary, they who refuse to forgive, or they who will not confer a favor on a neighbor, have their temper always soured by reason of their conscience reproving them, or because they think they are disliked. Blessing the fifth consists in prudence in one’s speech, which enables one to steer clear of the greatest troubles in this life, such as enmities, quarrels, detraction, and the like, for he that fears God “orders his words in judgment;” makes use of language so matured by his good judgment as to give offense to nobody, and from it derives immense good. And he assigns a reason for his so “ordering his words in judgment,” when he says, “because he shall not be moved forever;” prudently looking out for all possible contingencies, so that, happen what may, he “cannot be moved forever.”

7. “The just shall be in everlasting remembrance: he shall not fear the evil hearing. His heart is ready to hope in the Lord.” The sixth happiness of the person fearing God is, that he will always live in the memory of man, not by reason of his crimes, as do Judas and Cain, Herod and Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas; his memory will be a glorious one, “and all the church of the saints shall declare” his praises; and not only that, but he will be “in everlasting remembrance” among men; and his name, too, will be written in the book of life, never to be blotted out, and thus and truly he will be “in everlasting remembrance” with the Angels in heaven. “He shall not fear the evil hearing,” he will not fear the detractions and reproofs of the wicked, nor will he fear that frightful sentence of the eternal Judge, “go ye cursed into everlasting fire.” – “His heart is ready to hope in the Lord.” This is the seventh blessing of the soul that feareth God; a firm and fixed reliance on the divine protection, through which it fears no evil. “His heart is ready to hope in the Lord.” That is, in every adversity, in every imminent danger, his heart is ready to take refuge in God, because he is always prepared and ready to hope in God, never loses sight of God’s assistance, never distrusts him, never hesitates in putting faith in him.

8. “His heart is strengthened, he shall not be moved until he look over his enemies.” His heart is strengthened in such confidence, so that there is no danger of his failing in it. “He shall not be moved until he look over his enemies.” He never will have the slightest fear of any impending danger from his enemies, and, of course, much less when he shall look down upon them prostrate and vanquished.