

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.3.2024

THE BLESSED MAN - PSALM 1

Psalm 1:1-6

Blessed is the man

who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

3 He is like a tree

planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

4 The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS

- The Hebrew title for the Psalter is "Tehillim" which is translated as "praises."
- The English word "Psalms" comes from the Latin translation of the Bible, from the title "Psalmus," which means "songs sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument."
- Psalms is an anthology, a collection of Hebrew songs.
- The ancient Hebrews called this collection, The Book of Praises.

- Though it is a collection, there is a comprehensiveness and structure.
- The Psalms offer a compendium of themes and topics that are covered throughout the OT.

- It is the largest book of the OT is and is quoted or alluded to in the NT more than any other book of the Bible.
- All of the titles by which Jesus is identified come primarily from the Psalms.

Authors

- There are multiple authors - most attributed to David (73). Other authors include Solomon, Moses, the sons of Korah, Asaph, Heman, Ethan, Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra.
- There are anonymous authors for 47 of the Psalms or maybe as low as 34.
- The Book of Psalms is commonly referred to as David's Psalms because he wrote the largest number of them.
- David was also the sole individual responsible for arranging the songs for Temple service. (1 Chron 25)
- Because so many different authors were involved in writing Psalms, we know they were written at different times during a period spanning around 1,000 years.
- The oldest psalm is Ps 90, composed by Moses during Israel's wilderness wandering.
- The last psalm is Ps 126, written after the time of Israel's exile in Babylon.
- Scholars don't really know what the process was of compiling the complete Psalter.
- David's psalms, which are the majority of them, were written during the times of his reign, and psalms written after that period were likely collected and arranged by Hezekiah's men and the scribes that were with Ezra that returned to the land.

Five Books

- Psalms is divided into five books.
- Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150.
- Psalms 1 and 2 were placed strategically as introduction to the Psalms and the last five psalms conclude with a long doxology.
- Many Bible scholars believe that the psalms were arranged into five books to correspond to the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy—called the Torah, possibly to mirror the books of the Law of Moses.
- It is important to understand this structure to be able to understand the message of the Psalms. It is a key to good interpretation.
- We need to know not only the author of the Psalm, but when it was written, and when it was likely compiled, and what were the circumstances surrounding the nation of Israel at the time it was compiled.
- If we really want to grasp the message of the psalms, we have to locate the psalms in the context of the Old Testament and redemptive history.

Genre / Literary forms:

- The Genre of the psalms is Hebrew poetry.
- There are major three literary forms that are the most frequently employed in the psalms:
 - Songs of Lament, hymns, and Songs of thanksgiving.
 - Laments, both individual and communal laments. These are cries, sometimes angry cries to God for help during a time of deep distress.
 - Most of the psalms of lament move from lament to praise and express confidence in God.
- Ex; Psalm 80
- Hymns, the next largest category. They are songs of praise to God for his great works in creation, for choosing Israel, and the many reasons the

Lord is to be praised.

- The goal of a hymn is for Israel, all nations and peoples, and all the earth to praise the Lord.
- Ex; Psalm 117
- Thanksgiving, both individual and communal, express gratitude to God for some special blessing, deliverance or an answer to prayer.
- Ex; Psalm 32

Other forms

- Psalms of Ascents
- Psalms of trust
- Royal Psalms
- Psalms of Zion
- Psalms of Salvation history
- Wisdom or Torah psalms
- The psalm writers freely mixed these literary forms but generally the categories hold and are helpful in interpreting the message of the psalm.
- Many different poetic devices are used such as imagery, metaphor, parallelism, anthropomorphism, word repetitions, and chiasms.

II. THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

- Ps 1 and 2 are linked in various ways.
- Ps 1 begins with the words “blessed is the man” and ps 2 concludes with the words “blessed are all who take refuge in him.”
- These phrases form an inclusio; they form a bracket around the two psalms.
- The endings of both psalms use some of the same words, “way” and “perish”.

- Who is the blessed man in 1:1?
- The ESV has a footnote stating that the singular use is to portray a representative example of a godly person.
- This is a prototypical individual, someone who is put forth as an example for everyone to follow.
- Let me suggest to you that because these two psalms are linked and they serve as the intro to the Book of Psalms, that the blessed man is none other than the Lord’s Anointed, the promised King from the line of David.
- That is why all who take refuge in him are blessed.
- They will be blessed like him because they follow his way of living righteously.

- The word "blessed" means “happy”, “fortunate”, it denotes a “contented state of being that comes from a directed life.”
- The first reason given why this man is blessed is stated negatively by the things he does not do.
- The three things he does not do are stated metaphorically by the actions of walking, standing, and sitting. They describe a way of living, a way of life.
- They indicate a progression of walking in a certain way that is a descent into greater wickedness and sin.
- The way of folly was described as a descending path that leads to destruction. (Prov. 9:13-18)

- First, the blessed man does not “walk in the counsel of the wicked...”
- What is it to seek counsel? You are going to someone seeking direction and advice.
- The blessed man does not look to the wicked for counsel. He does not look to the advice of the world or the twisted reasoning of the world.

- Second, the blessed man does not “stand in the way of sinners...” Here is the progression.
- If you listen to the advice and reasoning of the wicked and embrace it, you begin to take your place among them, you stand where sinners stand.
- Third, the blessed man does not “sit in the seat of scoffers...”
- What is scoffer? It is someone who mocks and ridicules, or treats something with contempt.
- Blessed is the man then who does not listen to and walk in the advice of the ungodly, and does not take part in their sin by standing among them, and does not sit in the seat of scoffers and mock and ridicule what is right.
- In Ps 2:1-3, we get some details by what is meant by the counsel of the wicked.
- Psalm 2:1-3

Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

3 “Let us burst their bonds apart

and cast away their cords from us.”

- The counsel of the wicked is that we don't have to listen to God.
- We can determine right and wrong for ourselves, we're going to live our own way.
- And if you want to live a blessed life, you won't follow that counsel.
- Whose counsel do you value most? The world's or God's?
- 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.
- The blessed man is blessed because he delights, treasures, highly values, the law of the Lord.
- Now the word "law" is the Hebrew word, “torah” which means instruction. The first five books of the Bible are called the Torah and they contain the whole body of commands the Lord gave Israel.
- But it is much broader than just the commandments and prohibitions God gave his people.
- The Torah also provides instruction and the promises God and the prophecies he gave to his people.
- The blessed man is the one who delights in the teaching of the Lord— all of it!
- In the introductory Psalm, all of the book is commending itself to us as a book we are to memorize and live out all of the teaching it contains.
- And “on his law he meditates day and night.”
- The word meditate means “to mutter.”
- The idea here is the blessed man mutters the Torah, he goes about his life, day in and day out muttering the teachings of God.
- Why is he doing that? Because he delights in it. Because he loves God.
- The same Hebrew translated as meditate in 1:2 is used in 2:1 “why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
- "Plot" is the same Hebrew word as "meditate."

- The blessed man meditates on the law of the Lord, the peoples of the world are meditating on vain things, things that are empty, meaningless, and worthless.
- It is vanity to think that the creature could defy the Creator.
- What do you meditate on? What do you give your thoughts and focus to?
- Do you meditate on God's Word and take pleasure and delight in it?
- Or is your meditation on vain things?

THE OUTCOME OF THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

- The outcome of the way of life lived by the blessed man is described in v3-4.
- Imagery and similes are employed to give us a vivid symbolic picture of the blessed man's life.
- "He is like a tree planted by streams of water..."
- Where else are trees prevalent in Scripture that are planted by streams of water? The Garden of Eden. (Gen 2:8-10)
- What is the imagery of this psalm suggesting? That the blessed man's life is like living in the garden of Eden because God is with him.
- The nation of Israel is referred to as an olive tree and a vine. (Jeremiah 11:16-17)
- This imagery gives the suggestion that this blessed man is representative of the people of Israel.
- "That yields its fruit in its season..." That is what you would expect by a well fed and watered fruit tree.
- "And its leaf does not wither." A withering or wilting leaf indicates a tree that is lacking water and nutrients.
- And in a dry and arid climate, the blessed man will be like a well-watered tree whose leaves are full.
- We are talking about a person here. What is the point that the psalmist is making?
- That if you want to be like a strong, well-watered, fruit-bearing tree, planted by streams of water you need to delight in and meditate on God's law day and night.
- When you do that, you will find that God's Word will be like a continual, refreshing stream of water that enriches and strengthens your life. It will invigorate your life, give you deep and strong roots, so that in the seasons of your life that you should be bearing fruit, you will bear fruit because you have been nourished by the word of God!
- And when the seasons of difficulty come, as they inevitably will in life, trials, tribulations, sorrow, loss, when these things happen, you will not wither and wilt because the word of God is there to sustain you and give you life!
- "In all that he does he prospers."
- What does a fruit tree do? It prospers by bearing fruit. They produce fruit that brings a benefit to others. This is still employing the imagery of the tree.
- God set up the world to work a certain way. He can do that because He is the Creator.
- Not only that, he graciously showed us how to live in accordance with the way he set the world up to work.
- When we live that way, we will flourish, we will prosper and succeed.
- Because the blessed man meditates on this, on God's ways, he prospers in all that he does.
- Joshua 1:7-8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to

do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

- This suggests to us that David is affirming that this Blessed Man is one who will live out everything that Joshua was told to do.

- Deut. 17:18-20 18 “And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, 20 that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

- The instructions for the king of Israel is exactly what we see in Psalm 1.

- Deut 6:4-9 4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- The blessed man is living out all that God has commanded in his Word.

III. THE WAY OF THE WICKED

- But what is the outcome of the one who rejects the way of life that God commanded and instructed?

- 1:4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff the wind drives away.

- Chaff is the debris that is separated from the seed when grain is threshed and winnowed.

- It is a symbol in the Bible for what is worthless and destined for destruction.

- It is a symbol for the ungodly and those who do not bear fruit.

- The psalmist is drawing a huge contrast between the righteous man and the wicked.

- There are two ways, two paths in life, this is the way the world works.

- 1:8 they will not stand in the judgement...there will be a day of reckoning.

- There will be a final accounting that is anticipated in the psalm.

- If you do not live like the blessed man, if you walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of sinners, sit in the seat of scoffers, when the judgment comes, you will not stand.

- This is a warning to all who defy God.

- “Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”

- Who are the righteous? It is those who identify with the blessed man and how he lives.

- They follow in the way of the exemplary righteous person.

- V6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish.

- The Lord knows the way of the righteous because he is the one who has determined what that way is and has given instruction on how to walk in it.

- But the way of the wicked will perish.

- If you cultivate a way of life that is opposed to what God has instructed, that way leads to destruction, that way will perish.

- The righteous and the wicked are headed in opposite directions. They are two fundamentally different ways to live with eternal consequences.
- **Matthew 7:13-14** “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.
- **Matthew 7:24-27** “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

CONCLUSION

- What is your life built upon?
- Where do you go for counsel?
- What directs your life?
- What are you delighting in? What are you meditating upon?
- Let me exhort you as strongly as I can to delight in the Word of God,
- Meditate on the Word of God day and night.
- Memorize the Word of God.
- Rehearse God’s Word, all day, every day.
- It is what will keep you being like chaff.
- The Word of God is a constant source of life, nourishment, wisdom, instruction, and encouragement.
- It will make your way prosperous and give you success.
- Ultimately, we have the benefit of being on the other side of the promise of the King who would come in the line of David, the Messiah.
- Jesus is the exemplary Blessed Man of this psalm.
- He lived a life of complete righteousness, delighting in the law of God, walking in perfect obedience, living continually in fellowship with the Father, and his life yielded the fruit of salvation and redemption in due season.
- In all that he did, he prospered.
- See, apart from Christ, we would never, on our own, delight in God’s teaching and his law.
- But God promised that he would put his Spirit in us, and He would cause us to love the law of God, and delight in his teaching and do what he commands us to do (Ezekiel 36:26-27)
- And that is exactly what the new birth in Christ accomplishes.
- And now, God’s Word becomes our delight.
- Delight in him, He is the Word of God, he is an endless stream of life-giving nourishment, he is the way, the truth, and the life.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?