

THE MILLAR'S TALE (24/06/2001)

Goodness for those who "fear"?!

Psalm 31:19 reads, 'How *great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men and on those who take refuge in you.*' God is pictured here like a wealthy person who establishes trust funds for his children to be used after they reach maturity. The money is on hand, it has been set aside - but it isn't available to the children until they reach the prescribed age.

That is what God does for those who fear him. He sets aside or stores up goodness for his children, to be given at appropriate times in the future. Just what this goodness is, and when it'll be bestowed, is unique to each individual according to God's plan and purpose for that person.

'I came across Ps 31:19 during one of the more difficult periods in my life,' says Jerry Bridges ([The Joy of Fearing God](#) p8). 'I desperately needed some encouragement at the time, and God gave it to me through that scripture. What caught my attention was the thought that God *stores up* goodness, which he bestows at some time in the future. Even though things may be dark today, God is still storing up goodness for us.'

'As I prayed over Ps 31:19 during those discouraging days, God gave me hope that at some point in the future he would again bestow his goodness, the goodness that he was storing up for me. That's exactly what happened. In due time God opened up ministry opportunities far beyond anything I had ever imagined. **Ironically, the very circumstances that brought about those discouraging days were used by God to both equip me and set me free for the ministry he had stored up to bestow in his good time.**'

'Notice, though, that God stores up his goodness not for everyone, but for *those who fear him*. How are we to understand this condition? Why did I think I qualified and had a right to gather confidence from that scripture? This verse is an example of parallelism; that is, where a single idea may be stated again in another form. In this case, fearing God and taking refuge in him are parallel thoughts'.

There is great encouragement to persevere faithfully in this little verse and for those who are struggling I pray that you will take heart. Interestingly this is how the psalm ends: 'Be *strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.*'

Blessings,

Neil.