

## THE PATH OF LIFE

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore". Psalms 16:11.

Life is universally desired. The desire to live is as deep as life itself. Every normal person wants to live. This fact is proved by the frantic struggles to maintain life, even in its most wretched conditions. Only when reason has lost its sway does the suicide do his work. And yet none of us can say what life is, or what electricity is. We see it, feel it and are conscious of it, but that is all. We know life only by its manifestations.

Enjoying and appreciating life as he did, the Psalmist had a personal consciousness of his relation to God as his Lord. This prevented him from turning aside after idols. God was his inheritance -- a portion awarded to him by supreme grace, and rich enough to satisfy all of his needs. This portion he found in fellowship with God, and in being constantly sustained by Him. This relationship carried with it all the elements of joy.

### I. A Pattern

"Thou wilt show me the path of life." This statement plainly implies that there are different paths, or courses of conduct, which are pursued by men. The guide to whom the Psalmist referred was God. This holy God is both able and willing to guide. To Moses He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Exodus 33:14). To the Psalmist God said, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalms 32:8). In Hebrews 13:5-6 we read, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

God is a perfect pattern and guide for every soul. He knows the way. He is acquainted with the goal. He knows how to reach it. Being the God of mercy, He will bless the merciful. Being the God of righteousness, He will guide aright in every relationship. Being the God of justice, He will justify all who will believe. Inasmuch as He is the God of joy, He will guide to happiness. He will never permit His own to suffer for the lack of that which is essential.

### II. A Pilgrim

"Thou wilt show me the path of life." All of us are alike in that we are pilgrims who are in need of the guidance of God. The Psalmist said, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Psalms 39: 12). We are pilgrims or travellers and are in need of a guide.

God has a purpose in and for every life. This purpose can be

discovered by those who earnestly seek it. It is possible for every pilgrim to find God's place for him in life.

### III. A Path.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life." If one were lost in a forest, surrounded by a multitude of enemies who were ready to take his life, and a guide appeared to him and offered to show him "the path of life," he most certainly would be followed eagerly. Even so, all of us are in a great forest of conflicts, doubts and uncertainties which not only perplex and annoy us, but also threaten to overwhelm us. Out of this darkness and confusion, like a flash of lightning at midnight, comes the cry of triumphant faith from the Psalmist, "Thou wilt show me the path of life." The path of life conducts us up a steep ascent.

The path of life has been pioneered by our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14: 6). He is the one and only way for the soul to get back to God and to enjoy His glorious presence and power. Before we can move along the path of life it is necessary that we be raised from a state of death in trespasses and sins into newness of life in Christ Jesus. Blessed be God for the path of life which He has opened in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the path of peace, patience, power and perfection. He is the way of self-denial, sacrifice, service and satisfaction. He will lead to light, life, liberty, love and loyalty. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

This word "life", as used in our text, has a rich and profound meaning. It means life in its truest sense and noblest form. This life is lived:

#### 1. In the shelter of God's power.

The Israelites were in God's keeping, and their enemies were powerless. In Psalm 106:8 we read, "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known." They were strong because around them by day and by night was the unconquerable power of God. Their history proved that as long as they trusted and obeyed God they were both safe and victorious, but when they forsook Him and allied themselves with other nations they experienced defeat.

#### 2. In accord with God's will.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,

and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, said the Lord Almighty" (2Corinthians 6: 14-18). The law of cause and effect is just as real in the spiritual realm as it is in the material.

3. In the riches of God's supply.

Everything that we can need at any time in life is included in the gift of Christ. Paul wrote, "But my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phillippians 4: 19). To be able to say, "My God," is better far than to say, "My millions," because we cannot reckon the riches of God by millions. His riches go beyond human powers of calculation. He will supply every need of yours.

4. In the light of God's presence.

Let God be first in your life. Let your greatest desire be that God shall be supreme in your life and work, and He will take care of you.

IV. A Prospect.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Our Lord prayed for His disciples that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly. In Christ there is full satisfaction of heart and life.

For what does one wish for more than joy? What measure of joy can anyone wish for more than fulness of joy? Such joy is found in the presence of God.

1. The source of lasting pleasures.

Lasting pleasures originate in a Person. God's answer to man's need in every respect is Christ. Christ is the source of lasting pleasures. Christ satisfied God the Father perfectly. Twice in the Gospels we read of occasions when God declared His pleasure in His Son. If Christ satisfied God perfectly, then Christ alone can satisfy the creatures of God's hand. Only in Christ can you ever be satisfied fully.

2. The secret of lasting pleasures.

It is only in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour and Lord that we can know life abundant. Cultivate fellowship with Christ in your daily life.

3. The sphere of lasting pleasures.

Outside the atmosphere and environment of Christ's presence the freshness and fulness of pleasures are lacking. Fulness of joy in Christ can be known only by practising His presence.

4. The supply of lasting pleasures.

"At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." God is the possessor of every good thing, and His right hand is the dispenser. Lasting pleasures are there for the taking. His right hand waits to bestow them lavishly upon all who are ready to receive. God has made available in Christ a joyfulness of life which transcends anything that this world affords.