

Psalm 127 12-12-99

One of the beautiful Songs of Ascents is Psalm 127. There are fifteen of these Psalms. Some believe that they were sung at rest stops on the way to Jerusalem when attending one of the Feasts of the Lord. And another opinion is that each psalm was for one of the fifteen steps ascending into the Temple. As we proceed through life it is good to take those rests stops and meditate on His word. Would it not be wonderful if our every resting-place on this journey of ascent burst out in a new song to the Lord?

This particular Psalm is "of Solomon". Now, that may mean it is for him or by him. One of the key-notes is vanity and that reminds us of Solomon's book of Ecclesiastes.

Verse One: "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." There are many types of houses. If indeed this is Solomon I would think he is referring to the house of the Lord which he began to build. But certainly it applies to every type of house, your household, this fellowship, an organization or business. If the Lord is in the building of it then the ones laboring are doing so with His anointing. It is a thing of substance and eternal purpose.

"Every house is built by some man, but he that built all things is God." We are all building. Each of us is building and individual life, some are building a home, some a fellowship. The question we must put to ourselves is, "Is the Lord building through me or is this just an exercise in futility because He is not in it?"

Solomon knew the Lord had given his father the plan for the Temple. People came with abundant provision. No arms were twisted. Kings gave willingly toward the building of this house of worship. He knew the Lord was building the Temple. Rehoboam, on the other hand, built up walled cities and stock piled weapons and put commanders in them, but it was all in vain. The Lord allowed Shishack the Egyptian to conquer them all and subjugate them because Rehoboam had turned away from the law of God. 2Chron 11,12

We must be cautious how we build. 1 Cor 3:10-17 We can build that which will not last and the results are vanity, the labor is a waste of effort. Or we can be certain the Lord is building and that there is a substantial effort because the Lord is building.

There has been a real temptation to build this fellowship. Some of you know the thoughts of man that have gone on. Thoughts like, "lets look for a building" or "lets draw up a constitution" but we must be very careful we are not just laying wood, hay and stubble on the Chief Cornerstone. Those things may come or they may not, but whatever we do we must be certain it is the Lord who is building through us!

The Lord is building right now in you and me. The Corinthian passage ended saying you are the temple. We discussed last Sunday the shaping of the stones. Let us be certain that we do not add things of no substance to the work but that all our work is directed by Him. He will build the Church! He will finish what He started.

"Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain." Look at all our careful attention to not let any calamity overtake us. We have insurance, vitamins, airbags, retirement funds, Y2K supplies... If the Lord isn't watching over you that stuff is all a wasted effort. Life is fragile! You better not be trusting in those things because they can't do anything for you unless the Lord is watching over you.

Now how can you know the Lord is building and watching over your life? Your home? This fellowship? Are all these things committed to Him? Are any of these your own efforts in your own way? He won't build your pride up, or work on making you independent of Him. He will not encourage your self-reliant spirit. If any of your efforts are in this direction, you can know He is not in it. In fact if you are His child He will work to bring it down so you can see it is vanity, insubstantial, not lasting! But, if your work is committed to the Lord, what you do will be established. Pr 16:3 Both of these sentences do not say not to build or watch. They do say make sure that the Lord is building and keeping in the things you do.

Verse 2 If the first verse says to work while trusting in God then this one says to rest while trusting in God. The third vanity is to think that by long hours you will be wealthier. Our fears for provision, our lack of faith in God's help, our dependence on self drive us to long hours of work. This is keeping more people from the Word and prayer than any other downfall. God does not want to drive you like cattle but lead you like sheep. And where does He lead you? He leads you to quiet pastures by still waters so your soul can be restored.

Too often we don't have the faith that things will be taken care of. I remember one of my first jobs I felt so overwhelmed and that I would never finish. I went to talk to one of the overseers and expressed my fears and worries. When I went back the job had shrunk of its own accord and I ended up finishing early. Man did that make me feel inexperienced. I was! Most mole hills look like mountains when your face is right up in it. Back off and pray. Get God's perspective. Trust Him that what needs to be done will be done and if you don't get to it, it must be for tomorrow. Prov 10:22

"He gives his beloved sleep." I know the Lord loves my dog, he gives him so much sleep. The word beloved was a name for Solomon, Jedidiah – *beloved of the Lord*- I'm sure Solomon had more reasons to work and worry all night than

you do. But he knew sleep was a gift from God. Now that phrase in Hebrew could also be translated "God gives to you in sleep." Remember Solomon got his gift of wisdom while sleeping. We are so caught up with the idea that "if it is going to get done I have to do it". God can give it to you in your sleep. I've had answers come to me in my sleep. Understanding of tough situations has sometimes come in a dream. Ever go to sleep frustrated and wake up happy? God gives to his beloved in sleep. Sleep is one of those things we take for granted. When we can't sleep, we realize what a gift it is.

Look at Peter in Acts 12:6,7. Probably thinks he may die the next morning and the angel has to kick him to wake him up. That is trust in the Lord. We know the Lord has heard our prayer and we can sleep. Ps 3:4,5 And not just sleep but have sweet sleep. Prov 3:24

*Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep
Now tell me if that any is,
Of gift or grace surpassing this-
"He giveth his beloved sleep"*

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

We could go on if time permitted into the rest of the Psalm about our children. In Hebrew both son –*ben-* and daughter –*bath-* and a house –*beith-* all come from the same root word, to build-*banah-*. The chapter goes on with the same subject of building with substance into your children as opposed to vanity.

The Lord seems to be impressing upon us how much we are to depend on his goodness and to trust in Him for all the affairs of life. In every way and in everything He is the difference between purpose and vanity. How much of your life is built and focussed around the eternal? How much is building on vanity? The Lord is more than happy to help us with the transition from vanity to the meaningful, to take us to a place of trust and reliance on Him. He wants us to enter into His rest in every area of life. Our own spiritual growth, our family's, this fellowship, our work, in all these areas let us let Him build and protect and not try to do it without Him.