

June 16, 2013 by Steve Brandon



Blessed Fathers

Psalm 128

1. Fear the LORD (verses 1-4)
2. Seek His Blessing (verses 5-6)

For the past month and a half, we have been looking at the Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120-134). These were the songs that Israel sang as they made their pilgrimage up to Jerusalem to worship three times a year, according to the command of God. My hope in preaching through these Psalms is that God will help us in our worship. We are dealing with themes pertinent to preparing our hearts for worship. May the Lord help us to apply them.

So far, we have looked at six of these Psalms: 120, 121, 122, 124, 125, and 127. We have nine more to go. They have been a blessing to me. I trust that they have been a blessing to you as well.

As you know, we aren't taking these Psalms in order. Rather, we are bouncing around, taking them Sunday by Sunday according to an appropriate theme of the day. This Sunday is Father's Day. It's a day set apart by Hallmark I mean, our nation, to honor our fathers. It is good for us this morning to honor our fathers. It is good for you to do something this day with your fathers, whether that's dinner or a ball game or a phone call or an exchange of some type of gift. It is all profitable and God-pleasing. Exodus 20:12 says, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you."

My message this morning is addressed to fathers, though, I thoroughly believe that it will be helpful to all of you, whether or not you are a father.

Psalm 128 is very appropriate for us to look at this Father's Day. On the one hand, it is a general Psalm with principles that apply to everyone. Verse 1 says, "How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD." That's a principle that all of us can apply in our lives. But, as you work through the Psalm, you see that it is especially focused upon fathers. It speaks of those who work. It speaks of those who have wives. It speaks of those who have children. You put these things together and you see that it addresses fathers.

Now, Psalm 128 gives us a picture of the blessed life. Four times in this Psalm, the word, "blessed" is used. In verse 1: "How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD." In verse 2: "When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, You will be happy" Here, "happy" is the same word as is used in verse 1. The ESV translates this, "You will be blessed." In verse 4: "Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed". And, finally, in verse 5: "The LORD bless you from Zion."

You put these two things together -- "fathers" and "blessing" -- and you come up with the title of my message: "Blessed Fathers." This Psalm gives us a picture of the blessed father. He will enjoy the fruit of his work (verse 2); will enjoy the companionship of his wife (verse 3); will enjoy the presence of his children (verse 3); will enjoy the fellowship of his community (verse 5); will enjoy the sight of his grandchildren (verse 6).

In many ways, Psalm 128 is like Psalm 127. Both of these Psalms speak about the family. Both of them speak of the home (Psalm 127:1) and of work (Psalm 127:2) and of children (Psalm 127:3-4) and of blessing (Psalm 127:5).

Both of these Psalms are like the Proverbs. If either of these Psalms had been placed in the book of Proverbs, it would be difficult to argue that they should be Psalms, instead. They both speak wisdom about the family. They both speak wisdom about godly parents. The book of Proverbs is full of such wisdom.

At this point, I must point out that the blessings of Psalm 128 aren't the guarantee of every godly father. These blessings aren't the guarantee of every father who fears the LORD. But, it is the norm for godly fathers. It is the regular experience for those who fear the LORD.

These words are like the Proverbs. They give general truths, which make for patterns of life, but are not necessarily true in every circumstance. In general, the godly are blessed. Their children will make them glad (Prov. 10:1). They will not know hunger (Prov. 10:3). They walk securely (Prov. 10:9). Their desire will be granted (Prov. 10:24). They life will be lengthened (Prov. 10:27). They will speak wisdom (Prov. 10:31). They will be rescued from death (Prov. 11:4) and trouble (Prov. 11:8). They will be a blessing to their community (Prov. 11:11).

But, not in every case. Godly men can have children who give them heartache. Case in point: David (2 Samuel 15). Godly men will not have their every desire answered. Case in point: the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 12). Godly men will not always be rescued from death and trouble. Case in point: Jesus Christ (Mark 11-16).

But, this is how the Proverbs work. They are general truths which speak about the general way that life works. The exception proves the rule. For every godly man who has children who have gone astray, I can give you ten examples of those with children who make their hearts glad. For every godly man who lives in poverty, I can give you ten examples of those who abound in prosperity. For every godly man who dies young, I can give you ten examples of those who have lived to a ripe old age.

I say all of that in the event that there is a godly, God-fearing man among us who doesn't know all of these blessings. I say all of this in the event that you encounter a godly, God-fearing man who doesn't know all of these blessings. You are not to judge them, nor doubt them. It may be that they are the exception.

However, every godly, God-fearing father will long for the blessings of Psalm 128. They will long to enjoy their work (verse 2). They will long to enjoy the relationship with their wives (verse 3). They will long to enjoy seeing their children develop (verse 3). They will long to enjoy a healthy community (verse 5). They will long to see their grandchildren (verse 6).

How many of you fathers would love nothing more than to know these blessings in your life? I trust that all of you would.

Enough of my introductory comments. Let's look at Psalm 128.

Psalm 128
How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
Who walks in His ways.
When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands,
You will be happy and it will be well with you.
Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
Within your house,
Your children like olive plants
Around your table.
Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.
The LORD bless you from Zion,
And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
Indeed, may you see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel!

Here's my first point. Blessed Fathers, ...

1. Fear the LORD (verses 1-4)

See it there in verse 1?

Psalm 128:1
How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,

It's repeated again in verse 4, ...

Psalm 128:4
Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.

Indeed, this is the theme of the Psalm. The man who fears the LORD will be blessed. Let that sink deep into your hearts: The man who fears the LORD will be blessed. In fact, let's say it again, together. The man who fears the LORD will be blessed.

Note, that this isn't a command. The Psalmist isn't telling us here to fear the LORD. Rather, he's simply making an observation. The man who fears the LORD will be a blessed man. By extension, the father who fears the LORD will be a blessed father.

In this way, it's a bit like the Beatitudes. In His famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said things like this, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ... Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt 5:3, 5-6).

These sorts of statements aren't commands. Jesus doesn't command us to be poor in spirit. He merely says that those who are poor in spirit will be blessed, by obtaining the kingdom of heaven. Jesus doesn't command us to be gentle or to hunger and thirst for righteousness. He merely says that such people will be blessed.

However, you can feel the imperatival force. You can feel the command in these words. Seek poverty of spirit and you will be blessed. Seek gentleness and you will be blessed. Seek to hunger and thirst for righteousness and you will be blessed.

So likewise here in Psalm 128. We aren't here commanded to "fear the LORD." It's simply an observation that blessings will come to "everyone who fears the LORD." But, you can feel the imperative: "fear the LORD." If you fear the LORD, blessings will come upon your life.

Throughout the Bible, we have many commands to fear the LORD. They come from various sources. Deuteronomy 6:13 says, "You shall fear the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name." Moses told Israel, "Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?"

(Deuteronomy 10:12). David wrote, "For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He also is to be feared above all gods" (1 Chronicles 16:25). Solomon wrote, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil" (Proverbs 3:7).

This wasn't merely an Old Testament thought. This idea carries over to the New Testament as well. Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Paul said, "Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). Peter said, "Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17).

Psalms 128 says it this way, Blessed Fathers are those who ... Fear the LORD (verses 1-4). You might ask, "What exactly does this mean?" I believe that we have a working definition given right here in the Psalm. Verse 1, ...

Psalm 128:1
How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
Who walks in His ways.

When you fear the LORD, you will walk in His ways. You will believe what He says. You will act on His word. You will do as He dictates. You will go where He directs. You will obey His voice. You will follow His commands. You will live your life in submission to Him! God will be the most important One in your life.

When you fear the LORD, You have come to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. You know that in Jesus Christ, you have been forgiven of your sin. You know that by faith alone in Him, you have been reconciled to God. You know that He paid for your redemption upon the cross. You will stand someday before the LORD, complete in Christ. Your heart's desire is to love and serve Him. And so, you "walk in His ways" (verse 1).

Why do you do these things? Because you fear the LORD. You know that He is the ultimate authority of the universe. He holds the judgment in His hands. He is to be feared above all gods. But, you also know He has been kind to you in Jesus. And you can say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

Some of those blessings come in verses 2 and 3. In fact, I see three of them. First of all,

a. Your work (verse 2)

It's right there in verse 2, ...

Psalm 128:2
When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands,
You will be happy and it will be well with you.

One of the blessings of fearing the LORD is joy in the fruit of your work. In other words, you will be enabled to really enjoy the product of your hands. Ever since the fall of Adam, our work has been cursed. God has made it difficult.

God said to Adam, ...

Genesis 3:17-19
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying,
'You shall not eat from it';
Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.
Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;
By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return."

Now, it's not that work is bad. Nor is it that work is sinful. Adam was given work of cultivating and keeping the garden before the fall (Genesis 2:15). It's just that work was made more difficult after the fall. Whereas Adam didn't have to work too hard for his food, we do. Whereas Adam didn't have to deal with thorns and thistles, we do. Whereas Adam didn't have to sweat for his food, we do.

But, for those who fear the LORD, our work can be redeemed. We can work long and hard, but, in the end, we can rest in the LORD. We can truly enjoy the produce of our labor.

Proverbs 15:16 says it well, "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord Than great treasure and turmoil with it." When you fear the LORD, you can be content with your labor, whether you are wildly successful in your occupation or whether you are just getting by. When you know that you have served the LORD in your work, you will be able to enjoy what you have and sleep well at night.

Fathers, I know that many of the hours of your day are given to work. These hours can lead you to frustration. Or, these hours can lead to your happiness. These hours can be spent in vain. Or, these hours can come to be a great blessing to you.

Please understand God's role in your work. We read in Psalm 127:2, "It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved [even in his] sleep." It's no good to work hard and lack sleep and always be tired. You will never enjoy your work this way.

But, when you realize that God is the One who prospers our work, and God is the One who frustrates our work, then you will realize the importance of fearing Him in your work. And the promise here of verse 2 is of God's blessing upon those who fear Him. So, work hard, men; but work with the fear of the LORD upon your heart. And it will be well with you.

This is the heart of the apostle Paul, who wrote to slaves. His words can equally be applied to breadwinners today. "Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord" (Col 3:22).

Men -- fathers -- work with the fear of the Lord in your hearts. Don't merely work to punch your time clock. Don't merely work when your boss is looking. Don't merely work to satisfy your boss. No, go further than that. Fear the Lord and work for Him. That's how Paul continues, ...

Colossians 3:23-25

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

And God's promise to those who fear the Lord and work for him is a happy, contented enjoyment of the fruit of your labors (Psalm 128:2).

Well, that's the first blessing the Psalmist gives in verses 2 and 3. Your work (verse 2) The second comes in verse 3, ...

2. Your wife (verse 3a)

Look at the first half of verse 3, ...

Psalm 128:3

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
Within your house,

The Psalmist here gives a picture of a fruitful vine. It is like a plant, firmly rooted in the ground, overflowing with produce. In our home, we have a very modest garden in a raised bed. In it we have a few tomato plants. Above them is an intricate web of string, up which the tomatoes might climb. Over the course of the summer, these few tomato plants begin growing right up onto the web, producing many tomatoes which we get to enjoy over the course of the summer.

This is the picture used here in verse 3 of the wife of the blessed father. Her branches reach out and produce much fruit, which he gets to enjoy. It comes as a blessing to him.

The fruitfulness of a wife goes far beyond mere child-bearing. I believe that Proverbs 31 gives a good picture of the sort of fruitfulness that verse 3 is getting at. She isn't an idle busy-body (Prov. 31:27). Rather, she works hard to provide for her house (Prov. 31:11). She works with her hands to provide for those in the house (Prov. 31:13). She brings in her food from afar (Prov. 31:14). She earns enough extra money to buy a field and have a garden of her own (Prov. 31:16). She has enough left over to give to the poor (Prov. 31:20). She clothes her household with coverings to protect from the cold of winter (Prov. 31:21). She sells garments as a side business (Prov. 31:24). "She smiles at the future" knowing that her family is on a good path (Prov. 31:25). "The teaching of kindness is on her tongue" (Prov. 31:26).

I'm so thankful to have a wife like this. Yvonne serves our family so well. She is far more than I deserve. She's always working hard to make our home comfortable and attractive. In recent days she has been outside working on some landscaping projects, getting dirty and working very hard. The other day she came in after a day's work very sore and zapped of energy. I'm grateful to the LORD to have such a wife as her. The fruit of her labor is enjoyed by me and all our household.

My heart resonates with the last few verses of Proverbs 31, ...

Prov. 31:28-30

Her children rise up and bless her;
Her husband also, and he praises her saying:
"Many daughters have done nobly,
But you excel them all."
Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,
But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

Now, I don't think that it's an accident that the "fear of the LORD" is mentioned in Proverbs 31, of the virtuous wife and mother. The blessed father fears the LORD. The assumption of Psalm 128 is that his wife follows suit. And you then have a family that rests in the fear of the

LORD.

Proverbs 14:26 tells us that, "In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge." This is a big way that a God-fearing wife will bear fruit -- in the lives of her children.

And here we see the third blessing noted in Psalm 128 of the blessed man.

c. Your children (verse 3b)

The second half of verse 3 reads like this, "Your children like olive plants Around your table" (Psalm 128:3). Again, the picture is from agriculture.

An olive plant is big, gnarly tree. They are very hardy, being drought-, disease-, and fire-resistant. An olive tree can live for many, many years. Their roots are very robust and can regenerate the tree even if everything above the ground is destroyed. "The older the olive tree, the broader and more gnarled the trunk becomes." [\[1\]](#)

In our climate, we don't have olive trees. So, I thought that I would give you a picture of what they look like. I have here a picture of some olive trees taken from the Mount of Olives, where most believe the Garden of Gethsemane to be. It has been conjectured that some of these trees were old enough to hear the prayers of Jesus in that place.

Picture with me a man and woman who fear the LORD. Picture their house. The LORD is honored. The LORD has priority in all things. Picture their table. The children are all gathered around it, like strong and hearty olive trees. How did the children become such robust trees? The children are taught the ways of God.

And the words of Deuteronomy 6 come true. Moses tells the Israelites, ...

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

These words speak about how the father and mother both fear the LORD (Deut. 6:2). And that fear translates into total love for Him, with all of heart, soul and might (Deut. 6:5). As a result, they spend time teaching their children the ways of God, talking of the LORD day and night, when rising or retiring, in season and out of season. Church family, never under-estimate what such a practice might mean for your home.

Some time ago, I wrote a little article entitled, "Is Family Worship Practiced in Your Home?" In that article I tell the story of being in a bookstore and viewing a book that intrigued me. It was entitled, "Thoughts on Family Worship" by J. W. Alexander. I had never heard of J. W. Alexander. Neither had I heard of "Family Worship," though I had some inkling of what it meant. As a man who was recently married and beginning my own family, I was intrigued. So I purchased it and read it and began to practice Family Worship in our home soon thereafter. Family worship has been practiced in our home ever since.

The book has made such an impact on me and on our family, that I will never forget the day I picked it up. It was almost exactly 19 years ago -- the last Sunday in June, 1994. I will never forget where it was that I picked up the book.

So, what is Family Worship? It's simply gathering the family together in your home and worshiping the LORD. Singing, Bible reading, praying. It's that simple.

It doesn't have to be long. It can take five minutes. It can take fifteen minutes. It can take half an hour.

In our home, the exact form this has taken has varied with the age and number of our children. Before children, it was Yvonne and I reading and praying together. When our children were small, it consisted of mostly singing. As our children have become older, it has meant more and more Bible reading and instruction.

It takes some work. It's not always so easy gathering all of our children in one place at the same time. But, such a gathering has been important to our family.

Verse 3 of our text this morning talks about a united family. "Your children like olive plants Around your table." I do believe that the idea in this verse is of a family that is gathered together in one place in unity.

And as a family, we have sought to be together on a daily basis, worshiping the LORD together. Has it always happened? No. There are times in the week where it's just plain impossible to gather. Like when I have a late-night meeting or there is music practice for the church or

we visit some family and don't get home until after bedtime. There are seasons when it's difficult to gather together. Like during show week of a theatre production that our children are in or during the summer months when activities take us out late on many nights. But, it has been a staple in our home for nearly twenty years and will continue to be as long as I live.

It's a way that I might be able to say to my children, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh 24:15). And by God's grace, I know the blessing of children around our table, who are serving the LORD.

And if I were to pass on any practice that I believe has been most important in these things, it would be the regular practice of family worship, where on a daily basis, we have come together as a family to make the LORD a priority in our home. We sing together. We read together. We pray together. Such a practice helps us to apply the LORD's teaching in many areas of life.

I commend family worship to all of you fathers. I do believe that it will help you on the path to being blessed through your family. It's really not a difficult thing to do, but it takes some intentional leadership.

Fathers, do you want to be blessed? Lead your children in the ways of God. Moses continued on Deuteronomy 6, ...

Deuteronomy 6:20-25

"When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean which the Lord our God commanded you?' then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Moreover, the Lord showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.' So the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today. It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the Lord our God, just as He commanded us.

The main theme of the teaching of Jewish fathers to their children was to teach them of their redemption from Egypt. Fathers, as you have opportunity to teach your children, teach them of the redemption purchased by Jesus Christ.

Fathers, do you want a life where you know the blessings of Your work (verse 2), Your wife (verse 3a), and Your children (verse 3b)? Then embrace verse 4, ...

Psalms 128:4

Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.

If you fear the LORD, you can expect to see blessings in Your work (verse 2), Your wife (verse 3a), and Your children (verse 3b). Do you fear the LORD?

Really. Do you fear the LORD? Is the Bible your constant companion? Is prayer your constant habit? Do you seek His wisdom? Do you trust Him with everything? Is He your highest joy? This is the path to having a blessed life: Fear the Lord. You have no right to expect the blessing if you don't fear the LORD.

Let's move on quickly to my second point this morning. And I promise that this will be short.

Blessed Fathers, ...

2. Seek His Blessing (verses 5-6)

I get this from verses 5 and 6.

Psalms 128:5-6

The LORD bless you from Zion,
And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
Indeed, may you see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel!

These verses come in the form of a prayer. It's a prayer for those who fear the LORD. It's a prayer for blessing.

You can see it there in verse 5, "The LORD bless you from Zion." And I think that the heart of a blessed father is that he will readily accept such a blessing from the LORD. In fact, I believe that he will "seek" such a blessing from the LORD.

In many ways, that's why he's headed up to Jerusalem anyway. Remember again that this is a pilgrim song. It's a song of those who are going up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD. And it is from Jerusalem that this blessing comes. "May the LORD bless you from Zion."

The singing father is seeking to worship the LORD. He is seeking to receive His blessing as well.

Know this, church family, we come each Sunday morning to church to worship the LORD. Yes, and it is good to do so. We don't want to receive the glory. We want all glory to go to Him. Psalm 115:1 says, "Not to us, O LORD, not to us,

But to Your name give glory."

But, never think that Sunday morning (or any other time that we worship the LORD) is merely a one-way street as if we were giving everything to God and He gives nothing in return. No, in coming and worshipping, we seek His blessing upon our lives.

In other words, we come and gather on Sunday mornings because we know that God blesses His people. And we want to be among those who receive His blessing!

And it is good for us to be here. We are reminded again of who God is. We are reminded again of the way God works. We are reminded of our sin. We are reminded of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. We are guided in how we are to live.

So, let us seek the blessing of the LORD. When the Psalmist says, ...

Psalm 128:5
The LORD bless you from Zion,

May we say, "Yes, Lord. Bless us."

We will see this in a few weeks when we look at Psalm 123. Psalm 123:3, "Be gracious to us, O LORD, be gracious to us." It's a prayer that seeks the blessing of the LORD. It's the sort of prayer that we need to pray. We need the blessing of God upon our lives. We are not able to go it alone.

And every time we step into this building to worship the LORD together, we are making a proclamation. "God, I'm not able to do life on my own! I need your help! May your blessing be upon me."

Well, in verses 5 and 6 we see three more areas of blessing to seek. The first is ...

a. In Community

Psalm 128:5
And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

We see here a prayer of blessing upon Jerusalem. May Jerusalem prosper. May it go well with the city.

And by way of application, you might easily bring this into the church. For the typical Jewish worshiper, Jerusalem was the place of community. It is where they gathered to worship. What Jerusalem was to the Jew, the church is to us. The church is our community.

Verse 5 is a prayer for the prosperity of our community. Here's the principle: When things go well at church, there is an overflow of blessing that comes to you and your family. When God is blessing others in our church community, it will spill over to be a blessing in your life as well. You will be encouraged by the faithfulness of God as you witness it in others. You will be helped by the service of others. You will be directed in your love for the LORD. You will be reminded of the core truths of the faith.

And if you want to be a blessed father this morning, Seek His Blessing (verses 5-6) in the church. "May you see the prosperity of Rock Valley Bible Church all the days of your life!"

Seek blessing ...

b. In Grand-children

Psalm 128:6
Indeed, may you see your children's children.

The Bible says that "Grandchildren are the crown of old men" (Proverbs 17:6). In many ways, grandchildren are a sign of God's blessing upon a man's life. Psalm 103 says it this way, ...

Psalm 103:15-18
As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,
And its place acknowledges it no longer.
But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children's children,
To those who keep His covenant
And remember His precepts to do them.

Just think about everything that needs to be true for a man to see (and enjoy) his grandchildren. First of all, he needs to be blessed with children, himself. Second of all, his children need to be blessed with children. Thirdly, he needs to live long enough to see them. They are a blessing that all fathers would long to see.

We read about this joy and blessing in Genesis.

Genesis 48:8-22

When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." So he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well." Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn. He blessed Joseph, and said,

"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,
The angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;

And may my name live on in them,
And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." He blessed them that day, saying,

"By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying,
'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'"

Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 16, 2013 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive>