

Psalm 90:1-6, Part I

Read Psalm 90:1-6

I confided in the saints on Wednesday evening that my study of this Psalm has led me to the Gospel of John, and particularly John chapter 15. This will be more of an introduction to this portion of Psalm 90 and deal with some of what Jesus declared in John 15. I know that I am to offer an exposition on Psalm 90, and this will be more of an exposition on John 15. I fought hard to “keep from straying” from the Psalm, but there are some foundational Truths that the LORD laid bare for me. These Truths, even though we know them, we need to be reminded. I hope to remind us of at least two things. One, we often bring our mindset, our presuppositions to the Scriptures in which we must guard against. The Bible tells us that the heart is desperately wicked and can’t be trusted. We are even commanded to take heed “how” we hear: [Luke 8:18 NASB] **18 "So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him [more] shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him."** Jesus tells us repeatedly in the NT to listen and uses phrases such as “he who has ears, let him hear”, and often commands us to “take heed”. The second thing I hope to remind each of us is that GOD’s Word is effectual, It will produce “fruit” in the life of a believer to the purpose of showing forth GOD’s Glory. In these two things I will contrast man’s evil tendency of a man-centered approach in what he hears contrasted with a GOD-centered approach that is mercifully granted by our LORD.

We as believers are given the grand Truth that in Psalm 90, the LORD GOD shelters, comforts, protects, preserves, and cherishes all His own as we are strangers, pilgrims, and aliens in this world. We must keep in mind that this Psalm was written for the tribes in the desert, but also that it applies to believers in all generations. This is set before us in the phrase **“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”** This Truth and Promise that our LORD has been our dwelling place in all generations intimates the certainty of GOD’s Provision toward His people in the past, but also in the future. Because we may look back upon His Faithfulness (which is indicated by the past tense of GOD having been our dwelling place); we may look forward with confidence in Him, in His Sovereign Design, His Perfect Will, and His Mercy and Goodness all the days in which He grants us. This Truth is presented and furthered in the New Covenant - [Philippians 1:6 NASB] **6 [For I am] confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.** Even before this work of Grace upon our hearts, which is the Good Work done by our LORD in Mercy for us, He is our dwelling place. In considering that the LORD has been and will always be the believer’s dwelling – in considering what this means and looks like in my own life and in the lives of His people; I immediately thought of Jesus’ commands to abide in Him. In one of the “I am” proclamations of our Lord, He declares: [John 15:1-3 NASB] **1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.** It is important to see that in verse 3, the Lord Jesus is reminding the disciples that they have experienced this cleanness. Keep in mind this is true for us now. The disciples as all believers are clean because Christ has planted us in Him and He prunes us. The chief means that our Lord cleanses or prunes us is by Truth, which is by the Word He has spoken. Jesus is given a peculiar title in the prologue of the Gospel of John. [John 1:1 NASB] **1 In the**

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This emphasizes the importance of the means of Grace that we not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. As we are assembled here this day for the purpose of worshipping our LORD, we are as believers being cleansed by the proclamation of His Word. Christ cleanses His people by doctrine, by His Words. This again, intimates the necessity of the Gospel in the believer's life. [Romans 10:17 NASB] **17 So faith [comes] from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.** This does not mean that we are clean from all sin, but that which is held before us in John 15:3 is that our experience should be that we are being sanctified or washed by the Truth, the doctrine of the Gospel. And this shows us the continuance of His Grace is necessary. After He expresses that He is the True Vine, He speaks of "bearing fruit" and doing so by "abiding in Him". [John 15:4 NASB] **4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither [can] you unless you abide in Me.**

Regarding taking heed how we hear, I want us to consider how the impossible commands of Jesus sounds in the ears of the two approaches mentioned earlier; man-centered and GOD centered. The man-centered is the one in which we are born with as a result of the Fall. Some of the commands are, "abide in Jesus", "abide in His love", "love one another, just as He loves you". We are told by the Words of Jesus that if you keep His commandments, you will abide in His love, just as He kept the Father's commandments and abides in His love. So, to the man without ears to hear, which he may indeed hear these commands, but the effect or the way they resonate will be completely different than to the man who has been given ears to hear. One will hear that he needs to build up more resolve, more self-determinism, and that he must pull himself up by the bootstraps and do what Jesus commanded. The miracle of salvation is not just to be rescued from an eternal punishment, but it is that we by being given a heart of flesh (Read Ezekiel chapters 36 & 37) delight in, adore, love, and enjoy Christ. This joy that a believer has in Christ is absent in self-determinism where man and what he does is central. I am not an antinomian nor am I absolving the responsibility of man. I hope to remind each soul of the impossibility of keeping His commands and delighting in Him apart from abiding in Him. In the flesh we will naturally tend to have this put our noses to the grindstone approach (especially men). By GOD's Mercy, this will be one of the branches, not bearing fruit, that will be taken away (**John 15:2**). I ask you as we journey through the Psalms together to consider often what it means that GOD is our dwelling place and what it should look like to abide in Christ.

Secondly, I hope to remind us that GOD's purifying Word is effective in the life of a believer. Jesus tells us that to bear fruit, we must abide in Him. Fruit is a term used to describe the outward demonstration of one's inward disposition. Our disposition by nature as a result of sin entering the world through one man is evil. [Galatians 5:19-21 NASB] **19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** (Also read **Matthew 15:18-20, Romans 7:5, Psalm 51:5, Ephesians 2:3, and Romans 5:12**) One of the predominant misconceptions, especially in our day, is that to be a Christian we simply need to do outwardly good deeds like go to church, tithe, mow our neighbor's yard, etc. These are good things and a Christian should be moral, but Christianity

is more than good deeds or morality. We cannot judge ourselves based merely on external acts. Remember, fruit can only be bore by abiding in Christ.

Conversely, the man that has mercifully been given ears to hear, that is what I referred to as a “GOD-centered” approach, will by Grace understand and live upon the Truth that bearing fruit is only accomplished by the power of GOD and the Holy Spirit working in and through the believer in Christ. So, what does fruit look like? It is seen in a change in our personal temperament, affections (what we love), attitudes, and actions (how we spend our time). [Galatians 5:22-23 NASB] **22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.** This fruit can only come by way of faith in Christ. It is death to try to be any one of these apart from Christ. Being a fruitful Christian is not by keeping a list of moral rules, but by the LORD giving us a new heart and a new nature. As a result of having been given a new heart, our character will be changed and we will be progressively conformed (sanctification) to the image and likeness of Christ (**Romans 12:2, II Corinthians 3:18**). To be a fruitful Christian is to be a follower of Christ and to love what He loves. It is to do what He commands by faith with joy and a thankful heart. It is an obedience that is predestined and empowered by the LORD GOD, which removes any grounds for man to boast in himself (**Ephesians 2:10, I Corinthians 1:28-31**). This is a part of what Grace is – that by abiding in Christ or that GOD is our dwelling place or refuge that we produce good fruit. Our fruit is good because He is good. [Romans 11:36 NASB] **36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him [be] the glory forever. Amen.**