

The Preservation Of The Christian Home

Text: Psalm 128

Suggested Hymns:

415, 393, 589, 293, 865LSBT358

1) By cultivating Christian Home-Life

2) By cultivating Christian Home Virtues

3) By cultivating Christian Home Worship

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Psalm 128, *¹ Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways. ² When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. ³ Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. ⁴ Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD. ⁵ The LORD bless you out of Zion, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life. ⁶ Yes, may you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel!* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

This psalm, which is a blessing on the family, is also a blessing on the nation, because as the family goes, so goes the nation. The blessing of a nation starts with godliness in the hearts of parents. Such parents fear God and strive to keep His commandments. Their strength flows to the children through the contentment and peace it produces in the family.

From solid families strength flows to the nation. From solid, godly families come workers who will build up the nation, parents who will raise godly children, and children who are our hope for the future. Without such families the future is dark. From such families the nation and the church will find strength.

In the preceding sermons we discussed some of the fundamental principles of home-building and home preservation. But we have not yet exhausted the subject. Other essential requirements for permanent happiness in the home must still be noted.

Let us now consider these requirements at the hand of this beautiful psalm. Here we have a description of a happy home which the Lord promises to

preserve, a home conducted in such a way as to give the father the assurance, ² *When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.* ³ *Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table.* ⁴ *Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD. ...* ⁶ *Yes, may you see your children's children.*

Let us consider *How May a Happy Christian Home be Preserved?* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. A Happy Christian Home May Be Preserved By Cultivating Christian Home-Life

Our text portrays a happy family, an ideal home-life. Husband and wife, parents and children, live together in a blissful relationship, ² *When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.* ³ *Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table.*

This unity is expressed in Psalm 133, ¹ *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!* ² *It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments.* ³ *It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing — Life forevermore.*

Compare with this the average home in our day. The home is in many cases merely a place to eat and sleep. The members of the family are like scattered embers on the hearth.

There is little family spirit, ever-weakening family ties, no intimate and agreeable family life, and no common interests. There is an ever-widening gulf between parents and children, and the children drift apart from one another. In short, the home is disintegrating.

This is a real tragedy, *“for the hearthstone has always been the corner-stone of the family and of society.”*¹ In our day we would say the *dinner table*. It is where discussions and family devotions are held.

Let us counteract the tendency of our age of drifting apart with all the power at our command. Pattern your home-life after the ideal portrayed in this psalm. Let the members of the family really live together, work together, and play together. Let the parents make a systematic effort to make the home attractive for their children.

Let them be the companions and sympathetic confidants of their maturing sons and daughters. Let the children, on the other hand, appreciate these efforts of their parents, co-operate with them, and make the home the centre of their activities.

These are the first steps to be taken if we want to ensure the continued happiness of our homes.

2. A Happy Christian Home May Be Preserved By Cultivating Christian Home Virtues

But the psalmist says also, ¹ *Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways.* He makes the prosperity and happiness of the home dependent upon genuine piety, demonstrated by “walking in His ways.” We read in Proverbs 12:7, ⁷ *The wicked are overthrown and are no more, But the house of the righteous will stand.*

Parents, as well as children, should therefore strive to lead godly lives. But, being members of a family, they should in particular guard against the sins which undermine family-life and with determination cultivate home virtues.

The most indispensable home virtues are:

First, love, which includes unselfishness, courtesy, patience, etc. Remember the words of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, ⁴ *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Second, moral purity, for sins against the Sixth Commandment will disrupt a home faster than anything else.

Third, soberness, for drunkenness brings about strife, poverty, suffering, and contempt.

Fourth, being industrious, for without diligent work the home will suffer want.

Fifth, a Christian attitude with regard to temporal possessions, avoiding, on the one hand, greed, and on the other, wasteful extravagance. For by both a family is at length deprived of the necessities of life.

The main reason for the disintegration of our homes and the rarity of true happiness in the home is the decline of piety in the home, resulting in the neglect of one or more indispensable home virtues.

Friends, let your own home-life pass in review before your soul. Can you, under existing conditions, expect the Lord to continue to bless you and your family?

3. A Happy Christian Home May Be Preserved By Cultivating Christian Home Worship

Christian home-life and home virtues cannot thrive without regular home worship. True, home worship is not expressly mentioned in our text, but the general tone of the psalm suggests it, and the statement of verse 1 definitely includes it. *¹ Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways.*

If a father really fears the Lord and endeavours to walk in His ways, he will certainly gather his family every day around the family altar. Do you, my friend, maintain family worship in your home?

Consider the benefits of regular family worship. At the family altar the members of the family are daily brought together in intimate spiritual communion; there is a continual reaffirmation of their oneness, a constant deepening of the unity of spirit, and a steady growth in love and sympathy.

At the family altar the family as a body communes with God by hearing His Word and praying together. This is as we read in Matthew 18:20, *²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*"

By the Word of God the members of the household are refreshed, comforted, strengthened, preserved, warned, guided, and defended. We read in Psalm 119:105, *¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.* And in verse 165, *¹⁶⁵ Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes*

them to stumble. And in verse 9, ⁹ *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.*

Also in Proverbs 30:5, ⁵ *Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.*

In the New Testament we read in Colossians 3:16, ¹⁶ *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

And in Ephesians 6:11–13, ¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* ¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

In prayer they pour out their hearts before God and invoke His benediction upon the family and its members. If there is a special affliction, it is committed to the Father of mercies at the family altar. Thus everything that is noble and sublime in family life is fostered, strengthened, protected, and refined in family worship — unless the family worship is a cold, mechanical performance.

But where the family altar has been abolished, the most prominent feature of Christian home-life has been eliminated, and the door is opened wide to worldliness and spiritual degeneration.

Can you, Christian father, continue to deprive your family of the blessings that accrue from regular home worship?

We read in Joshua 24:15, ¹⁵ *And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*

Then as our text says, ⁵ *The LORD bless you out of Zion, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life.* ⁶ *Yes, may you see your children’s children.*

Thus we have heard what we must do if we want to preserve our homes in their happiness and spiritual prosperity. By cultivating Christian Home-Life, cultivating Christian Home Virtues, and cultivating Christian Home Worship.

May every one of us put into practise what he has learned from the Word of God!

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,²

1.

O happy house! O home supremely blessed!
Where You, Lord Jesus Christ, are entertained,
As the most welcome and beloved Guest,
With true devotion and with love sincere;
Where all hearts beat in unison with Thine,
Where eyes grow brighter as they look on Thee,
Where all are ready, at the slightest sign,
To do Thy will, and do it heartily.

2.

O happy house! where man and wife are one,
Through love of Thee, in spirit, heart, and mind;
Together joined by holy bands, which none,
Not death itself, can sever or unbind.
Where both on Thee unfailingly depend,
In weal and woe, in good and evil days,
And hope with Thee eternity to spend,
In sweet communion and eternal praise.

3.

O happy house! — where with the hands of prayer
Parents commit their children to the Friend,
Who, with more than mother's tender care,
Will watch and keep them safely to the end;
Where they are taught to sit at Jesus' feet,
And listen to the words of life and truth,
And learn to lisp His praise, in accents sweet,
From early childhood to advancing youth.

4.

O happy house! — where You do share the weal,
Where none forget You, whatso'er befall;
O happy house! — where You the wounds do heal,
The Healer and the Comforter of all;
Until every one his stated task has done,
And all at length shall peacefully depart
To the bright realms, where You Yourself are gone:
The Father's house — where You already are! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Bellows

² Karl Johann Philipp Spitta, Hymns for the Church on Earth, #216