

## Psalm 128: *Shalom*, part 2

May 29, 2016

### SUMMARY of PART 1

Last Sunday, we looked at **Psalm 128:1** - *Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways.* We looked at what the **fear** (phobia) of the LORD is; that whatever you fear or have a phobia in, has power and control over you. God wants to have that power and control over you. Therefore, blessed is the man who seeks a holy phobia in the LORD. **Q: Do you pray for a holy fear of the LORD? Do you ask for the Holy Spirit to control you?** Because the inevitable result of a holy fear, verse 1 tells us, is *walking in His ways...* IOW, **following** Him. This is how *true peace/Shalom* comes... fearing the LORD leads to following the LORD. And that leads to what we see in the rest of Psalm 128... **fearing and following the LORD isn't the end, it does lead somewhere...**

Remember, **Psalm 128** is a Psalm of ascent, one of 15 Psalms (120-134) sung by the Jews on their way to Jerusalem during each of the 3 feasts. Jerusalem, we said last week, is the city of *salem* or *Shalom*. The Hebrew term, ***Shalom***, means **peace**, and at the core and root of the word is the idea of completeness, of fulfillment, of being made whole...which will only truly come when we are with God in heaven.

**Philippians 1:6** - *He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* In **Psalm 138:8**, the Psalmist declares this promise, *The LORD will fulfill His purpose for me.* These verses remind us that we are headed somewhere... we are in route (to becoming complete in Christ), but we're not yet there yet. Therefore, **the fear of the Lord and following the Lord are leading to something.** They're leading us to our completion. And the rest of Psalm 128 has a beautiful way of expressing what all this is leading to. That expression is in the form of a common and significant metaphor: **FRUIT.**

### Read Psalm 128

This whole Psalm envisions the peaceful blessing of a fruitful multi-generational home. It's a thumbnail image of our eternal home in Zion. The Lord showed the prophet Zechariah (**Zech. 8**) this when he wrote: *Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy... I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.*

This is a beautiful prophecy of what God has in store in heaven. And the thumbnail sketch God uses to picture this in Psalm 128 is a fruitful home. In this fruitful home, you find a man who fears the Lord, who eats the fruit of the labor of his hands, whose wife is like a fruitful vine *within the heart of his home*, with olive shoots (children) popping up (multiplying his fruit), and Grandparents, with staff in hand, seeing their children's children playing safely in the streets. It's a serene thumbnail of true Shalom: ***The fear of the Lord that leads to following the Lord that leads to fruit for the LORD.***

There are two kinds of fruit mentioned in Scripture... good fruit and bad fruit. The Supreme Court decision last July to legalize same-gender marriage is a perfect example of bad fruit, which is a result of what happens when a nation does not fear the Lord or follow Him. **However, and here's a question: Could it be that the redefining of marriage in our nation, is the *fruit* resulting from a people who have not witnessed at large, what a healthy fruitful, Christ-exalting marriage should to look like?** We're really good at identifying bad fruit and the trees that bear them (like the Supreme Court decision), but we're not good at seeing the 'log' in our own eye. Do our Christian marriages, as John the Baptist said, bear fruits in keeping with repentance? Do our marriages showcase what good fruit is, what a healthy one man/one woman union is supposed to look like? Jesus said, *you will recognize a good tree by their fruits.*

With that in mind, from Psalm 128, here are...

#### **4 Things that the presence of good fruit tell us:**

##### **1. Good fruit means *life, not death.***

**Psalm 128:2** - *You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands.*

An abundance of fruit says one thing... prosperity, blessing, life. But the absence of fruit says something else... famine, curse, death. The presence or absence of fruit in a society or region meant life or death. A fruitful land and people meant fullness... Shalom, peace, life.

**Psalm 1:3** – *(The man who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates day and night... He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in season. Meaning he's fruitful when it's time... and it only comes when God brings it forth. But it must be planted by life-giving streams of water.*

**Q: What life-giving stream of water must one be planted by that produces life?**

**John 6:63** – *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.*

Good fruit means life, and that life only comes by the Spirit of God. A fruitful marriage is a Spirit-controlled marriage, a Spirit-helped, Spirit-taught, Spirit-filled marriage. And because the flesh (sin, selfish nature) is no help at all (even though it constantly tries to), it must be killed... just like the 'little foxes that ruin the vineyard', just like the weeds and thorns that choke the plants. They must die. **Romans 8:13** shows us: *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if **by the Spirit** you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

## 2. Good fruit comes with *pain*, not *ease*.

**Psalm 128:2,3a** - *You shall eat the fruit of the **labor** of your hands; Your wife will be **like a fruitful vine** within your house...*

Of course, we know that work/labor was not a part of the curse, but a part of Eden, before sin entered the world. **Pain, thorns, sweat** in work, however, was a result of man's sin, and the curse of God. Therefore, the presence of fruit also means the presence of pain.

Notice the picture connected in **Psalm 128:2-3**, *the fruit of his labor and his wife... a fruitful vine*. This man works painfully hard to for good fruit to come forth. In the garden, it says the man tended or **cared for** the garden. This man is like the husband the Apostle Paul instructs in Ephesian 5... He's a man who *loves his wife as he loves himself (5:28)*. He *nourishes and cherishes* his garden, specifically this precious vine, which is his wife... *just as Christ does the church*. He's not first ministering in other men's gardens, nor is he lusting over other men's wives and daughters while weeds are growing up in his. No, his priority is his own wife...his own children... his own field, his own garden. It requires care-ful tending... and it's painful. Have you noticed guys, how leading your wife and family requires you to make some very unpleasant and unpopular decisions or do you just let your own personal peace make the decisions for you? That won't produce good fruit.

## 3. Good fruit is organic, not *artificial*

**Psalm 128:6** - *Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD...*

Good fruit is organic; its time-consuming, its gradual. It's not immediate and artificial. Our society is becoming increasingly artificial. Russell Moore just wrote [an article](#) sharing how social media disconnects us from real-life relationships, by showcasing, not the bad bullet points in our lives, but the most witty and joyful points. But that's not how relationships work or how

organic fruit is cultivated. Good fruit comes of over time... its slow. In fact, it's nearly impossible to see fruit grow. We only see it grow over time. Artificial fruit however is immediate, it comes to those who want it in a hurry, who need to be fixed and move on. Real fruit comes gradually. Oftentimes takes years.

**APP: Does your wife ever have any burdens? How do you lift your wife's burdens?** Did you know that only Jesus can lift our burdens. Remember, last week we shared that this what the Gospel, the Good News that brings great joy means... the Jesus Christ came to lift the heaviest burdens we bear, our sin and condemnation and eternal judgment of God. Jesus died on the cross and lifted our burden. We can't lift their burden, but we can bear their burden. Here's a practical way how:

**James 1:19:** *Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for the anger of man does not **produce** the righteousness (or fruit of) of God.* Which is faster guys, being quick to listen or quick to speak? Bringing good advice or good news? Here's what being quick to listen does... it allows us to shut up and look to Jesus the Author and Perfector of our faith.. which allows us to walk in our wife's shoes and love her as we love ourselves... and that takes time. Oh, there's so many times I have simmered or boiled or yelled or been quick to give the silent treatment and its produced fruit... but it was artificial and bad; it wasn't real. But to spend time sitting at the feet of Jesus and sending forth my mind into the depths of the Living Water of the Spirit every day, and killing that selfish nature in me by the Spirit, and then carefully tending and bearing my wife's burden by shutting up and listening so I can pray and then lead her to her burden-lifting Savior... that's organic... that's really inefficient.... But the harvest in that is real fruit.

#### **4. Good Fruit is for the day of *feasting*, not for wasting**

##### **Revelation 22:1-5, 17**

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever....*

*The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*

It's the picture of Jesus, the Bridegroom dwelling with His bride around the wedding table filled to overflowing with the fruit for God. That fruit is the good works God began in us in Christ Jesus. Our lives are now to be spent, controlled by His Spirit as we help make ready our own families for that final day... as Paul prayed in **Philippians 1** – *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more... and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

This is why Jesus is the central figure of Psalm 128. Christ is the perfect husband man of Psalm 128 who perfectly feared His Father and perfectly followed the ways of His Father even unto death on a cross, so that He might be the firstfruits of all those raised from dead. Because *He who began this good work in us will bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus.*