



## river west church

Good Case for a Humble Heart

Psalm 49

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7.01.2012

### **Psalm 49 Isn't a Prayer, So Why is it in the Book of Psalms?**

You'll notice right away that this Psalm is different. It contains no prayer or praise. Its opening words point in a different direction. "Wisdom", "Meditation", "Understanding", "Proverb", and "Riddle": these are the words we find in verses 1 – 4. That kind of introduction sounds more like the Book of Proverbs than the Book of Psalms. Which is why Psalm 49 is often called a "wisdom Psalm."

It reminds us of the way the Book of Psalms started. Psalm 1 is also called a wisdom Psalm. You remember that Psalm 1 paints a picture of two ways, two destinies, set before us. It sets the stage for the entire Book of Psalms, not by giving us a prayer, but by giving us the divine perspective on our lives. It tells us to anchor our lives and our prayers in the Word of God. That's wisdom!

But Psalm 1 isn't the only wisdom Psalm in the Book of Psalms. Scattered among the Psalms, every so often, you'll run into one of these wisdom Psalms. Each one is a giant shot of divine perspective, divine wisdom. That's what Psalm 49 is. It's here for a reason. It's here to anchor our faith and our prayers in a particular point of view. It gives us a huge guiding truth that applies to every single life, everyone, rich and poor, high and low. Psalm 1 tells us to anchor our lives in the Word of God. Psalm 49 tells us NOT to anchor our lives in the wealth, status, or achievement that we may (or may not) obtain in this short and fleeting life.

### **Man in His Pomp, Yet Without Understanding is Like the Beasts that Perish!**

Here's what you get in Psalm 49: Life, Death, Gain, Loss, Riches, Boasting, Pride, and the Terrors of the Grave. Sounds pretty intense! It's all designed to get our attention. God wants us to look at life through a different lens. We get stuck in a system of thinking, with this present life as our only measure of reality; success; meaning. We focus on success as measured on a human scale. By nature, we are status seekers, ever looking at other people's successes and failures and measuring our lives by that standard.

But God unmasks all that. God reminds us of the brevity of life and the futility of accomplishment, when this present life is our only reference point. Death erases it all. The grave claims every life. There is no amount of money or success that can change that. No one can "redeem" another and save them from death. The price is too high.

Here's a great case for a humble heart. You are going to die. Your life is but a "vapor" in the light of eternity. You came into this world naked and will go out the same way. What does it benefit a man or a woman if they gain the whole world and forfeit their soul? (Mark 8:36). This is in your face wisdom. But pride blinds us. The quest for status and style among our peers dominates our thinking. We become short sighted and forget the eternal picture. So God tells us the truth about our lives and calls us to gain a heart of wisdom!

**But God...**

Verse 15 is the pinnacle moment in Psalm 49. "But God..." It's an amazing verse! This verse is filled with the hope and power of the gospel – the promise of both ransom and resurrection. It gives us an even greater case for a humble heart: the saving grace of God through Christ. That's the truth we will explore today in this amazing Psalm. And the application isn't just about our hope beyond the grave. The application is about your attitude about everything in your life, everyday of your life. It impacts how you think, how you pray, what you value, how you treat people, what you do with your finances, and more. It's huge. It's wisdom. Open your heart and let God speak deep wisdom to your life!