

Psalm 15 – The Resume for God’s Presence

Intro:

1) Resume

- a. When you apply for a job, you often submit a resume
- b. Why?
 - i. Employers don’t just want to know that you only *showed up* to the interview – they want to know what QUALIFIES you for the job/task
 - 1. The right qualifications can get you through the doors and into the position

2) Psalm 15 reads like a resume checklist – a job’s requirements list

- a. Not for a job, but for life lived in the presence of God
- b. Notice the opening questions David asks – V1
 - i. Abide – to sojourn, to settle, to take up one’s abode, to turn aside (from the road) for the purpose of finding a lodging
 - ii. Tabernacle – the tent of God
 - 1. The tent-like structure which represented God’s dwelling place among His people as they journeyed to the promised land (Ex. 25-40)
 - a. Ex. 25:8
 - 2. The tabernacle represented the centrality of God’s presence in the lives of His people
 - a. Tabernacle was literally in the middle of Israelite life when stationery and when marching
 - i. Numb. 2:1-2, 17
 - 3. Tabernacle reminded the people of God that if God did not go with them, they would never make it to the Promised Land
 - iii. Dwell – to reside, to remain
 - iv. Holy hill – a place set apart, a place consecrated and dedicated to the Lord
 - 1. Some would argue this refers to Jerusalem, where at the time of David, the ark of the covenant was brought
 - a. Jerusalem sits on a series of ridges in the central hill country of Israel – about 2,500 ft above sea level
 - b. The city itself is surrounded by valleys
 - i. (Kidron, Hinnom)
 - c. Literally – when one would go to Jerusalem, they would have to “go up”
 - 2. Some argue this “holy hill” is a reference back to Eden which, as we infer, was on a hill
 - a. Reason – one river flowed into it and 4 rivers flowed out of it, making it have some sort of elevation
 - b. Some assume the Eden reference because that is the place where God’s presence dwelt with man 1st

3) Any way you interpret these questions – its clear that David longs for the presence of God

- a. Actually – Psalm 15 is a recorded conversation David has toward God manifesting his desire for intimacy, nearness, and communion with God

4) The questions David raise here are not just superficial questions about who may enter Jerusalem to worship – it's a bigger question of what kind of people get to experience living in the nearness of God

- a. The words “abide” and “dwell” point deeper than a mere visit to the tabernacle, it infers a life settled there – hard to do if you are just visiting for worship
- b. “Dwelling” – isn't just about a visit to a place of worship – it's language of permanent fellowship with God
 - i. It's covenantal language of closeness
 - ii. Speaks of long-term residence in God's presence, not a temporary visit
 - iii. The language is not speaking of a one-time worship event, but about ongoing fellowship with God

5) V1 outlines for us this great longing to know – what are the requirements of one who gets to experience the nearness of God in life

6) In our modern world, where appearance often matter more than authenticity – Psalm 15 cuts through the noise and reminds us that God isn't impressed with surface-level religion.

- a. David knew God draws close to those who walk the talk
- b. This Psalm encourages us to examine our lives and ask – Do I live the kind of life that reflects the nearness of God?
 - i. Do I live in a way which says – I truly want to dwell with God?

7) Sermon – the resume for God's presence

- a. Explain – Omnipresent Vs experienced, manifested presence of God
- b. Text: Psalm 15

Character – V2

- 1) Notice the very first qualifications mentioned are all speaking about the inside
- 2) Fascinating about the words – the three phrases in V2 are stated in the active participle in Hebrew
 - a. Meaning – this is to be the on-going lifestyle, not a one-time deed
 - b. Participle points to a continued action, could say – habitual action
 - i. The person who experiences the nearness of God is one whose lifestyle reflects these qualities regularly
- 3) Breakdown the qualifications
 - a. Walk uprightly
 - i. Walk – to go or come, figuratively indicates the characteristics of one’s lifestyle
 1. How one is living
 2. Metaphor for one’s daily life – Mic. 6:8
 - ii. Uprightly – to live in full dedication to God
 1. Root – complete, to be whole, to be innocent
 2. Words does not mean sinlessly perfect, but rather a whole-self dedication to God
 - a. An undivided loyalty to the Lord
 3. Levitical term – without blemish – Lev. 1:3
 - a. In other words – dedicated sacrificially to the Lord
 - b. Work righteousness – to do what’s right
 - i. Work – to do, to make
 - ii. Righteousness – to do the right thing morally and legally
 1. Physical sense – something straight as opposed to crooked
 2. Term applied to weights and measures – Lev. 19:35,36
 - iii. To do what is right – means a life conformed to God’s moral will, expressed in a just dealing with others
 - c. Speaks the truth in his heart
 - i. Speaks – general word for “say”
 1. Refers to mental or oral communication
 - ii. Truth – reliability, faithfulness, genuineness – God’s truth
 - iii. Heart – the inner self, inner person
 1. Stresses sincerity – not just outwardly, saying the right thing, but inward authenticity
 2. Addresses both the mouth and the mind

4) To experience the life of nearness to God's presence we must do, think, and say that which is right

- a. Biblical faith is a faith of what is true and right – not prideful living, submitted living
- b. In David's time – Israel's neighbors often approached their gods with rituals, heartless offerings, and incantations
 - i. What David is revealing here is counter-cultural
 - 1. The Lord requires integrity and inner truthfulness
- c. These qualifications require both Godly moral value and Godly moral duty

5) Notice – over the next couple verses you'll read some qualifications stated in the positive and others in the negative

- a. V2 gives us a foundation of positive markers – here's what you should be doing
 - i. An acceptable life is one marked by character, righteousness, and truth
- b. The structure of V2 shows that dwelling with God is not about ritual access but about a transformed way of life

6) The first qualification is a character that is conformed by the Word and Will of God

- a. Addresses who you really are, not who you put on to be

Conversation – V3

1) “God is intolerant of those who maliciously destroy others with their speech” – Holman

- a. Ps. 101:5a – “Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off...”
- b. Truth - God takes what we say seriously

2) Notice – now we get into the negative qualities – meaning those things we are to AVOID

- a. Backbiting, evil to others, reproaching others

3) Once again we have 3 participle clauses – perfect tense

- a. Indicates a completed action often with present results

4) Breakdown of qualifications

- a. Does not backbite with his tongue
 - i. Backbite – to slander
 - 1. Main idea – to go about as a slanderer, a talebearer
 - a. Suggests malicious gossip or spreading damaging reports
 - b. This was such a big deal in Israel because backbiting could ruin another persons reputation and even threaten their standing in the community
 - 2. Translated mostly as “spies” or “spy out”
 - a. Conveys idea of spying – to go about sneakily
 - i. Possibly even - speaking privately like as a spy
 - ii. This type of activity was strictly prohibited by God – Lev. 19:16a
 - iii. Rom. 1:30 names the backbiter among those who live a life of sin-fill unrighteousness
 - iv. Remember – Devil (diablos) means slanderer
 - b. Doeth evil to his neighbor
 - i. Evil – wicked, injury, translated hurt 10xs
 - 1. Essentially – does his neighbor harm
 - ii. Idea – doing unjust or harmful actions toward a fellow Israelite
 - iii. To do your neighbor harm would be to treat them opposite of how God desires you to treat them – Lev. 19:18 (9-18)
 - c. Take up reproach
 - i. Take up – bear, carry, lift
 - ii. Reproach – scorn, insult, disgrace
 - iii. Not carrying or lifting up an insult against another
 - 1. Meaning not spreading or entertaining accusations that dishonor

5) Notice these prohibitions focus on speech

- a. Emphasizing - The person who experiences nearness and fellowship with God will refrain from harming others in speech
- b. In other words – Gossip and praise do not belong on the same lips

Companionship – V4

1) “This is a picture of one who grieves over evil, despises wickedness, and is committed to doing and upholding what is right, no matter the cost.” – D. Akin

- a. Notice these qualifications center around others – companionship
- b. Idea – here’s who you shouldn’t and should keep company with

2) Breakdown of qualifications

- a. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned
 - i. Vile person – one who is rejected, despised
 - ii. Contemned – rejected, despised, show contempt
 - iii. Phrase is not speaking about hating people personally, but to rejecting the lifestyle of those who are rejected (wicked)
 - iv. Idea – a person who is ungodly is not to be embraced as an influencer in your life
- b. Honors them that fear the Lord
 - i. Honor – to be heavy, weighty, glorified, to give esteem
 - ii. Idea – the person who experiences the nearness of God will be found near others who seek nearness to God
- c. Swears to his own hurt and changes not
 - i. Idea – he keeps his word, even when it is hard to do so
 - 1. Even when the promise may be bring personal disadvantages
 - ii. Swear – making an oath, making a binding promise
 - iii. Own hurt – to break, dash to pieces, distressed
- d. Changes not – remains firm, doesn’t go back on his word

3) Again – this was a counter-cultural statement David is making

- a. He was surrounded by cultures in which alliances, friendships, and commitments often shifted with convenience or political advantages
- b. In God’s society – oath taking was a serious matter, one you should live up to
 - i. Numb. 30:2
 - ii. James 5:12

4) Takeaway

- a. Be discerning in your relationships
 - i. Righteousness involves valuing what God values
 - ii. Implication – we refrain from ungodly influence and embrace those who are godly
 - 1. Case study – Ps. 1
- b. This is vital for us today – we live in a culture which idolizes and admires the ungodly
 - i. Celebrity culture, influencers, leaders, movie stars
 - ii. V4 edifies us not to join in the admonition of those who reject God, but rather esteem those who walk with God

Compassion – V5a

1) One who experiences the nearness and fellowship of God does not take advantage of others, but is moved, out of compassion, to help other

- a. In other words – for the Godly, people are more important than the dollar

2) Breakdown of qualities

- a. Put out his money to usury
 - i. Lend money with interest
 - ii. The OT forbade charging interest to fellow Israelites in need
 - 1. Ex. 22:25, Lev. 25:36,37, Deut. 23:19,20
 - 2. It was seen as taking advantage of others
 - iii. Lending was supposed to help not hurt others and expose their vulnerabilities
 - iv. Interesting – term interest lit. means – “a bite”
 - 1. Conveys idea that interest to those in need was seen as “biting” (exploiting) them
 - v. Don’t view/use others misfortunes as an opportunity for making a profit off them
 - 1. In Israel’s agrarian society, the poor often borrowed money for survival
 - a. God’s law protected them from being exploited through high interest like the surrounding nations
- b. Take a reward against the innocent
 - i. Reward – bribe – a gift given to twist justice
 - 1. God repeatedly condemned this – Ex. 23:8, Deut. 16:19
 - ii. Innocent – someone free of guilt, free of blame
 - iii. To take/give a bribe against the guiltless was the opposite of seeking justice
 - 1. Taking a bribe or giving a bride was seen as perverting justice and undermined the legal system

3) One who lived in the presence of God was one who sought justice and righteousness in all areas, not just in the convenient areas

Closing**1) If you haven't notice yet – all these qualities are counter-cultural – they went against the pagan nations around them**

- a. This, in essence, was what it mean to live holy in a practical sense
 - i. It was living out God's Word in a world set against God's Word
- b. Notice – those who did this experienced the nearness and fellowship of God

2) Notice the outcome – V5b

- a. Moved – to slip, fall, totter, stagger
- b. This is a strong Hebrew idiom for stability, security, and permanence
- c. The outcome here is one who is truly anchored in God

3) The outcome begs the question – from what shall one not be moved from?

- a. Ans – V1 – the nearness and fellowship of God
- b. Write down – Prov. 10:30

4) Ultimately – you look at these verses and might lose hope

- a. There's no way I can live that way
- b. Or – I've already messed up too much
- c. Reality – these are verses which can only be met in the grace and mercy of God through Jesus
 - i. You draw near in access to God – NOT by your own works, but by the words of another
 - ii. Jesus rent the veil, not you
- d. These verses glorify Jesus – if you want to draw near – do so in Jesus