

# The Gift of God

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*Psalm 127:3-5*

## **INTRODUCTION**

- A. Illustration about the gentleman's correcting the visitor who said, of his children, "These are they that make rich men poor," Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #1248.
- B. Indeed, children are a special gift from God.
  - 1. Perhaps it is because children are a special gift that we find instructions in Scripture about how parents are to raise those children.
  - 2. Perhaps it is because children are a special gift that those who cannot physically have children often adopt.
  - 3. Perhaps it is because children are a special gift that our hearts bleed when we see children mistreated or harmed.
  - 4. Perhaps it is because children are a special gift that we find our text in Psalms. This morning, we want to examine what the psalmist wrote that we might better understand the gift of children.
- C. The psalmist begins Psalm 127 by speaking about the building of a house.
  - 1. "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (v. 1).
  - 2. In other words, we can build a house all that we want to, but unless the Lord is involved in it, the house will come to nothing.
    - a. We need God in our families; without God in our families, we are wasting our time.
    - b. We need to make God the center of our families; he needs to be involved in everything we do.
  - 3. After discussing the importance of God's being in the family, the psalmist tells us about the blessing God gives us in families: the gift of children.

## **THE REWARD OF CHILDREN, v. 3**

- A. Children are a heritage from the Lord.
  - 1. The term "heritage" in the Old Testament mostly refers to the Promised Land.
    - a. The idea of "heritage" is that God gave the Israelites the land of Canaan and expected something in return.
    - b. The idea is quite like the ancient feudal idea — where servants were allowed to live on one's property in return for work.
  - 2. Applying that concept to children, we see that children are a heritage in that God has given them to us in return for work. What work does God expect in return for the gift of children?
    - a. God surely expects parents to train their children in righteousness.
      - 1) "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).
      - 2) "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).
      - 3) If we do not teach our children, who will?
    - b. God surely expects parents to provide for their children.
      - 1) "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).
      - 2) "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor. 12:14).

- 3) Our hearts bleed when we see children going without, the authorities take action, and God calls it Sin.
- c. God surely expects parents to control their children.
  - 1) Elders are to have their “children in submission with all reverence” (1 Tim. 3:4).
  - 2) Deacons are to rule their “children and their own houses well” (1 Tim. 3:12).
  - 3) When parents allow children to do whatever they want without any control, the children suffer and the parents do a great injustice. It is far better for parents to train children to be in submission to others than for them to get out in the world and have a rude awakening.
- B. The fruit of the womb is a reward.
  1. The patriarchs of Israel and their wives understood that children were a reward from God.
    - a. Leah recognized her children as a gift from God (Gen. 29:31-35).
    - b. Rachel recognized her children as a gift from God (Gen. 30:22-24).
  2. The idea being presented here is that God gives children as a reward for righteousness.
    - a. But, wait a minute. What about those who are unable to bear children? Is God punishing them for unrighteousness?
      - 1) We need to remember that in the OT punishment and reward were generally immediate.
        - a) Achan was taken out and stoned as soon as Joshua discovered that he had disobeyed God’s orders at Jericho.
        - b) The Lord blessed Job for his righteousness immediately — he restored to him twice as much as he had had before Satan’s intervention.
      - 2) God no longer punishes or rewards people immediately. If God did just send children as a reward for righteousness, there would be far fewer children in this world!
    - b. But, we cannot overlook the idea inherent in this verse — children are a blessing.
      - 1) Children bring joy, contentment, and hope that can come no other way.
      - 2) Children are not a burden, a problem, but they are a blessing!

## **THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, vv, 4-5**

- A. Here the psalmist tells his readers why children are a heritage — they protect their parents when the parents become older.
- B. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one’s youth, v. 4.
  1. Arrows in the hand of a warrior can be a great defense for one who is well trained and knows how to use them.
  2. The primary thought in this passage is that sons will provide sufficient strength to protect the family against enemies.
    - a. In antiquity, families often had to defend themselves against others.
      - 1) When Lot was taken captive, Abram “led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan” (Gen. 14:14).
      - 2) Gen. 33:1-3 — Jacob thought that Esau and his men were going to kill him.
    - b. The psalmist is saying that the children of one’s youth provide protection as the parents age.
  3. Children need to protect their parents.
    - a. Children need to see that their parents’ physical needs are met: “If any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God” (1 Tim. 5:4).
    - b. “‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth’” (Eph. 6:2-3).
      - 1) Surely, no one would attempt to make this mean that children should only honor their

parents while they live at home.

2) Parents should be honored as long as they live.

c. Children protect their parents in a variety of ways:

1) Children need to make sure that their elderly parents have what they need in life: they may need to stay with them, go to the grocery for them, do household chores, and the like.

2) Children may need to help parents with complex issues, e.g., dealing with the Social Security Administration.

3) Are you protecting your parents?

C. The man who has a quiver full of children is blessed, v. 5.

1. This has obvious reference to the period when the more children one had the better off he was: the more work could be done around the farm or in the family business.

2. That's no longer true, but it is still true that the one who has children is blessed.

D. He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate, v. 5.

1. Dissecting this phrase is not the easiest thing in the world.

2. Here is probably how we should understand this passage:

a. The father will not be put to shame when his children speak with the father's enemies in the gate.

b. In ancient society, court was held at the gates of the city.

3. The children had been trained by their parents, and they now speak on behalf of their parents before the parents' enemies – again this is the idea that children protect their aging parents.

4. Are you protecting your aging parents? Those of you who are younger and whose parents don't need help, are you willing to protect your aging parents?

## **CONCLUSION**

A. Children are an incomparable blessing from God — they give more joy than we can believe.

B. But, God gives us another great blessing: he gives us the privilege of being his children.

1. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 Jn. 3:1).

2. What a privilege to know that we are God's children and that he is our Father and that we can go to him with our needs, and he'll provide.

a. Are you God's child?

b. Do you need to come this morning and become God's child?