

## Psalm 1 – Thursday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018

- I have to say that I've been looking for the book of Psalms for a number of reasons, chief of which is the impact on our lives.
- This because the book of Psalms speaks to and deals with every aspect of our lives experientially, emotionally, and spiritually.
- In approaching this book, you get the sense that you're in a line with God's people who over the ages have been blessed by it.

- For those who are familiar with this amazing book, you know what's in store as we study it chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse.
- To say that it will powerfully minister to us would be a gross understatement such that, it can be life sustaining, and changing.
- Before we jump in to the book, I would like to provide an appetizer of sorts in order to prepare us, for that which is before us.

- First, I would like to start with some fast facts about the book of Psalms as it relates to who it is that God inspired to write them.
- We know that no less than seventy-three were written by David, some believe more, and another eleven or twelve by Asaph.
- Twelve were written by the sons of Korah, one by Hezekiah, one by Moses, one by Heman, and the rest of them are unknown.

- That's who it's believed wrote them but what's more important than that is what's written in them that makes this book stand out.
- I would submit that the book of Psalms is the book of worship and praise, which is actually what the word "Psalms" means.
- Namely, that of praises in song to God in every situation we experience in life. Here's what others have said about this book.

Matthew Henry – "We have now before us one of the choicest parts of the Old Testament, wherein there is so much of Christ and his gospel, as well as of God and his law, that it has been called the summary of both Testaments."

One commentator noted that, "...of the two hundred nineteen Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, one hundred sixteen are from the Book of Psalms, many of which prophesy about Jesus' First and Second Coming. The gospels tell us Jesus went to the mountain to pray. But the psalms tell us what He prayed. The gospels tell us Jesus was crucified. The psalms tell us what He was thinking while He was on the Cross. The gospels tell us He went back into heaven. But the psalms tell us what He's doing in heaven."

Charles Spurgeon - "The delightful study of the Psalms has yielded me boundless profit and ever-growing pleasure; common gratitude constrains me to communicate to others a portion of the benefit, with the prayer that it may induce them to search further for themselves."

Martin Luther - "[The Psalms are] a Little Bible, wherein everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended."

C.S. Lewis - "The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance."

Ray Stedman - "The Psalms are much more than poetry. Many of them bear the title, Maskil, or teaching psalm. They are thus intended to instruct the mind as well as to encourage the heart. They are designed not only to reflect a mood, but to show us also how to handle that mood; how to escape from depression or how to balance exaltation with wisdom."

**Psalm 1** -- 1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall 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 ungodly shall perish.

- If you were to put a title or caption on this Psalm it would probably have to be something along the lines of living a blessed life.
- The reason being is it details the characteristics by way of the do's and don'ts of what a blessed life looks like and will be like.
- It's interesting to note the word blessed carries with it the idea of oh how happy and content is the one who is right with God.

- It's also interesting to note that this Psalm does not teach us how to be happy rather, it teaches us how to avoid being unhappy.
- Specifically in the sense that the blessing of God is already there for us, however, we have the propensity to diminish it as well.
- This is what this first Psalm is saying about that which we can do in our lives that will strip the blessing of God out of our lives.

- One of the things I love about this Psalm is that it paints magnificent pictures on the canvass of the godly and the ungodly life.
- Notice first in verse one that the blessed life will be one characterized by not walking in the way of the counsel of the ungodly.
- In other words, if my life is to be blessed, I will not allow myself to be influenced by the ungodliness of the things of this world.

- Notice it goes from walking in the counsel of the ungodly to standing in the path of sinners, to sitting in the seat of the scornful.
- The reason I point this out is because this is how it starts, and as such, this is how it will end. You walk then stand then you sit.
- When you're sitting it means that you plan on staying and in so doing you end up being comfortable in an ungodly environment.

Adam Clarke - "The great lesson to be learned from the whole is, sin is progressive; one evil propensity or act leads to another. He who acts by bad counsel may soon do evil deeds; and he who abandons himself to evil doings may end his life in total apostasy from God."

- It's been said that if someone tells you who your friends are today you can tell them what their life will be like in five short years.
- The truth is that we're known by the company we keep and if we're comfortable with godly people, we'll be known as godly.
- Conversely, if we're walking with and standing in the path of sinners, sitting in the seat of the scornful, we will become ungodly.

1 Corinthians 15:33 - Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 - 14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

- Let me hasten to say, that this in no way means we don't associate with non-believers rather, it's that they do not influence us.
- The blessed life is one who does not do these three things listed in verse one, but instead he does delight in the Word of God.
- So much so that they will meditate on it day and night, which carries with it the idea of a cow chewing and regurgitating the cud.

Charles Spurgeon of this said, "It is not only reading that does us good; but the soul inwardly feeding on it, and digesting it."

Joshua 1:8 - This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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.

- In verse three we have a description of what a blessed life is like when we delight in and digest the Word of God day and night.
- Our lives will be like a tree planted by rivers of water, which supplies it with what it needs to be fruitful and prosper, not wither.
- I see this as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, that are manifested in our lives, such that not only are we blessed but we bless others.

Galatians 5:23-24 - 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

- There's one more thing that I want to point out here concerning the tree of our lives being planted by the water of God's Word.
- It has to do with the roots going down very deep into the ground, which gives it its strength to withstand the storms that will hit.
- So too is this true for us, when our roots are deep and grounded in God's Word we are able to stand when not if the trials hit.

- In verse five the Psalmist turns a corner and contrasts the godly and blessed life with the life of the ungodly saying it's not so.
- Instead of being strong like a tree with deep roots, they are like the chaff, which only takes a wind to drive them away and fall.
- As such, they will not stand in the judgment, nor will sinners stand in the congregation of the righteous, because they cannot.

Charles Spurgeon of the contrast between the chaff wrote, "Intrinsically worthless, dead, unserviceable, without substance, and easily carried away." There is a huge difference between a tree and chaff."

- This brings us to verse 6 where we're told that the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.
- It's interesting to note that the first word in the Psalm is the word "blessed," and the last word in this Psalm is the word "perish."
- The reason I point this out is that of the stark contrast between one who is godly being blessed and one who is not perishing.

Proverbs 14:12 - There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.