

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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Encouragement Letter (20NOV24)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for the Lord's continued presence and strength to face each day's challenges and joys.

Today we continue in Psalm 62 considering "Not Wealth nor status, but Christ" before moving onto church matters.

ENCOURAGEMENT: NOT WEALTH NOR STATUS, BUT CHRIST

How much do you trust in wealth or status? We live in a wealthy and affluent society. The standard of living in Australia is higher than in other countries. Much in our country is evaluated according to wealth and income. Even politicians talk a lot about the economy, regarding our financial stability, security and growth as the measure of how well we are doing as a nation. It can give the impression that the value of a person is measured in how much they participate and contribute to the economy. It can be easy to think that all our problems will be solved if only we had more money. The next stanza we are looking at warns us of this attitude.

*Surely the lowborn are but a breath,
the highborn are but a lie.
If weighed on a balance, they are nothing;
together they are only a breath.
Do not trust in extortion
or put vain hope in stolen goods;
though your riches increase,
do not set your heart on them.*

Psalm 62:9-10

First, v9, talks about status. He is addressing how people trust in their status in the world. Status in the end amounts to little and our lives in the great scheme of things count for very little (that is, outside of a relationship with God). The lowborn are a breath – a short gasp of air that barely registers, a fleeting life. The highborn are a lie – there is the appearance of substance but in reality they are just as fleeting as the lowborn. They have the appearance of

importance and longevity, but it is false. It is interesting that when both are weighed on the scales it is only the breath of the lowborn that is detected. There is more substance to the lowborn than the highborn, but in the end such status counts for little. It is not what is most important. Do not trust your status in worldly society – what people think of you, your place in the world, whether you bare a person of means or not, whether you have a reputable job.

Second, v10, talks about wealth. He addresses those you have the ability to leverage others for money by dubious means or pilfer cash illegally. He says, do not trust in such activities. It is ignoring the Lord who made you and living for yourself. Next he says not to set your heart on riches, even if they are increasing. They are as temporary as status and to set your heart on them is to give your devotion to something other than God. Do not base your life on your wealth and income and ability to earn. Whether you have much money or little money it does not alter your value. You are loved by God and made in his image and redeemed by the precious love of Christ. Trust in him.

This stanza points me to Paul's words to Timothy:

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

It is godliness with contentment that has great gain, a life lived by faith in Jesus Christ lived in step with the Spirit in increasing transformation towards godliness. This is where true contentment and satisfaction is. Possessions are fleeting – we cannot take it with us from this life. The pursuit of riches leads to ruin and even a loss of faith. But a relationship with God through faith in Christ lasts forever. What are you trusting in for stability, security and flourishing – status? wealth? Or are you trusting in that which lasts forever – the Lord Jesus Christ?

As always, love and prayers,
Steve