

Marks Of Those Who Love The Lord

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation" (Psalms 91:14-16). The psalmist is distinguishing some of the characteristics of those who truly love God, and tells us what God will do for them. Let's consider five of them.

First, they have set their love upon the Lord (vs. 14). The Christian's heart has been turned away from the world and in the direction of God. Paul described the Thessalonians as those who had *"turned unto God from idols, to serve the living and true God"* (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). Thus, God's child has turned to Him, and away from sin (cf. Romans 6:17-18; Colossians 3:1-2). It is only when we have this understanding and, thus, this kind of commitment that we can be acceptable. Many people have a passing interest in Christ (Luke 8:11-14; Mark 7:6), but this is not enough. Those who love the Lord have set their love on Him (John 14:15; Matthew 22:37-39).

Second, they know His name (vs. 14). All of us know people whom we are very close to; our dear friends are people with which we have spent considerable time. They are ones we have tested and tried; their friendship has been proven. To know God is to trust Him, to believe Him. The psalmist says elsewhere, *"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee"* (9:10). Abraham knew God, he trusted Him (Romans 4:3; 17-23). On the other hand, the wicked do not know God, and they are cursed because of it: *"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider"* (Isaiah 1:3).

Third, they pray effectively (vs. 15). Those who love the Lord have the assurance that their prayers will be answered; they may confidently express their dependence on God. Some men, of course, God will not hear. *"The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous"* (Proverbs 15:29). Also, *"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination"* (Proverbs 28:9; cf. 1:24-31; Job 27:8-9). However, God's ears are open and receptive to His faithful followers. *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"* (1 Peter 3:12; Psalm 18:3, 6).

Fourth, the Lord is with them in trouble (vs. 15). Notice, they are not immune to trouble. We must see that there is actually some benefit to us when trouble arises (James 1:2-4). Trials serve to make our faith stronger, so we will have testing in this life. However, we have the assurance that God is with us in all our troubles. Psalm 46:1 says, *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."* *"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me"* (Hebrews 13:6; cf. Romans 8:31-39; Philippians 4:13).

Fifth, they will be saved (vs. 16). When God shows us His salvation, it will be worth it all. Paul said, *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* (2 Timothy 4:6-8; cf. 1 Peter 1:3-9; Luke 18:29-30). This salvation that is now possible for us is through Christ. Acts 4:12 says, *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* This salvation can set us free from sin, and can deliver us from the picture that is painted for us in Mark 9:43-44 and Revelation 20:10.

It is good to ponder this from time to time. What a wonderful description the psalmist gives us of those who love the Lord. The only way to receive these blessings is to obey God's commands. This includes hearing and believing what the Bible says (Hebrews 11:6), repenting or changing your heart towards sin (Acts 17:30), confessing Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:10), being baptized to take away your former sins (Acts 22:16) and remaining faithful to the Lord (Revelation 2:10). This is truly a straight and narrow way compared to what the world has to offer. It will be hard to do God's will sometimes; we will also stumble along the way. Yet, for the one who perseveres, a *"crown of life"* will be waiting for them.

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