

Fellowship With The Holy Spirit – “Gracious For A Purpose: Drifting Away or Drawing Near?”

“I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving.” Psalm 69:30 ESV

- ❑ There are two kinds of magnifying: microscope magnifying and telescope magnifying.
- ❑ The one makes a small thing look bigger than it is. (Microscope)
- ❑ The other makes a big thing begin to look as big as it really is. (Telescope)
- ❑ Believers are not called to be microscopes. We are called to be telescopes.
- ❑ The whole duty of the Christian can be summed up in this: feel, think, and act in a way that will make God look as great as He really is.

Psalm 67

- ❑ God's purpose is to be known and praised and enjoyed and feared among all the nations.
 - ❑ To be known: verse 2— ***“That your way may be known on earth.”***
 - ❑ To be praised: verse 3— ***“Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!”***
 - ❑ To be enjoyed: verse 4— ***“Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.”***
 - ❑ To be feared: verse 7— ***“Let all the ends of the earth fear him.”***
- ❑ God wants to be known for who He really is so that our praise and joy and fear are rooted in reality not imagination; and really show God's worth and glory.
 - ❑ A God of grace: verse 1— ***“God be gracious to us and bless us.”***
 - ❑ A God of power and salvation: verse 2 – ***“Your saving power among all nations.”***
 - ❑ A God of justice: verse 4— ***“You judge the peoples with equity.”***
 - ❑ A God who leads and guides: verse 4— ***“Guide the nations upon earth.”***
- ❑ The main point of the psalm is what the psalmist does with all that truth.
- ❑ He knows that God desires to be known and praised and enjoyed and feared for who He really is.
- ❑ So his response is to pray that God would bless Israel in such a way that God really would be known among the nations.
- ❑ In other words, the main point of the psalm is the link between verses 1 and 2 found in the word "that."
- ❑ ***“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, (Selah) THAT your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.” Psalm 67:1-2 ESV***
- ❑ So the point I want to stress this morning is this: God is gracious and blesses His people for the sake of the nations.

God's Way Throughout History

- ❑ This prayer in Psalm 67 is not hanging in the air with no connections with God's historical way of saving the world.
- ❑ It is rooted in God's covenant with Abraham.
- ❑ Years after the Flood, pride leads the people to rebel against God by constructing the tower of Babel. After having dispersed them by confusing their languages, God would eventually choose one man and one nation as the instrument of His blessing to the entire world.

- ***"Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*"** *Genesis 12:1-3 ESV*
- And because Jesus in all His saving work is the seed of Abraham, everyone who is united to Him by faith becomes a son of Abraham and an heir of all his blessings.
- ***"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles (nations), so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."*** *Galatians 3:13-14 ESV*
- ***"just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?... So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ... And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."*** *Galatians 3:6, 9, 29 ESV*
- So God's plan was that all the peoples of the world be blessed. To that end, He chose the people of Israel to bear His revelation and His blessing. And He made a covenant with them that they would be blessed and in that way bring that blessing to all the peoples of the world.
- And God fulfilled this covenant decisively when Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, fulfilled all righteousness and died for sin and rose again, so that anyone who believes on Him from any people on earth will become a child of Abraham and inherit the blessing of Abraham — and so be blessed by the blessing of Israel.
- So the Abrahamic covenant is being fulfilled through the church every time someone trusts in Christ.

What do we do?

- So is there anything you and I need to do to receive this blessing and grace?
- Do we just pray, sit back and do nothing?
- ***"You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."*** *James 4:4-8 ESV*
- Humility, submission or obedience, resisting evil, drawing near to God, and repentance.
- ***"Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."*** *Hebrews 2:1 ESV*
- One doesn't have to do anything to drift away. Departure from the faith usually comes from slow drifting, not a sudden departure.
- The Philippian jailer asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30-31) – ***"And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*** The question, "What must I do to be lost?" also has an answer: "Nothing."
- To do nothing is quite enough to be driven by the currents of the world, the flesh, and the devil and to drift away.

Drifting Away or Drawing Near?

- ❑ There is another point implied in this main one: if God blesses His people for the sake of the nations; then God is most likely to bless us when we are planning and longing and praying to bless the nations.
- ❑ If God wants His goods (greatness, power, love, grace, mercy, kindness, justice, joy, peace) to get to the nations, then He will fill the boat that's moving toward the nations (other people).
- ❑ He will bless the church that's pouring itself out for unreached peoples of the world, pouring itself out for the community it lives in.
- ❑ And this blessing is not a payment for or a earning; it's power and joy for a mission to accomplish.
- ❑ So how do we draw near?
- ❑ You must have a plan. If you do not have a plan than you are quite likely drifting away.
- ❑ If you don't have a strategy for drawing near you are drifting away because we live in the current of the world and the current of the world is going away from God.
- ❑ Drawing near is intentional.
- ❑ We need a public plan and we need private plans.
- ❑ Our time together Sunday mornings, small groups, youth group, Kids Zone, and fellowship times are all about drawing nearer to God.
- ❑ It's vital for the life of this local church that we draw near to God corporately and collectively.
- ❑ And to draw near to God as a body we must have a plan, we must be strategic.
- ❑ Also, each one of us must have a private plan, a strategy for drawing near to God.
- ❑ Spiritual disciplines are the plan. They are how we draw near to God, they are how we put ourselves in the position to receive more grace and more blessing.
- ❑ Spiritual disciplines = Bible reading (study/memorization/meditation), prayer (corporately and privately), fellowship with other believers (plugged in to a local church), singing (praise and thanksgiving), writing (journal, prayer requests, what God speaks to you), desiring and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- ❑ He is gracious to us for a purpose, He blesses for a purpose; so that we will be a blessing to this community, that through us the nations would be blessed and know, praise, enjoy, and fear God.