

The Call to Thrive

Psalm 1

Regeneration

THRIVE! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life

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livinghopechurch.net

“Vice is a monster of so frightful appearance, as to be hated needs but to be seen. Yet to see it oft, too familiar that face, we may first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

– Alexander Pope

Announcements

1. Welcome to visitors
2. Happy Birthday to Mrs. Helen Fetgatter. She is 89 years old.
3. No services tonight or Wednesday.
4. New Members class beginning in January 18.

If you don't have a Bible, there should be one in the seat in front of you. Open your Bible to **Psalm 1**.

Introduction

God's fingerprints on His children are unmistakable. Just like a child of a certain family carries the family image, so all God's children carry the image of conformity to Jesus Christ. We are beginning a series called, “Thrive! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life.” Today's message is entitled: “The Call to Thrive.”

Caveat

Let me make a caveat. First, this is in no way an exhaustive series. This will really be a brief, simple series that will hopefully inspire us to grow and make us hungry that 2016 will be a year where instead of simply surviving we thrive in our Christian life.

Ballasts of Growing in Christ

In 1998, my wife and I visited Barcelona, where there is an exact replica of the Santa Maria there in the port. If you went down into the belly of the ship, you would find a multitude of oak barrels, rim to rim. These oak barrels served a very important purpose for those who journeyed in that ship.

- ❖ Before they took the journey, they filled them with good clean drinking water-water that they would use for their cooking, and for their refreshment. These barrels were called

“ballasts.” Without these barrels filled with water, they could not have lived on this journey.

- ❖ But then every time one of the barrels was empty of drinking and cooking water, they filled it with sea water, because the barrels filled a second function: they were “ballasts” there in the bowels of that ship.
- ❖ What is a ballast? They are the heavy weight put in the lower part of the ship to balance the ship and give it stability. Once it gets out to sea and meets those gigantic ocean waves, and begins to know something of the turbulence of the sea, without ballasts, the ship would capsize!

It is the weight down in the middle of the ship that allows it to make its way through the turbulent sea, to keep it on course, and to arrive safely at its destination.

This morning we are going to look at three “ballasts that call us to GROW in the Christian life” that will firmly establish us in the shifting seas of this world. Without these ballasts deep down in the belly of your soul, you will capsize, and your life will be a shipwreck outside of the grace of God.

Psalm 1 and Regeneration

Psalm 1 presents the ballasts of Christian growth. It is the key to the entire Psalter, and really the key to the entire Bible. The reason it is the key, is because it presents the key to Christian growth: regeneration.

Authorship: David, a Man After God’s Heart

We don’t know exactly who wrote Psalm 1, but many in Christian history have attributed it to David. David knew what it was to be made new by God. He was a “man after God’s own heart,” because he had been given a new heart! King David compares the “blessed man” to a tree that had been **transplanted** near a river of running water. He was in a dry dead soil, and then He was “transplanted” to a place of life.

The idea is that the blessed man was once someplace else. If we read the other Psalms, we could say we were once in a pit of despair. But the Lord took us from the miry pit and placed us somewhere else.

We have been transplanted to a place of abundant life. That metaphor is one of what the theologians call “regeneration” or the Bible calls the “new birth.”

The new birth is the where growing and changing in Christ begins.

Regeneration Defined

Wayne Grudem defines regeneration in his celebrated and very helpful *Systematic Theology*: “*Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us. This is sometimes called “being born again” (using language from John 3:3–8).*”¹

“In the work of regeneration we play no active role at all. It is instead totally a work of God. We see this, for example, when John talks about those to whom Christ gave power to become children of God—they “were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the

¹ Grudem, W. A. (2004). *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (p. 699). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). Here John specifies that children of God are those who are “born ... of God” and our human will (“the will of man”) does not bring about this kind of birth.”²

The Hebrew Hymnal

The Psalms have rightly been called the “Hebrew Hymnal,” and Psalm 1 is the prelude for the entire Psalter. It tells us how an earthbound sinner can grow in his or her relationship with the Lord. As New Testament Christians, Psalm 1 tells us the secret to all growth and change: regeneration.

We must be born again. Verse 3 gives us the secret: The blessed man is one who is planted, or literally “transplanted” by the rivers of water.

Though King David is not explicitly named as the author, tradition tells us he is the author of this Psalm. The Bible uses agriculture, and here we see King David comparing a child of God to a tree.

That’s what we are going to do as well for the next four months. We are going to study how a Christian can grow and change into the image of Christ.

Outline

- A call to **happiness** in God alone – vs. 1, 3, “Blessed is the man...transplanted by the rivers of water.”
- A call to **wholeness** in God alone – vs. 1-3, “Blessed is the man...whatever he does prospers...”
- A call to **hope** in God alone – vs. 4-6, “not so the wicked!”

Reading of Holy Scripture

We read in **Psalm 1**:

“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
[trans]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.”

² Ibid.

St. Jerome calls Psalm 1 the Preface of the Holy Spirit

Saint Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate, says **Psalm 1** is the “master key” of the Psalter, and that it is “the preface of the Holy Spirit” to the Psalter and the entire Bible.³ Here we see the divine work of the Holy Spirit in the justified person.

The outlay of Psalm 1 gives us the secret and context to the entire Psalter. It is very much like the New Testament epistles. It is the imperative and indicative.

We are blessed in Christ, therefore, we walk a certain way. As St. Paul says in **Eph. 4:1**, “therefore...[because of who we are in Christ, found in ch. 1-3] walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.”

Overview: A Comparison of the Righteous and the Unrighteous

So we see that Psalm 1 gives us a **comparison** of the **saved** and the **unsaved** person – the righteous (justified) person, and the one who is still dead in his trespasses and sins. The comparison draws attention to the inner person, or we might say, the nature, or the heart.

The apostles do this all the time, especially St. John. The Apostle says in **Rev. 22:11**, “Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

In other words, the righteous and the unrighteous do what they do because they are what they are. Our nature produces our action. A bird flies because it is a bird. A dog barks because it is a dog. A chicken quacks. A cow moos. A fish swims. You get the idea.

What makes the Difference?

We read of the blessed man (vs. 1-3) and the cursed man (vs. 4-6). What makes the difference? The secret lies in verse 3. The difference between the blessed and cursed people on this earth is that one is “planted” or better translated “transplanted” by the rivers of water, while the other is blowing around like chaff. One is touched by the LORD, and the other is cursed by its own puny autonomy.

I. A call to **happiness** in God alone, vs. 3, “transplanted by the rivers of water.”

Who is the Blessed Man – Jesus Christ?

Augustine identifies the truly blessed man as the Man, Christ Jesus, who unlike the first Adam who took the counsel of the serpent, was tested in every way, “yet without sin.”

Jesus did not do as “the man of earth did,” (**1 Cor. 15:47**) “who consented to his wife who was deceived by the serpent, which led him to transgress the commandment of God.”⁴

And truly all who are in Christ are the blessed ones! You are the blessed man in Christ. Ladies, you are the blessed woman in Christ!

As **Ephesians 1:3** says, through our “Lord Jesus Christ... [we have been] blessed... in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world.”

³ St. Jerome. *The Homilies of St. Jerome, Volume 1 (1-59 on the Psalms)*, trans. by Marie Liguori Ewald, I.H.M. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 5.

⁴ Augustine of Hippo. (1888). *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*. In P. Schaff (Ed.), A. C. Coxe (Trans.), *Saint Augustin: Expositions on the Book of Psalms* (Vol. 8, p. 1). New York: Christian Literature Company.

Can you just praise God right now, that you are blessed because of something outside yourself? You didn't cause this blessing and you don't deserve this blessing! It's a gift!

Nature

Where does this blessedness come from? The secret is found in verse 3. We see with the idea of agriculture that “nature” makes all the difference. The person who bears fruit must be a planted or literally a “transplanted” tree.⁵ Psalm 1 serves to orient the reader to the entire Psalter.

God's fingerprints are all over God's child. They are transplanted by Him. “The Lord knows [watches over] the way of the righteous” precisely because the saved and justified person belongs to Him. We are, as the great Jewish apostle Paul says, “His workmanship” (**Eph. 2:10**), lit. God's *masterpiece*.

Regeneration: United with the Tree of Life

That the blessed man is one who is regenerated is seen because he has become one with the tree of life.

No Withering!

The blessed man is like a “tree whose leaves do not wither” [tree of life imagery]. A person who has no withering is a person who has **eternal life**. It is only the person who is reconnected to the “tree of life” that has any hope.

In Jesus Christ, we are reconnected to that “tree of life,” from which we were once banished. As William Brown says in his excellent work “Seeing the Psalms”:

“The individual who follows the path of righteousness is elevated... Gone are the cherubim and flaming sword, the guardians of the tree of life. All that is required is the desire for righteousness. The student of the Torah and the tree have become one.”⁶

A Heart Change from Outside of Oneself

You must first understand that there must be a heart change that begins outside of oneself. There must be a force greater than oneself that works on the core of man to humble him and bring him to God. Without this, the blessed man doesn't look so blessed. He's simply doing what anyone can do – behavior modification.

Blessed with the Abundant Christ Life

No, the blessed man is blessed because he is “transplanted” by the rivers of water. We are blessed because we drink of Christ by the Spirit. We are plucked up by the Spirit and made to drink of the Rivers of abundant life.

As Jesus says in **John 10:10**, we must remember why Jesus came, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

What is at Stake

Verse 1, “Blessed is the one...” The Psalm is clear what is at stake: being blessed or cursed in this life and in the life to come. This is so clear: the Hebrew idea of blessedness (אֲשֵׁרִי)

⁵ See excellent work by William P. Brown. *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002) 55-79.

⁶ Ibid, 61.

[*esher*]⁷ is one of wholeness and peace that comes from the life-giving presence of God. Your eternal joy and comfort is at stake. Life and death are in the power of this Psalm. Heed it and live.

Phillip Schaff's Definition of Blessedness

The renowned German theologian Phillip Schaff has described it as the “condition of abiding satisfaction fully realized in consciousness” “to be happy” and to “attain full satisfaction in the inner man.”⁸

The New Testament idea of this blessedness is “being filled with all the fullness of God” and being brought into full maturity and conformity in Christ (**Rom. 8:30**). To have this “joy unspeakable and full of glory” as a result of our union with Christ.

The Hebrew Idea of Blessedness: To See God's Face

R.C. Sproul says in his book “Knowing Scripture,” that Hebrew concept of blessedness is the idea of being able to see God's face.

“How did the Hebrew mind understand the notion of blessedness? Hear the words of the classic Hebrew benediction and try to catch a glimpse...

Num. 6:24-26, “The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

“For the Jew, the ultimate state of blessedness comes from being able to stand so near to God as to see His face. The one thing fallen humans were prohibited in the Old Testament was to behold the face of God. They could draw near - Moses could view God's back parts - they could have fellowship with God, but His face could not be seen. But the hope of Israel, the final and highest benediction, was the hope of seeing God face to face.”⁹

Regeneration: The Imagery of a Tree

Remember, it was at the base of a tree that Adam and Eve were tempted and plunged the whole human race into sin. “In Adam all die.”

The angels with flaming swords guarded the tree of life, so that Adam would not eat of the tree of life and live forever. We read in **Genesis 3:24**, that the LORD God “...drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

Transplanted Back into Eden

And so to be “transplanted” like a tree is significant. It is to be placed back into Eden. We are now like the tree of life, transplanted by the rivers of water!

And so we see this image of regeneration. A tree cannot transplant itself. We are planted by the husbandman, the gardener.

⁷ Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

⁸ Philip Schaff. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1912), 200.

⁹ R.C. Sproul. *Knowing Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 98-99.

II. A call to **wholeness** in God alone – vs. 1-3, “Blessed is the man...”

The Blessing of Progress!

The Christian life is compared to a walk (see Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15). It begins with a step of faith in trusting Christ and it grows as we take further steps of faith in obedience to His Word. Walking involves progress, and Christians are to make progress in applying Bible truths to daily life. But it is possible for the believer to walk “in the darkness,” outside the will of God (1 John 1:5–7).¹⁰

1. The Growing Christian **Forsakes sin.**

Paul Washer (the evangelist) said, “The person who has a new relationship with God also has a new relationship with sin. What we once hated, we now love. What we once loved, we now hate.” Psalm 1:1 really expresses this in a remarkable way.

The born again Christian can know He is growing because He is growing more and more distant from sin and sinful living.

If spiritual intimacy is like a food for the Christian, then sin is like a cancer. All you want to do as a child of God is get rid of it—keep it as far away as possible.

1 John 1:6, “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

St. John repeats what the Psalmist so well-articulated in the first Psalm.

Psalm 1:1, “Blessed is the man

[The blessed person is identified as the one] who

walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

nor stands in the way of sinners,

nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

- The blessed man does not **listen** to the counsel of the ungodly
- The blessed man does not **linger** in the way of sinners
- The blessed man does not **laugh** in the seat with scoffers

Alexander Pope Quote

The famous English poet, **Alexander Pope** wrote of the progression of the backslider who loves the vice of the world:

“Vice is a monster of so frightful appearance, as to be hated needs but be seen. Yet seen to oft, too familiar that face, we may first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

The Opposite of Backsliding is Growing and Changing

The Blessed Man does not walk ... stand ... sit with the ungodly. Blessed is the man! Truly satisfied and spiritually mature is the man who **avoids backsliding!**

The Blessed Man Will Not **Listen to the Counsel of the Ungodly**

¹⁰ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ps 1:1–3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The battle begins in the mind. We must be careful of friends, of media, even of family that would begin to change our focus from the Lord.

The Bible says in **Ephesians 4:22**, “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.”

Psalm 101:3 “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.”

Amusement: the pathway to backsliding

We are to be careful about what we think about as Christians. There is never a time when we are to stop thinking. We have to be careful about our a-musement. To muse means to think. To be a-mused is to stop thinking. The Christian is never to park his or her brain at the door, even in our entertainment. It’s good to enjoy life (as Ecclesiastes teaches us) but let us be careful to FEAR the Lord in all that we do!

There is a worldly, careless lifestyle to be avoided, not emulated. The sequence of verbs employed describe a life immersed and focused on association with all that is opposed to God. The order of these verbs may indicate a gradual descent into evil, in which one first walks alongside, then stops, and ultimately takes up permanent residence¹⁶ in the company of the wicked.¹¹

The Blessed Man Will Not **Linger in the Lifestyle of Sinners**

A Nature that Hates Sin

The next line progresses the image to one who has not just taken the advice of the wicked, but is now “standing firm in it; the single action has become a way of life.”¹²

Growing and changing means that God has put within your nature a hatred for worldly counsel. You can no longer live comfortably in sin anymore.

The Wet Canoe Ride – Christians Not Comfortable in Sin

As Christians we cannot live comfortably in sin anymore. Sin is like water. Sometimes we think we can get real close to the water and not get wet.

Several years ago, when Jill and I were newly married, we went to a marriage and family conference at a Christian Camp. We decided to go canoeing to a little place called “The Island.” We thought we’d have time after dinner to go on a romantic canoe ride before the big chapel time in the evening. Well, chapel started at 7pm and it was only about 6:00 so I thought we had plenty of time to go canoeing! So we began to paddle. Of course I wanted to be the navigator, so I had to sit in the back.

The farther we paddled the farther the island seemed to be away from us. Before too long we had to turn back, because it was getting time for chapel. I told Jill we had to row as fast as we could to get back. Well the faster we rowed the wetter we got. Do you know how miserable it is to sit through a service with your feet soak and wet?

We couldn’t wait to get back and put on fresh clothes. Like wet, stale, dirty clothes, Christians are not comfortable in sin!

¹¹ Wilson, G. H. (2002). *Psalms* (Vol. 1, p. 94). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

¹² John Goldingay, *Psalms 1-41*, “Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms,” ed. Tremper Longman II (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 82.

Jesus was a Friend of Sinners

So the blessed man does not “stand in the way of sinners.” What does that mean? Jesus was a friend of sinners! Was he wrong to stand with them? No! The Psalmist is speaking of participating in the way of living, the lifestyle of the lost. Jesus was a friend of sinners, but he lovingly confronted them in their sin. He told them to “go and sin no more.”

St. John in His First Epistle

Thinking leads to acting. Careful thinking and acting is a **mark of true regeneration**. St. John asks the question over and over again in his First Epistle: *How do we know we are born again?* Our appetite tells us if we’ve had a nature change. If we have a new heart, we will have the capacity to love Christ and keep His commandments.

How can we know if we have partaken of the new birth? This is the same question the Apostle John asks in his First Epistle. Just as Psalm 1 says, we know the man is blessed because of His changed life. We know anyone is regenerated because they now hate sin and love submission to God. They love to live in obedience to God. They hate the devil’s counsel and they love the counsel of God’s Word. They live by God’s Word they love it so much.

1 John 3:4-9, “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.”

Take Heed!

Who will be so thick, hard-hearted and stubborn as to not see what is at stake? The test of our eternal salvation is our delight in the Torah or in the world. We cannot both love the world and love God. As Jesus said, “We cannot serve two masters.”

“The one who is a friend of the world is an enemy of God” (Jms. 4:4).

The Blessed Man Will Not **Laugh** in the Seat of Scoffers

This means we must hate the awful condition of those that do not know Christ. We no longer sit where they sit. We have been raised with Christ. Now we must seek to live that resurrected life, and point them to Christ!

Peter’s Sad Progression

Be warned of backsliding! We see this sad development in Peter’s disobedience. Jesus gave Peter good counsel and said he should go and wait (John 18:8), but instead, Peter took his sword out and followed after Jesus into the fray of temptation (18:15). Peter didn’t **listen** to the counsel of the ungodly. Next we see him **standing** with the wrong crowd (18:18), and before long he is **sitting** by the fire, cursing and saying, “I don’t know this Jesus of Nazareth” (Luke 22:55).¹³

¹³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ps 1:1–3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

REVIEW: 1. The Growing Christian Forsakes sin.

2. The Growing Christian Feasts on the Word.

Psalm 1:2, “but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

Delights in the Word

St. Jerome said, “The one who is blessed not only puts off sin, but delights in the Word of God, expressing wholehearted obedience to Law of the LORD.”¹⁴ This is the regenerated person.

Jerome went on to say in his sermon on Psalm 1: “It is not sufficient for us to reject evil unless we seek the good.” We put off the old by putting on the new.¹⁵

The Blessed Man or Woman is Word Saturated

The people God blesses not only read the Word daily, but they study it, memorize it, and meditate on it during the day and night. Their mind is controlled by the Word of God. Because of this, they are led by the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. Meditation is to the soul what “digestion” is to the body. It means understanding the Word, “chewing on it,” and applying it to our lives, making it a part of the inner person.¹⁶

The growing Christian will be growing in saturation of the Word! What we delight in is our **passion**. There are those who more than anything love: sports, or love music, or something else. It doesn't matter what it is. Our first love should be the Lord. Our life should revolve around Him.

Paul said in **Philippians 3:10**, “That I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” That's my passion! I want to know Christ!

Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Changed Thinking

The essence of biblical repentance is changed thinking. That is the very core of what it means to repent. The blessed man is the person who has a “renewed mind.” He or she is one who distains the counsel of this lost and dying world and delights in the counsel of the Word.

Day and Night

The Bible says clearly that we should “meditate on the law of the Lord day and night.” It's not just becoming Bible egg heads. Someone said, “The only part of the Bible you truly believe is the part you obey.” The point of reading is to chew on it and digest it and incorporate it into life.

You might say, “How is it possible to do so day and night? I have to sleep don't I?” It reveals that meditation is not just reading but thinking, applying, even dreaming about obeying the Lord!

Everything we do should be a way to practice the principles of the Word of God. Practicing God's presence should be our focus at work, at recreation, and in everything we do.

¹⁴ Blaising, C. A., & Hardin, C. S. (2008). *Psalms 1–50* (p. 1). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

¹⁵ St. Jerome. *The Homilies*, 5.

¹⁶ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ps 1:1–3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

We need to meditate on God while we shop, while we are in a basketball game, while you drive in your car. Day and night we are to be meditating on God's Word so that we can be living out the its principles.

REVIEW: 1. The Growing Christian Forsakes sin.
2. The Growing Christian Feasts on the Word.

3. The Growing Christian Flourishes in life!

Psalm 1:3, "He is like a tree
[trans]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."

Transplanted Trees!

The idea is that we are a tree that has been rooted up from one lifestyle and transplanted into another.

The theological implications of being a "transplanted tree" should not be overlooked.¹⁷ This tree is described as one that is not naturally found next to these rivers of water, but rather has been intentionally placed there for nourishment.

Thus the natural state of fallen humanity is the path of wickedness, but the truly blessed person delights in God's Word because he has been thus transplanted next to nourishing water.

Streams of Water

The believer is "transplanted" by "streams of water." Bruce Waltke, a Hebrew scholar suggests that these "streams" are not naturally there, but have been hewn in like a "water channel" or "an irrigation canal." Just as the tree represents the blessed person in the metaphor, these irrigation channels represent the Torah [LAW] of the LORD.

Waltke explains: "Water is especially precious in the parched Near East. The word for stream [peleg] almost always refers positively to the intentional channeling of abundant, gladdening, life-giving water in an otherwise dry place.

A natural river (nahar) might run wild or run dry, the "streams" of water put there by God provide a steady, directed, full supply of life-giving water."¹⁸ The truly blessed person is like a tree intentionally planted (transplanted) next to the irrigation channels that supply this life-giving water.

A Promise for Wholeness

The Blessed Man is planted by the rivers of water. We are not only:

- separated from the world, and
- saturated with the Word, but we are
- situated by the waters!

¹⁷ Brown, 56, 76-78.

¹⁸ Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 140.

Situated by the Waters!

Rejoice today that God Himself has placed you by the still waters. And even those waters have been hewn out by His own dear hand for you to have “every spiritual blessing” in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

III. A call to hope in God alone – vs. 4-6, “not so the wicked!”

Finally, we have a warning, but for the Christian, every warning is merciful word! We are warned that there is NO HOPE outside of God alone!

Reading of Holy Scripture

There is no hope without God.

Psalm 1:4-6, “The wicked are not so [blessed],
but are [cursed] 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.”

No Meaningful Results

Suddenly, and without warning, the psalmist interjects with a strong statement that sets apart the wicked from the righteous. “Not so the wicked!” serves to draw a sharp contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Whereas the righteous are blessed in all that they do, the wicked are excluded from all the blessings of God’s people. This brief phrase is all that is required to evaluate the results of the wicked, for they have nothing worth mentioning.¹⁹

NO MEANING IN LIFE

Psalm 1:4, “The wicked are not so [blessed],
but are [cursed] like chaff that the wind drives away.”

The Wicked are NOT like the Godly

“Not so the wicked!” says the Psalmist. This means that all that the godly person enjoys and experiences is not true in the life of the ungodly. The godly are compared to a tree—strong, permanent, beautiful, useful, fruitful. The ungodly are compared to chaff—they have no roots; they are blown with the wind; they are useless to the plans of God; they are neither beautiful nor fruitful²⁰

Like the Chaff

Like the chaff that floats away from the wheat. All that the wicked worship and seek: power and treasure and popularity is all “fleeting” like the wind. Without the fear of the Lord, everything is as Solomon says, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

Solomon said in **Ecclesiastes 12:13**, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty [purpose] of man.”

¹⁹ M.A. Tiberi. Sermon Manuscript. “Psalm 1: The Blessed One” Living Hope Bible Church. June 30, 2013.

²⁰ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ps 1:4–6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Man's highest calling and destiny is to be blessed and happy in the face of God. Why are people miserable chasing after temporary dreams? Why is one Super Bowl not enough? Why do people go from marriage after marriage and relationship to relationship? Because we were made for something bigger!

- **Oswald Chambers** put it this way, "The remarkable thing about fearing God is that, when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else."

NO PARDON IN DEATH

Psalm 1:5, "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Only Two Ways

The righteous have the guarantee of eternal life; the wicked destruction.

"So the two ways, and there is no third, part forever." ~ Derek Kidner

A Future Judgment

Is there a future judgment? Verse 5 informs us that there is. The wicked will be judged according to their sins.

Psalm 130:3-4,

"If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

O Lord, who could stand?

⁴But with you there is forgiveness,

that you may be feared."

NO SALVATION IN ETERNITY

Psalm 1:6, "for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

The Lord Knows the Righteous

Even though Peter sinned against Christ, the Lord asked Peter three times: "Do you love me?" The Lord knows the hearts of the righteous. They are not perfect. They are not sinless, but they are sinning less.

The Word "Know"

The word "know" in the Bible means much more than the mental understanding indicated when we say, "I know the names of the twelve Apostles." In addition, it carries the idea of choosing and caring. "The Lord knows those who are His" (2 Tim. 2:19, NKJV). "I know my sheep" and His sheep hear his voice and follow Him (John 10:14-15, NKJV).

I Never Knew You

Christ's statement to the lost is, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23). You may know of Christ, but does Christ know you?

No salvation outside of Christ

The “way of the wicked will perish!” There is no eternal salvation or hope for the one who lives for this world.

Christ said, “I am the Way.” Is He your pathway every day? Are you walking with Him? He said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (Jn. 5:5).

So Many are Surviving

There are some this year who have simply survived. We have stagnated. We cannot say we have grown in a meaningful way.

This year let us determine that we are going to grow in Christ! We are not just going to survive! We are going to THRIVE!