THE GOOD LIFE

A STUDY OF THE 23RD PSALM

PART 12 – MY CUP RUNS OVER!

REVIEW

You know, I've run into a lot of people who have obviously allowed their experiences in life and the circumstances they have incurred to warp their belief system. Some of these people are what I call "negative Nancy's" to where it's always a glass half empty kind of mentality. Others seem to just expect bad things to happen to them saying things like "Well, if it wasn't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all."

And while a lot of people would look at this kind of mentality as okay because, after all, what's it hurting, right? But the truth is, it's hurting a lot more than most realize!

You see, the way we think in our hearts is what we are going to reflect in our lives. So, to have "stinking thinking" like this actually can and does influence what we experience.

I was just talking to someone this week about this and how whenever I have taught on financial stewardship, the first thing that I tackle is not the importance of giving. No, it's not the important role that wise financial stewardship plays. What I deal with first is the mentality we have towards money. Yes, I try to help people understand that the way they think about finances and about themselves in this area is what will ultimately drive the direction their life goes in this area.

And the same is true for our life in general. If we expect the worse, if in our hearts we are looking for bad things to happen, and if we refuse to believe what God's Word says concerning this, we can absolutely limit what God wants us to experience in our life.

Did you know that we can actually limit God like this? We sure can because it says so in the Bible. Where, you ask? **Psalm 78:41** describes how the children of Israel tempted God while in the wilderness and "limited the Holy One of Israel."

I know this flies in the face of Christian tradition, but it's absolutely the truth. Our lives will reflect what we believe in our hearts and that can limit what God desires for us to have. **Proverbs 23:7** says, *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."* – meaning, the way we think in here (i.e. in the heart) is the way we will be out here (i.e. in our lives).

All of this is especially important as it pertains to what we will look at today …

So in this 23rd Psalm which we have been covering for close to three months we have what describes this good life mentality. And a couple of weeks ago, we moved from the fields of the Good Shepherd to the home of the Honorable Host – that is, we transitioned to where David begins to describe how the LORD hospitably invites us into His home to a dinner He has provided for us.

Again, **Psalm 23:5-6** says, *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

So last week, we looked at the first thing our Honorable Host does for us when we enter His home to attend His great supper – He anoints our head with oil!

Now a big point we made last week is how this terminology that David used here is a clear reference to the Holy Spirit. This is because when the Scriptures talk about the "anointing" and about "oil," they are almost always used to refer to the Spirit of God. Even the fact that David talks about this anointing with oil being poured on our heads forecasts the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2 because it was on their heads that there appeared tongues of fire.

So I say this to say that this phrase "You anoint my head with oil" gives not just one, not two, but it gives three allusions to the Holy Ghost. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established, amen?

So we learned that the Holy Spirit is one of the main reasons why we are capable of living the good life. It is because He is "The Anointing" Whom God has poured out on us in such richness and extravagance! He is the One Who has filled these cups up and Who flows out of our bellies like rivers of living water! Yes, the good life is the anointed life – the life anointed by the Holy Ghost!

But we learned that the Hebrew word David used for "anoints" in Psalm 23:5 isn't the common word for anoint. This word described "to make fat, to thrive or to prosper." So we learned how this oil that our most gracious and honorable Host (the Lord of Hosts, that is) anoints our head with is poured out in such a "full, thriving, and prosperous" manner. In other words, He pours oil on our head *so abundantly* – thus the expression indicates an *abundance of oil*.

So one of our main takeaways last week is that one of the first things that the LORD wants you and I to experience when we come to His supper is this abundant anointing! Yes, He wants to pour out the Holy Spirit on us "fully & richly." Church, this is true prosperity! This is the abundant life! It's not just having more of the world's goods; it's having heavens goods! And the most invaluable resource of heaven that you and I have been freely given is the opportunity to be filled with His Holy Spirit. He is what our heavenly Host has honored us with in His house!

THE OVERFLOWING CUP

So, let's look back over and that last phrase of **Psalm 23:5**, which describes another facet of the good life that our Good LORD desires for us …

After being invited to the LORD's home for a spread like no other, the honored guest, having first been anointed with oil, is now sitting at the LORD's table and says, "My cup runs over!"

Now some translations say, "My cup overflows." The New Living Translation says, "My cup overflows with blessings." The Living Bible paraphrase says, "Blessings overflow." The Easy to Read says, "My cup is full and spilling over." The Aramaic Bible in Plain English says, "my cup overflows as if it were alive."

In fact, this Hebrew word that is used for "runs over" is only used in one other place in the Scriptures, and that is found at the end of **Psalm 66:12** when he says, *"But you brought us out to rich fulfillment."* describing how the LORD ultimately brings His people out of difficult places and into places of prosperity. Other translations call this place of "rich fulfillment" a *"wealthy place."*

So, the picture we have painted here is of a cup that is not just filled full to the brim, but it describes a cup that is actually overflowing and spilling over – a rich, abundance of drink! Hallelujah!

From a spiritual point of view, it describes having so much peace, joy, God's presence, etc., that you are more than fulfilled in your heart. It also is an allusion to the New Wine that has been poured into our cup in abundance – that is, the baptism with the Holy Spirit. But from a financial sense, it describes having "more than enough money" -- more than you need, more than you can spend, and extra to give. Whatever example you want to use – our cup running over describes a life spilling over with the goodness of God! Glory!

But you see, this was not just what God did for David, it is what Jesus came to provide for all of us! Let's go over to John chapter 10 and take a look at where Jesus describes to us what He came to do, giving us another description of this "cup running over" kind of life …

THE ABUNDANT LIFE

In **John 10:10** we have, what I believe to be, one of the most important truths that Jesus ever gave us concerning God's nature. He said, *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*

Now let me, first of all, make a quick point from this verse: From this very simple yet profound verse we can distinguish between what comes from God and what comes from the devil. Anything that has come to steal from us, to kill us, or to destroy the things in our lives is from the devil! Anything that has come to produce a better quality of life is from God. Now, of course, I need to qualify this. We need to define what is truly "a better quality of life" …

Does money necessarily improve the quality of your life? Most people would give a hearty "Amen!" to that question, but that is not exactly the case. Financial prosperity certainly can add to the quality of your life, but it is absolutely contingent upon the prosperity of your soul. If your soul is not full of peace and joy then money, nor any other natural blessing, will ever improve the quality of your life. But this also does not mean that having wealth is of the devil either, the love of wealth is what comes from the devil because covetousness takes away the life of its owner.

So, what I wanted us to see in this verse is that Jesus reveals to us a certain aspect of God's nature that is important for us to understand: Again, Jesus said, "but I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." So, Jesus said, "I have come – that they may have life…" Did He come? Yes! Then, you and I may have life! Amen!

Now as it is with salvation or any other provision given to us by God, it doesn't happen just because Jesus came. In other words, just because He came to provide it, doesn't mean it is automatically applied to our lives. No! This verse says, "that they *may* have life."

But notice that Jesus said He not only came to give us life, but He came to give us life *more abundantly*! This shows me that there are progressive qualities of life to be had. A Christian may have life, but we also may have it more abundantly.

Now the words "more abundantly" comes from the Greek word *perissos* which means "over, above and more than is necessary." Strong's says that it means "beyond, super-abundant in quantity, superior in quality and by implication, excessive." The Amplified Bible gives a great definition to this phrase; it defines it as "to the full, till it overflows."

So, you see, based on Psalm 23:5 and this verse we can clearly see God's true nature. **God's nature is to not only give us enough life, but to give us more than enough life!** This is always what He desires to do for us because He is an excessive God!

Allow me to show you several other biblical examples of this excessive nature that He possesses …

EL SHADDAI

Now the first name God ever used to reveal Himself to mankind described this very characteristic that we are talking about …

He appeared to Abram in **Genesis 17:1** and revealed one of His names as, "Almighty God." The Hebrew word that He used here was "El Shaddai." The word *Shaddai* was derived from the word *shad* which means "breast" and the word *el* which was a word that described God as mighty, strong, and powerful. So, when you combine these two words together, they describe God as the One who is able to supply and provide every need that we have. But if you look a little deeper into the meaning it carries the idea of Him being "All-Sufficient", or you could say, "more than enough!"

You see, God's nature is to not just be our sufficiency, but to be our all-sufficiency! In other words, His tendency is to not just meet our needs, but to meet them in abundance!

As Paul stated in **Philippians 4:19,** *"And my God shall supply all your need …"* But he didn't stop there: How does He meet all our need? It is *"according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus!"* Those two words "according to" make a big difference in the way we should look at this verse. If he would have said, "*out of* His riches in glory" that would mean He could supply them in any way. For example, if I supplied something to you "out of" my riches then that might mean I just gave you a twenty-dollar bill when I'm a multi-millionaire. But if I supply you "according to" my riches then that means I will supply you according to how wealthy I am. So, if I was a multi-millionaire then that would mean you would get a whole lot more than twenty bucks☺!

You see, this is the way God is! He supplies us with more than enough because His provision is not according to the world's system; it is according to His riches in glory! Hallelujah! That ought to make you shout! As I've heard my father in the faith, Andrew Wommack, say time and time again, "**God is El Shaddai, not El Cheapo!**" ☺ God is too much!

TOO MUCH!

But there is no greater example of God's true nature than in the life and ministry of Jesus:

Jesus said in **John 5:19,** *"Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."* He also said to Philip in **John 14:9**, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father."* In fact, the writer of Hebrews even described Jesus as the *"express image of His (God's) person"* (**Hebrews 1:3**). Therefore, we have three witnesses that clearly show us that Jesus fully expressed the nature of God while He was here with us. So, let's look at a few examples from His life that echo this "cup overflowing" life of God:

First of all, consider the miracles of Jesus multiplying the loaves and the fishes for the thousands. In both of these accounts (where He fed the 5,000 men & then the 4,000 men), we are told that they ate and were filled, and also took up twelve baskets full and seven baskets full, respectively, of leftover bread and fish (See **Mark 6:42-43** & **Mark 8:8**).

Now the catalyst for this miracle is clear: It was in Jesus blessing what they had and giving His Father thanks for it. This too is a catalyst for your miracle of provision – being thankful for and blessing what you have!

Now let me ask you a question: Did God miscalculate how many people there were? Did He just multiply some extra bread and fish in case there were more people than He anticipated? I think not!

How about In **Luke 5:1-10**, when Jesus called His fisherman to come follow Him? This was, of course, when Jesus used Simon Peter's boat to teach those following Him. So, in what was likely Jesus' blessing Peter for the use of His boat, He told him to *"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch"* (**Verse 4**). Then we are told that they caught such a great number of fish that their net was breaking. This resulted in Simon and his brother calling for their partners to come and help them and after they had come and filled both the boats, the boats began to sink.

So, we see here that this "net-breaking, ship-sinking" blessing to Simon Peter's business came as a result of his willingness to sow his resources into Jesus' ministry. In other words, he gave to Jesus' ministry in order for Him to minister to the people and he was repaid with this abundant catch of fish – showing us that another key to experiencing this "too much harvest" is sowing into the kingdom.

But again, let me ask you a question: Did the Lord know how much their nets would be capable of holding without breaking? Did He know how many fish both of their boats could hold without sinking? Sure, He did! He didn't just command as many fish as He could to come get in their nets. The Lord is much more specific and methodical than that. So, why did they have "too many" fish? It's because it is simply God's nature!

Let's look at one other example in the life of Jesus, because it correlates with this one we just looked at:

In **John chapter 21**, after Jesus was raised from the dead, He appeared to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, but they didn't recognize them. He speaks to them from the shore, asking them if they had caught anything. So, when they answered Him that they hadn't, He told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and they would find *some*. Now, the word "some" is not in the original text, and that is because they didn't wind up catching just *some*; we are told that they caught a *multitude*! In this case, they had to drag the net to land because it was full of 153 large fish. However, the net did not break! (see **John 21:1-11**)

Now the interesting part of this story to me is that they initially didn't recognize Him. For some reason, their eyes were constrained from knowing that it was Him just like those disciples on the Road to Emmaus. But it was when they experienced yet another miraculous catch of fish that they recognized Him, saying, "It is the Lord!" In other words, while they didn't recognize Him physically, **they recognized His goodness!**

This is yet another important key to experiencing El Shaddai's nature – recognizing His goodness! You see, we are transformed into what we behold. So, if we see His goodness, His love, His grace, etc., we will be changed into the same image from glory to glory! **Second Corinthians 3:13-18** teaches us this – that as Moses' face was transformed by beholding God's glory, we are also transformed from glory to glory by beholding His glory.

Well, we see from one of Moses' experiences with the Lord that when he desired for the Lord to show him His glory that the Lord told him that He would make all of His goodness pass before him (see **Exodus 33:18-19**) – equating God's glory with His goodness. Therefore, we could translate Second Corinthians 3:18 like so – "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror *the goodness* of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from *goodness* to *goodness*, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

So, it is apparent that this is God's nature – He is a too much, more than enough kind of God! So, let's look back at Psalm 23:5 and look again at this phrase we began with – "My cup runs over!"

Now a good question to ask here is: Like it was with the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and the miraculous catch of fish, does God know when the cup is full? Of course, He does! He is omniscient and, therefore, knows everything. So, why does He keep pouring? It is because it's His nature to be excessive! He just delights in continuing to pour☺! It is not His fault that our cups are as "dinky" as they are. He pours out as much as He desires to give, and it is our job to get a bigger cup to hold the excess. And then, of course, if we get one of those "big gulp" cups, He will still keep pouring. Why? Again, because it is His nature to keep pouring – but the bigger the cup, the more we can drink. It is just that simple. But we also have to realize that receiving from God is related to our being able to see God as the God of more than enough.

(Illustration done, pouring into a glass until the liquid poured over the top of the glass; then by showing four different glasses/cups that describe four categories of Christians: the first was a very small "shot glass" that describes "worldly Christians," a small, "sippy cup" describing "baby Christians," a regular sized, standard "solo cup" describing your average Christian, and a "Big Gulp Cup" describing the type of Christian we should all aspire to become)

So, there are many examples of this characteristic of God found throughout the Scriptures, but let's look at what I consider to be the greatest example of this we have …

OUR EXCESSIVE COVENANT

I believe the greatest example of God's excessive nature was demonstrated in this new and better covenant that we have today with God through Jesus Christ.

You know, the old covenant that Israel had seemed to me like it was good enough. For God to even provide a means for mankind to come into covenant with Him is amazing enough. He chose the nation of Israel as His own and gave them promises such as healing, prosperity, and protection. All He required of them was to keep their part of the covenant (which was keeping His law) and their promises of protection and provision stayed intact.

Now I understand that there were flaws in this covenant (as God did too), but my point is that even that covenant was more than Israel deserved. God would have been righteous to just say something like, "Well, since Adam blew it they are just going to have to make it on their own. I've already done all I'm going to do for them. I already gave them their one shot." But He didn't do that! He chose Israel and was gracious to them time and time again.

Being included in this original covenant would have been far more than we Gentiles could have ever dreamed. But, thank God, He didn't stop there …

He established a new covenant based upon better promises and made it available for anyone who will simply believe. And under this new and better covenant, we see God's tendency to be excessive. Not only did we obtain the benefits and promises that were given through the old covenant, we also got "much more." Here is a list of some of the extra benefits …

1. We have been given a new nature that puts God's law in our hearts and minds and inspires us to do those things which are pleasing in His sight!
2. We have God's Holy Spirit living on the inside of us to teach, strengthen, empower, and lead us!
3. We have been given God's very own righteousness freely!
4. We have been made a kingdom of kings and priests unto our God!
5. All of us are capable of knowing God personally and are able to boldly and confidently approach Him for ourselves!
6. Unlike the sacrifice's blood under the old covenant which only covered their sins, Jesus' blood has completely washed away our sins, never to even be remembered again!
7. Not to mention, the good life that He has prearranged for us to live that includes both natural and spiritual blessings that are overflowing!

And the list could go on and on … This is an excessive covenant! Amen!?!

Thus, the reason the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly (**Genesis 17:1-2**)!

CONCLUSION

But what I want you to take away from this today is that the reason why God is excessive like this, pouring out more than enough is not just so that we have "more for our four and our store." No, while God certainly loves it when we are blessed with an abundance, for it is written, the LORD has pleasure in the prosperity of His servants (Psalm 35:27), one of the main purposes with giving us more than enough is so that we have plenty to share!

For example, He wants you and I to be blessed in our finances so that we have the financial freedom to give. You see, if you and I are struggling to pay our bills and live under the stress of where the money will come from next month, then how are we going to be in position to help someone else pay their bills today? This is not God's best. The Word of God teaches us that the LORD wants to "make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." (Second Corinthians 9:8). Amen!

But this is not just limited to the financial arena … The LORD wants to give us more than enough in the spirit & soul so that we can share it with others too!

For example, if I have abundance of joy & peace, that will overflow into those around me! If I have more than enough love, then I can have more love to give to others! And drawing back to what we emphasized last week – If I am full of the New Wine, the Holy Spirit of promise, then I am going to be able to better share my salvation with others! The Holy Ghost is what enables me to share God's kingdom with others by laying hands on people, prophesying into their lives, etc. etc. etc.

Church, God's nature and will is to reveal Himself as El Shaddai to us and to multiply us exceedingly! He desires to keep pouring His goodness into our cups, and fill us with His life until we are overflowing! So, as the Psalmist said, *"Open your mouth wide and He will fill it"* (**Psalm 81:10**)! Amen and so be it!