

## Psalm 112

5th Sunday, Year A

Evening Prayer II for 4th Sunday after Epiphany  
Evening Prayer II for Common of Pastors, Men Saints

This is an acrostic Wisdom psalm. It is to be prayed along with Psalm 111 (also acrostic), for it applies to humankind what was predicated of God in Psalm 111.

Statements of beatitude (compare Psalms 1, 32, and 41) contain, typically, two elements: they describe the recipient of God's blessing (verse 1), and they declare that everything goes well for such a person (verse 5).

Happy is the person who fears YHWH, and walks in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.

– Psalm 128:1-2

You who fear YHWH, wait for his mercy ...  
trust in him and your reward will not be lost ...  
hope for good things, for lasting joy and mercy.

– Sirach 2:7-9

Verse 1 makes it clear that fear of YHWH is seen in obedience:

Those who fear YHWH do not disobey his words,  
and those who love him keep his ways.

– Sirach 2:15

The rest of the psalm will focus on showing God's compassionate care for those in need. In this way, above all, we are 'holy as God is holy' (Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7).

The opening reference to the 'fear of YHWH' picks up the theme of the previous psalm:

The fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good understanding.  
His praise endures forever.

– Psalm 111:10

**<sup>1</sup>Praise YH\* [Hal'êlû Yâ]!**

**[ח] Happy\* is the person  
who fears\* YHWH,**

**[ז] who is enthusiastic  
about his commandments.**

**<sup>2</sup> [ז] The descendants of  
such a one will be mighty  
in the land.**

Living a good life

**[𐤇] The descendants  
of the upright\* will be  
blessed\*.**

<sup>3</sup> **[𐤇] Wealth and riches  
are in their houses,**

**[𐤇] and their righteous-  
ness\* endures forever.**

<sup>4</sup> **[𐤇] Rising like the dawn  
in the darkness, as a light  
for the upright\*,**

**[𐤇] is the Gracious\* One,  
the One who is tenderly  
compassionate\*, the  
Righteous\* One.**

<sup>5</sup> **[𐤇] All goes well for  
those who deal gener-  
ously and lend**

**[𐤇] who conduct their af-  
fairs with justice.**

‘Righteousness’ refers to behaviour that is consistent with one’s position in society. In wisdom literature the accent is on moral rectitude, referred to here as being ‘upright’. the focus is on almsgiving:

Almsgiving atones for sin.

– Sirach 3:30

Almsgiving will rescue you from every disaster.

– Sirach 29:12

Almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going into the Darkness. Indeed, almsgiving is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High.

– Tobit 4:10-11

A day is dawning when the just person will receive a favourable verdict and be liberated.

YHWH, in the morning hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case to you, watching and waiting.

– Psalm 5:3

I shall behold your face; when I awake I shall be satisfied, knowing that you have appeared.

– Psalm 17:15

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

– Isaiah 58:10

There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

– Isaiah 9:1

For you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.

– Malachi 4:2

God will rise up and ensure justice for the righteous.

YHWH is gracious and tenderly compassionate.

– Psalm 111:4

They are ever giving liberally and lending, and their children will be blessed.

– Psalm 37:26

Some give freely, yet grow all the richer; others withhold what is due, and only suffer want.

– Proverbs 11:24

The righteous will never falter.

– Proverbs 10:30

The righteous will never be uprooted.

– Proverbs 12:3

Origen refers to the words of Jesus:

The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds  
blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall,  
because it had been founded on rock.

– Matthew 7:25

Do not be faint-hearted or fearful at the rumours  
heard in the land.

– Jeremiah 51:46

The human heart that imitates God will share in  
God's steadfastness.

<sup>6</sup> [כ] For the righteous\* will  
never falter;  
[ל] they will be remembered  
forever.

<sup>7</sup> [כ] They are not afraid of evil  
tidings,

[כ] their hearts\* are firm, secure  
in YHWH.

<sup>8</sup> [כ] Their hearts\* are steady,  
they are not afraid;

[ז] in the end they will look in  
triumph on their foes.

The righteous participate in the generosity of  
YHWH.

Happy are those who are kind to the poor.

– Proverbs 14:21

Those who are kind to the needy honour their  
Maker.

– Proverbs 14:31

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to YHWH, and  
will be repaid in full.

– Proverbs 19:17

Those who are generous are blessed.

– Proverbs 22:9

Give alms from your possessions, and do not let  
your eye begrudge the gift when you make it.  
Do not turn your face away from anyone who  
is poor, and the face of God will not be turned  
away from you. If you have many possessions,  
make your gift from them in proportion; if few,  
do not be afraid to give according to the little you  
have.

– Tobit 4:7-8

<sup>9</sup> [ע] They have distributed  
freely, they have given to the  
poor;

[ז] their righteousness\* en-  
dures forever,

[ז] their horn is exalted in  
honour.

Be compassionate

Psalm 112:9 is quoted by Paul:

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.

– 2Corinthians 9:6-11

We recall also Jesus' words:

Be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

– Luke 6:36

<sup>10</sup> [𐤒] **The wicked are angry on seeing it;**

[𐤔] **they gnash their teeth and they are eaten away;**

[𐤒] **the ambition of the wicked will come to nothing.**

See Jesus parables about the Last Judgment, that is to say, about what ultimately matters in our lives (Matthew 25). There, too, there will be 'gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 25:30). Contrast the following:

A desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

– Proverbs 13:12