

IN PREPARATION FOR THE 50<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT CONFERENCE – 06/20-23/2025  
**CHRIST, OUR JUBILEE**

WEEK 5 – JUNE 02-07, 2025

**Psalm 127-128: Christ, Our Blessing**

Today, we enter the first days of June and with less than three weeks to go until we meet each other at the 50<sup>th</sup> Conference. We look forward to seeing each other again with radiant smiles, spirits ready for worshipping in a humble way, and souls refreshed by God's Word.

This week, we will spend time thinking about Psalm 127, a special Psalm located in the center of the Songs of Ascents, and one of only two psalms authored by Solomon (the remaining Psalm is Psalm 72).

However, there are Psalms that stand alone, but closely connected together to form a whole or a continuation of an idea. Examples are Psalms 42 and 43, 90 and 91, and 111 and 112. And this also applies for Psalms 127 and 128. Therefore, this week we will reflect on both of these special and precious Psalms.

At first glance, Psalms 127 and 128 seem to talk about family and children; however, if looking at another perspective, Psalm 127 refers to an individual or community placing God at the center, and Psalm 128 refers to the God who is the Center and the God as the Source of Blessings.

**GOD, THE CENTER** (Psalm 127). In the opening two verses of this Psalm, Solomon made a similar assertion as he did in Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, that is, without God, human life and all their efforts are just *"in vain."* In the Hebrew language, the word *"in vain"* here and *"vanity"* in Ecclesiastes are two different words, but both carry the meaning of emptiness, uselessness, dissatisfaction, worthlessness, and bringing no result.

The two areas Solomon mentioned are *"building a house"* and *"guarding the city"* (verses 1-2), and these are also two areas where Solomon achieved significant achievements (I Kings 10:4-5). Yet here, this renowned King had to admit that no matter how talented an individual or a community is, if God is not the center, the God who leads, guides, and blesses, then everything they do is just *"in vain."*

Although this Psalm was authored by Solomon, its message is also very suitable for the post-exile situation during Nehemiah's time. At that time, the population of Jerusalem was very small, and the people had to build and repair houses (Nehemiah 7:4). Families needed places to live; otherwise, the Jewish people would have no future. Enemies surrounded them on all sides, so the city needed strong gates, sturdy walls, and the watchmen who are always awake (Nehemiah 4:9, 7:3).

Let us compare the building of the house and guarding the city in Nehemiah's time with the first great construction project in the Bible recorded in Genesis 11:1-9, then we will better understand the teachings of Psalm 127. With the Tower of Babel, all necessary conditions for a successful project were met: clear goals, unified workers, innovation, but ultimately it failed. Meanwhile, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem with myriad difficulties: a scattered people, enemies on all sides, cowardly leaders, yet the walls of Jerusalem were permanently repaired in just 52 days. The key factor that made the difference between these two projects was God.

King Solomon's life and career also serve as a testament to the teaching of Psalm 127 when he began by fearing the Lord and was granted wisdom to *"build a house"* and *"guard a city"* successfully. However, when King Solomon turned away from God and His Word, the seeds of decline gradually appeared. Magnificent palaces were built, but Solomon's own *"house"* collapsed – Rehoboam, Solomon's only son, destroyed the Kingdom that Solomon had built with hard work. Solomon's son, instead of being *"like arrows in the hand of a warrior"* (verse 4), someone who would make Solomon *"not ashamed"* (verse 5), now caused Solomon to experience *"eating the bread of sorrow"* (verse 2). It was truly *"in vain"* for Solomon to laboriously build a dynasty only for him to destroy it all (verse 2; Ecclesiastes 6:1-6).

The teaching of Psalm 127 is also clearly shown through the Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:16-21. The image of the Rich Fool is present in many people today, even among those who claim to be Christians, when they remove God from their lives and their plans. Today, many people assess a person's success based on their achievements or their influence and popularity. However, what everyone truly needs to care about is Jesus' question, *"You fool! This very night your soul is demanded of you; and as for all that you have prepared, who will own it now?"* (Luke 12:20).

Jesus is the Savior but also must be King and Lord in our lives. We must place Jesus at the center of our personal lives, in our families, in raising our children, in our work, and in building the Church and the District. The purpose of our lives shall be nothing other than to glorify His name (I Corinthians 10:31).

There is one Latin proverb used as the motto of the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, appearing on the city's coat of arms and printed on official documents, which is *Nisi Dominus Frustra*, meaning *"Without the Lord, it is in vain"*. And this proverb is based on the first verses of Psalm 127.

**GOD, SOURCE OF BLESSINGS** (Psalm 128). When a person acknowledges God as God, King, and Lord of their life and lives in fear of Him, then that is a blessed person.

The teaching about fearing of God occurs less and less because many churches and believers today prefer the image of God as a good-natured friend in heaven, ready to listen to them and have enough power to fulfill everything they want. But the God revealed in the Bible is the Creator, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the God above all gods is the God before whom all creation must bow down and worship in reverence (Philippians 2:10-11; Revelation 4:8-11).

Proud humans always want to rebel against authorities above them, so they always assume that submitting to God's authority and "*walking in His ways*" (verse 1) is a burden and loses oneself, but the Bible says that God blesses those who fear Him and live according to His Word.

Here we realize that the fear of God is not a vague concept, a thought in the mind, or a temporary feeling, but must be shown through living each day, which the author uses the image of "*walking*" to illustrate. The fear of God must be shown in worship, in service, right within the family, at work, or in raising children.

Such a person will experience the blessing God bestows on them **PERSONALLY** (verse 2). It is truly a blessing to realize that one's life has value, that one's deeds are not "*in vain*" but have eternal value (Matthew 6:19-21; I Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 3:23-24). It is truly happy to see many wealthy and high status people but whose lives are full of hardship, insecurity, and bitterness (Ecclesiastes 4:6) because they do not have God, while we, who believe in Him, will have contentment (I Timothy 6:6), peace because we know there one God who always cares for and protects us (Psalm 3:5-6, 121:3-4, 127:2b; Hebrews 7:23-25), and no matter what happens, "*all things work together for good for those who love God*" (Romans 8:28). Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Such a person will experience the blessing God bestows on their **FAMILY** (verse 3). A wife in a God-fearing family is compared to a "*fruitful vine*," a vine that bears much fruit, symbolizing abundance and fullness. Here it not only speaks of having many children but also implies that a God-fearing wife is the joy and liveliness of the home, one who brings support and benefit to the family (Proverbs 31:10-31). Children are like "*olive shoots*." It is truly special that Solomon does not compare children to "*vine branches*" but to "*olive shoots*," young olive trees that will grow into independent and long-lasting individuals. God-fearing parents will not force their children to become "*their own vine branches*," to be dependent on them, but will "*train up a child in the way he should go*" (Proverbs 22:6) so that they will know God, meet God, live with God, be like God, and be used effectively by God. The image of the whole family sitting "*around the table*" is so wonderful, a blessing that many wealthy and powerful families long for but do not have because Jesus is not the Center of their family.

Such a person will experience the blessing God bestows on their **COMMUNITY** (verses 5-6). When we fear God and obey Him, He will use us to bring blessings to the community we belong to, to God's Church. Our descendants will be like "*olive shoots*" bringing peace and blessing to the places where God sets them.

"*For He grants sleep to those He loves*" (Psalm 127:2<sup>b</sup>). "*Who He loves*" is also the name God gave to Solomon (II Samuel 12:25), and all of us, those who are saved, are also "*those He loves*" (Romans 1:7; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4) because we are accepted in "*His beloved Son*," who is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:6).

Jubilee, the Year of Jubilee, carries the meaning of liberation and rest. Jesus came, endured death, and rose to life again "*to proclaim good news to the poor... to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus is indeed the Source of Blessing. He has done everything for us to experience a new life full of blessings in all circumstances.

Are you ready to receive God's blessing? Are you ready for God to use you to spread blessings in your family, the Church, and the District? **LET US FEAR GOD AND LIVE ACCORDING TO HIS WORD.**

**PRAYER.** Let us give thanks to God because He has chosen and given us salvation, bringing us into the source of blessing.

Let us pray, especially for our families, our spouses, and our children. Let us pray so that we may echo what Joshua said: "*As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*" (Joshua 24:15).

Let us also pray especially for the English Ministry at this Conference: for God's servants to teach God's Word, for many young people to truly meet God and dedicate their lives to God through the Conference, and for the youth to find a loving community in God and bond together.

Let us pray that each of us would truly submit to God and experience rest in every circumstance because we know God is always with us.

Let us pray for peace for the Church, for the District, and for this year's Conference.

Amen.