

Sermon Notes

Unless the Lord Builds the House

Psalm 127

May 10, 2015

Introduction: Psalm 127—A Psalm of Ascents off/for Solomon

This is a glorious Psalm filled with reminders and encouragement, and one which calls us away from attitudes and behaviors we seem to be drawn toward. While we are called away from certain things, we are called back to the way we are supposed to order our lives: according to the Lord's provision and under His constant care. We need these gracious reminders for we can be a fretting, grasping, sleepless, and forgetful people.

Is this a Psalm of Solomon or for Solomon?

We can be fine with either. Either way, this Psalm arises out of the glories and the ashes of their lives. From the heights of this Psalm, we must remember that there are depths too. David had many wives and many sons, and this means that Solomon had many brothers from various mothers. Their home was a place of sin and strife. This Psalm keeps its eyes fixed up on the glory of the Lord's provision even while it stands hip-deep in their own sins.

127:1 *Unless the Lord builds the house...*

We should immediately think of two different houses: the _____, which is the house of the Lord, as well as our _____ homes. The one is attended to by the children of God, and the other is expected to be populated by little children. We are supposed to think of both houses, and know that neither can succeed without the Lord's blessing. What is mentioned three times in verses 1 & 2? _____

The fact that the Lord is building the house is not some kind of recipe (excuse) for doing nothing. We are to keep building the house and keep watching the city. We are to keep doing this while at the same time we are trusting that the Lord is *also* building and guarding. There is more than one builder, and there is more than one guard. Without the Lord's blessing, our every endeavor will fall. Without the Lord's work, we are nothing and our work is nothing.

This was true with the temple (Solomon); this is true with the church (1 Cor. 3:6); and this is true with our every employment and with our families. Some are so negligent that the house will fall, and others are so diligent that they forget the Lord, and the house will fall. The Lord does not here say, 'Stop working and trust Me.' Rather, He is saying, 'Keep working and trust Me.'

Still, there are other ways of staying busy and disregarding the Lord...

127:2 *It is vain for you to rise up early and sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows/anxiety*

This is *not* referring to those who must, at various times, get up before the birds start chirping, or need to stay up late (due to faithfulness) in order to take care of their work or serve others. This is not about mere clock watching. Instead, this is referring to those who are always up and down, unable to trust the Lord because they are so busy trusting themselves. Thus, these are those who eat the "bread of sorrows" (nothing is good enough!), and this is a raw case of forgetting the Lord. However, the Lord's "be-loved" are given sleep; they know that they are loved and that the Lord takes care of them.

127:3 *Children are given; they are a heritage from the Lord*

This is the usual way to view a house—with children present—and speaking of work (building and guarding), the house (home) with children is a place of great and demanding work. The great Baptist preacher, C. H. Spurgeon said it well

"He gives children, not as a penalty nor as a burden, but as a favor."

"Where society is rightly ordered children are regarded, not as an encumbrance, but as an inheritance; and they are received, not with regret, but as a reward."

127:4 *Like arrows in the hand of a warrior*

Children are usually given during one's youth so that they can be trained (even amidst the failures of young and learning parents), and so that they may be a comfort to their parents later.

Arrows are _____. As such, they are _____ of the warrior. These weapons are expected to go where the warrior cannot go, and they are designed to be _____. Such arrows required time and preparation, and there is (parental) rejoicing when they hit the mark/target. This is unapologetic warfare language, and this is because there is a battle; such arrows are to be shaped and crafted to go out into society, with the skill of the ways of the Word, and with the stealth of grace.

127:5 *Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them*

Any child is a blessing. This blessedness of many children is increased—and comes hand-in-hand—when the children are gracious. The Lord is not after mere numbers. Some quivers may be small, and still full. Covenant faithfulness requires more than procreation. We are to have arrows, not just sticks, "knotty and useless", and this will occur as the Lord is building and guarding.

In Conclusion

Fathers & mothers—trusting in the Lord

Work and the image of God

Children, a glorious gift and wondrous work (Psalm 144)

