



September 24, 2017

Psalm 120 – 134

“The Pilgrim’s Progress – Part 2”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In this message, Pastor Gary helps us understand how to maintain a heavenly perspective while we’re still living on earth, and since our citizenship is heaven, he encourages to remember that we are just passing through!

Psalm 124

God Is Our Great Defender And Deliverer

1. David described his enemy as being like a ferocious animal or a raging flood.
2. Bible scholars don’t know who David’s enemy was, but many Bible scholars believe the reference is to the Philistines, who were the perennial enemy of Israel.
3. This psalm is a reminder that when the enemy comes to attack, God will come to the rescue.
4. **1 Peter 5:8–9** – *“**Be self-controlled and alert.** Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **Resist him, standing firm in the faith,** because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”* (Emphasis added)
5. There are four directives from the Lord that we need to be mindful of concerning our common enemy:
 - a. We need to be self-controlled
 - i. **Proverbs 25:28** – *“Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.”*

- ii. When we exercise self-control, we are like a fortified city, but a lack of self-control will put us in a dangerous position.
 - b. We need to be alert
 - i. Christians must be vigilant in watching for the approach of the enemy.
 - ii. [Ephesians 4:27](#) - *"... do not give the devil a foothold."*
 - iii. Pastor Gary said: "The enemy is constantly trying to work against us. Don't give him [an] opportunity... [The] opportunity we give him comes when we compromise. When we compromise in our lives it's like an open door [for] what Satan might want to do against us."
 - c. We need to resist the enemy
 - i. Pastor Gary said: "The Bible is your greatest defense against the attack of the enemy. Every single time Satan tried to tempt Jesus, Jesus hit him with the Word! Hit him with Scripture! Know your Bible!... The offensive weapon for every Christian is the sword of the Spirit... The rest of the armor is defensive weaponry."
 - ii. [Ephesians 6:17](#) - *"... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."*¹
 - d. We need to stand firm in the faith
 - i. We should expect some level of spiritual warfare as being normal, but the directive from the Lord for us is to stand firm and he will help us.

Psalm 126

God Welcomes Home Those Who Are Estranged From Him

6. This psalm refers to a dark time in Israel's history, a time when they worshiped idols made of wood and stone.
7. The Lord's patience ran out and he sent the Babylonians as an instrument of punishment, because he wanted to purge idolatry from the nation of Israel.
8. In 586BC, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and took captive thousands of Jews who were taken back to Babylon.
9. After a period of about 70 years God raised up King Cyrus of Persia, who defeated the Babylonians.
10. God put it on King Cyrus' heart to issue a decree that permitted the Jews to return to their homeland.

¹ Paul's description of the "Armor of God" is found in [Ephesians 6:10-17](#).

11. When the captives returned to Israel they rejoiced and were filled with joy, because the vast majority of the captives who returned to Israel had never seen their native land before!
12. Pastor Gary said: “This chapter is about people who were estranged from God and distant from him, [but] God brought them back. It’s about returning to the Lord and finding great joy in his presence. It’s a story of redemption and reconciliation and restoration... The fact of the matter is that there are probably some of you here who have also felt estranged from God, [and] there is a distance between you and God. Not a distance that he has created, but a distance that [you created]. Oftentimes I think that the distance... is attributed to three common things: 1) Sin in our own lives. When we disobey God and when we sin against him, a lot of times shame overwhelms us and shame whispers a lie to us, and the lie that shame whispers to us is, ‘You see what you’ve done? God could never take you back. See how ashamed you should feel? [See] how guilty you are? God would never love you and God would never take you back.’ Now, there is a reason we should feel shame and guilt and it’s called a conscience, and God has given it to us. And the Holy Spirit will convict us when we do wrong against the Lord. So, we should feel a measure of guilt, but that shame or guilt should never prevent us from running back to the loving arms of our Father... 2) I think another reason why we bring distance [to] our relationship with God is because, frankly, life disappoints us... Because life has not turned out the way we had hoped [it would] or some things have happened in our lives... Disappointments of life begin to add up and tragedy takes its toll and we get angry at God and we wonder where God was and we blame God... 3) I think another reason... is just plain neglect... [We] can just get so busy with life and we’re doing our own thing... we forget God.”

Psalm 127

Remember That Children Are A Blessing From The Lord

13. The first section of this psalm is about doing things without the Lord that will end up being nothing more than a vain endeavor.
14. It should be understood that Solomon was writing about more than building a structure; he was also writing about building a life or a career or a business, etc.
15. Who better to know about vain endeavors than King Solomon, who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, which is about how he accomplished great things, which ended up being meaningless because the Lord was not involved.
16. The second section of this psalm is about precious things.

17. [Psalm 127:3-5](#) – *“Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.”*
18. It’s interesting to note that the Bible tells us that Solomon didn’t have many children, even though he had 1,000 women in his life.
- [1 Kings 11:3](#) – *“He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.”*
 - The Bible records the names of two daughters named Taphath ² and Basemath, ³ and one son, Rehoboam. ⁴
19. Pastor Gary said: “The most precious blessings that God ever gives come in the form children. That’s why they’re singing this [song]... [However], we are living in a culture that doesn’t value children... When we, as a nation, have aborted almost 60 million children since [the 1973] Roe v. Wade decision... Don’t tell me our society values children... Of those 60 million children that have been aborted in our country, 8 million have been aborted through Planned Parenthood... This is a tragedy.” ⁵
20. Pastor Gary, in a partial quote from an article that appeared *The Washington Post*, said: “God values life from the womb to the tomb, and we need to also protect life ourselves.” ⁶
21. Pastor Gary said: “What [*The Washington Post*] didn’t quote, and I want to make sure that you hear the rest of it, if you read the article, [was this]: ‘When a society fails to stand up for those without a voice, it will be the end of that society.’ ... [It’s] true, and I don’t mean that [just] for the unborn, I mean that for the elderly, I mean that for the poor, [and] I mean that for the mentally disabled.”
22. Pastor Gary closed his message by reading a letter he received from a man whose family used to attend Cornerstone Chapel. ⁷

² [1 Kings 4:11](#)

³ [1 Kings 4:15](#)

⁴ [1 Chronicles 3:10](#)

⁵ Pastor Gary referenced a statistic that the 60 million aborted children in the United States since 1973 would roughly be the population of all of these states combined: Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Virginia.

⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/for-both-sides-of-abortion-debate-unusually-high-stakes-in-virginia-governors-race/2017/09/11/d651a198-787d-11e7-8839-ec48ec4cae25_story.html?utm_term=.b3ef29831222

⁷ Pastor Gary starts reading at 42:12 and he ends at 46:57. Use this link to access the message in the Teaching Library: https://cornerstonechapel.net/?page_id=418&i=1242

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Psalm 124](#).
2. Read and discuss [1 Peter 5:8–9](#).
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they weren't alert and self-controlled, and how the enemy got the better of them.
4. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about being alert, resisting, and standing firm in the faith. (See #5 above)
5. What are some of the ways the Lord has come to your rescue?
6. Read [Psalm 126](#).
7. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about God's willingness to welcome home those who are estranged from him. (See #12 above)
8. Read [Psalm 127](#).
9. Share examples of things you've done or experienced that ended up being a vain endeavor, and compare/contrast those experiences with
10. Spend time talking about the statistics Pastor Gary shared concerning abortion in the United States since the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. (See #19 above)
11. How has the Lord changed your perspective concerning abortion?
12. What should Christians do to stand up for the right to life for the unborn and others? (See #21 above)
13. Allow the people in your group to share their thoughts and feelings about the letter Pastor Gary read at the end of the teaching. (See #22 above)
14. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).