

Revive our Hearts!
Give me a trusting heart
Psalm 112 September 5th
Pastor Roy Summers

The hearts of many turned to wax

People who were in New York that day, remember how Tuesday the 11 September, 2001, started out as a beautiful blue-sky day.

The president went for a 4.5 mile run and engaged in playful banter with the press afterwards.

One of George Bush's close advisors scanned the diary and told the president that after his visit to the Emma Booker elementary school it was going to be an easy day!

But, as many of us will remember, that pleasant autumn day was shattered when two planes crashed into the World Trade Towers and another one into the Pentagon.

One artist who escaped the burning towers said that 20 years down the line she has not recovered from the event which had wired her mind to believe that a tragedy can fall any time of any day!

Is it possible to possess a heart that is steadfast and trusting—even in the face of bad news? A heart that may momentarily flounder but does not give up but rather keeps on going through “all the changing scenes of life”?

Is it possible to possess a secure heart?

Psalm 112 says a resounding “yes!” God's people can indeed possess a steadfast heart! (And the psalmist even tells us how to get one):

“Surely he will never be shaken...” (verse 6)

“He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord... (verse 7)

“His heart is secure, he will have no fear....” (verse 8)

Our simple prayer this morning is this: “Lord give us steadfast hearts that always trust in you.”

#1 A trusting heart may sometimes feel insecure

We begin with this point because we do not want anyone to imagine that a steadfast heart is a cold, unfeeling heart. You can have a heart that deep down truly trusts in God but is also moved and troubled and disturbed by the experiences of life.

The book of Psalms especially make this clear.

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.” (Psalm 22:14)

“Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish.” (Psalm 25:17)

“I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.” (Psalm 38:8)

“For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me.” (Psalm 40:12)

“My heart is blighted and withered like grass..” (Psalm 102:4)

So a trusting heart may sometimes feel insecure!

The Lord Jesus, said to his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, “Now my soul (my heart we could say) is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.” (John 12:27)

Jesus knows what it is like to have a troubled heart!

When describing the trials he went through to his Corinthian friends Paul wrote, “We were under a burden far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, we felt we were under the sentence of death” (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)

Having a trusting heart does not mean we are unmoved or untouched by the trials and sorrows of life!

Adoniram Judson served as a missionary in Burma for 40 years. In that long missionary career he faced imprisonment, torture, bereavement and disease, and in his heart he often felt dismay and disappointment. At one time he was so downhearted he wrote, ‘God is to me the Great Unknown. I believe in Him, but I cannot find Him.’

At another time, after the death of his wife, Ann, he dug a sort of grave next to hers where he would lie down and think of her. “My tears flow over the forsaken grave of my dear love”, he wrote home.

So, we say it again, “A trusting heart may sometimes feel insecure.”

This is the first truth of today’s sermon. Do not let the enemy tell you that you don’t trust in God because your hearts is sometimes troubled.

#2 A trusting heart and a godly life go together

But how do we get a settled, trusting and secure heart? Well, this is our second point,

“A trusting heart and a godly life go together.”

If you want a trusting heart, live a humble, loving, godly life!

This whole psalm describes the blessings and benefits of a godly life, and one of those blessings is a steadfast heart. Look at the psalm with me.

(a) The marks of a godly man or woman

The first verse—after his outburst of worship, “Praise the Lord!” sets the theme:

“Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands.”

“I’m going to list” says the psalmist, “all the blessings of a godly life...”

“...a godly believer who fears the Lord”

The psalmist is not talking about the dread fear of a slave or servant, but the loving respect of a child towards a loving Father. To fear the Lord is to remember every moment of every day that we live under his loving and holy gaze.

And that very naturally leads to... “finding great delight in his commands”

Just as a little child wants to please mom or dad, yearns for their approval—so a child of God delights to obey the commandments of God, summarised by Jesus in two:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”
(Mark 12:30-31)

Psalm 112 describes what this God-fearing obedient life looks like:

He or she is upright gracious, compassionate and righteous— Four really big wide-ranging words, verse 4: “Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.”

He or she is generous, verse 5 and verse 9, “Good will come to him who is generous” (5), “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor..” (verse 9)

He or she is fair in all their dealings, verse 5: “good will come to him... who conducts his affairs with justice..” (fair with employees, fair with your kids)

A godly man or woman is generous, gracious, compassionate, fair and righteous.

(b) The blessings of a godly man or woman

And then the psalm tells us the blessings that flow out of an obedient, godly life—and they are many!

Blessing 1: Influential children, verse 2, “His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.”

Blessing 2: Wealth, verse 3, “Wealth and riches are in his house,” (New Testament believers have to translate the promises of wealth in the Old Testament into promise of spiritual riches in the New. Jesus Christ does not promise material blessings, but how does Paul put it, God has “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus ” (Ephesians 1:3)

Blessing 3: an eternal reputation for righteousness; “his righteousness endures forever”, verses 3 & 9, “a righteous man will be remembered forever” verse 6

Blessing 4: Goodness will come his or her way, verse 5, “Good will come to who is generous.”

Blessing 5: victory over his enemies, verses 8 and 10, which again must be translated by the New Testament as victory over our invisible enemies

Five tremendous blessings come to those, who by God's grace and the power of his Spirit, live godly lives!

And then this one: Blessing 6:

“He will have no fear of bad news: his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord” (verse 7

“His heart is secure, he will have no fear.” verse 8

When sudden bad news comes to the ears of a godly man or woman, or when an enemy threatens them, though their hearts may flutter in the moment, they remain steadfast and secure and trusting.

I remember a godly friend of mine who was passing through a nasty divorce not of his making, telling me how his heart would be in dismay when a solicitor’s letter came through the post—they were always bad news. He learnt to get on his knees and pray before he opened them—what a difference that made!

Are you with me? A godly and obedient life and a trusting heart go together.

Let me put it this way. Suppose a Christian refuses to obey God’s will. He or she knows what God wants them to do, but they refuse to obey. What happens? They feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit. And guilt and condemnation poison the heart, weaken the heart.

And suppose one day they get a letter in the post, or an email or a text with bad news. What’s going to happen ? Already weakened by guilt and condemnation, their heart shakes and fears, shudders and sways!

But if, by God’s grace that believer is walking in step with the Spirit, then though the bad news may disturb them for a moment, their hearts will remain secure and steadfast.

Are you with me? A godly life leads to a strong and secure heart: “His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord” (verse 7) “His heart is secure, he will have no fear.” verse 8

Am I speaking to a believer who is ignoring the whispering voice of the Holy Spirit? You know what your Father in heaven wants of you, but you are ignoring his voice? And you wonder why you often have a weak heart, an anxious heart.

Wonder no more! Obey Christ TODAY! And your heart will strengthen, according to the promised blessing of Psalm 112:7: “his or her heart is steadfast”

#3 A trusting heart will persevere to the end

We may pass through many trials, and during those trials our hearts may deeply burdened and exercised, but the new and believing heart implanted by the Holy Spirit will endure to the end.

Job came out of all of his trials and trusted God to the very end.....

The apostle Paul—what troubles he faced! - imprisonment, floggings, five times he received the Jewish treatment of forty lashes minus one, three times beaten with rods, stoned once, three shipwrecks, 36 hours on the open sea, constantly moving to avoid danger from enemies, thirst, hunger, cold.. (2 Corinthians 11) - but he too made it to the end: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7)

Adoniram Judson too, after 40 years of missionary service made it to the Golden Shore.

And so too have countless believers, and so will you and I, by God's grace.

*1 Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.*

*2 Of his deliv'rance I will boast,
till all that are distressed
from my example comfort take,
and find in him their rest.*

*3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me;
with me exalt his name;
when in distress to him I called,
he to my rescue came.*

*4 The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliv'rance he provides for all
who on his mercy .*

*5 Fear him, ye saints, and you will then
have nothing else to fear;
make his service your delight,
your needs shall be his care.*

A trusting heart may temporarily feel insecure, of course it will, because we are only frail creatures of dust. A trusting heart and a godly life go together (that's the big learn from Psalm 112: one of the blessings of a godly, obedient life is a steadfast heart). A trusting heart will persevere until Christ returns or until we are called home to glory.