Psalm 24 – Conditions for a Life of Being a Blessing

1. The Recognition of God as the Creator

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it; the world and all who live in it." (v. 1)

This begins with the reminder of the Majesty of the God we seek to know. He is the King of all Kings (presidents, prime ministers, rulers of all sorts of people) and the Lord of Lords.

2. The crucial question for us who seek Him

"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place?" (v. 3)

It is one thing to ascend – i.e. enter His presence in prayer – but it is another thing to be able to stand there. Even the Philistines knew this! They said, ***"Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this Holy God?"*** (1 Sam. 6:20) Col. 3:3 says, ***"For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."*** How we thank God for this!

3. Who can know a life of blessing?

- **"He who has clean hands"** (v. 4)

  We must put all known sin out of our lives. This is the practice of "putting straight" crooked ways as far as they concern our actions. ***"Touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*** (2 Cor. 6:17). It is interesting to compare this with Job 11:14-15, ***" … If you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then you will lift up your face without shame; you will stand firm and without fear."***

  See also Ps. 28:2, 6-7, ***"Hear my cry for mercy as I call to You for help, as I lift my hands towards Your most holy place." "Praise the Lord, for He has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield my heart trusts in Him. My heart leaps with joy and I will give thanks to Him in song!"***

- ***"He who has … a pure heart."*** (v. 4)

  Our hearts can't be purified by faith while our hands are clinging to any wrong practice. ***"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."*** (Mt. 5:8)

- ***"He who has not lifted up his soul to an idol."*** (v. 4)

  There must be a surrender of any desire for the empty fleeting things of earth before heavenly realities can increasingly be revealed. We can't cling to the Lord Jesus with both hands when they are filled with all sorts of other things.

- ***"He who does not swear by what is false."*** (v. 4)

  Here again we meet with **truth** as the condition of all spiritual blessing – absolute honesty both with God and with people. There must be no deceit towards God or a profession of surrender while keeping back the full price. Remember Acts 5:1-6. Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property. But they kept some of the money for themselves. They gave the rest of the money to the apostles giving them the impression that it was the full price they had received for the property. Peter said, ***"Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."***

  We can't deceive the Holy Spirit. There should be no dissimulation towards others – professing to be what we are not. We must always have "clean hands" – not touching anything known to be sinful. We must have a pure heart that is cleansed by the Holy Spirit from all sinful desires. By

surrendering our wills, we agree to forego seeking first the things of time and to seek true and honest dealings with God and with other people. This is how the writer of Psalm 24 sums up the conditions of ascending to dwell in the holy place of our Eternal God.

4. The assured blessing from God

- ***"He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Saviour."*** (v. 5) If we will fulfil God's conditions, the Lord will certainly fulfil His, ***"Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation".*** (Ex. 18:5)
- ***"He shall receive blessing from the Lord – righteousness from the God of his salvation."*** In other words he will receive righteous treatment from a faithful God. This is really a synonym of blessing! We need righteousness in order to stand in God's presence – not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, the only Righteous One. The robe of righteousness (Is. 61:10) is given to all who believe. ***"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."*** (Rom. 3:22)
- **He will be one of a new generation.**

  "Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face, God of Jacob." (v. 6)

  Gal. 4:4 says, ***"But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts – the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father'. So you are no longer a slave, but a son and since you are son, God has made you also an heir."***

  This is the highest place we can ever desire! We can be a person who knows the Lord face-to-face even as Moses did.

5. The revelation of the ascended Lord Jesus

- **The entry of the King** (v. 7-10)

  "Lift up your heads, O you gates, be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in. Who is He, this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates. Lift them up, you ancient doors that the King of Glory may come in. Who is He, this King of Glory the Lord Almighty He is the King of Glory."

  So the way to ascend into the holiest is now shown to us. The psalmist turns from giving us a list of practical conditions for a seeking soul to know the presence of God in his life, to the heavenly vision of the Lord Jesus who has gone before us and entered into the presence of God our Father. He is our forerunner bringing us in Himself back to God.

- **The Conqueror from Calvary** (v. 8)

  "The Lord strong and mighty in battle, the Lord mighty in battle!" Col. 2:15 puts it like this, ***"And having disarmed the powers*** (i.e. the spiritual forces of Satan) ***and the authorities"*** (possibly human but under the control of Satan who is constantly seeking to entice people to follow their false teaching.) This is a picture of conquered soldiers stripped of their clothes/armour and their weapons to symbolise their <u>total defeat</u>.

- **The Lord of Hosts** (v. 10)

  "Who is He, this King of Glory? The Lord Almighty, He is the King of Glory!"
  In the Old Testament 'the Lord Almighty' is used for the first time in 1 Sam. 1:3 (sometimes also called 'the Lord of Hosts') and it usually refers to angels. It implies the complete sovereignty of God over all the powers and influences in the universe. It implies a heavenly army.

Here are a few examples:

"The Lord came from Sinai and dawned over them from Mount Seir. He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from His mountain slopes." (Deut. 33:2)

" 'Neither', he replied, 'But as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come'. Then Joshua fell down on his face in reverence…." (Joshua 5:14)

"The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord has come." Ps. 68:17

So here the chariots of God are like a vast chariot force. In New Testament times the Lord Jesus referred to this host in terms of "legions" (Mt. 26:53)

"Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers!" (Heb. 2:11-13)