

Subject: *Living by the Book*

Scripture: *Psalms 1:1-6*

This is the first of several messages I am going to preach on the Bible. To introduce this series I thought, where should I begin and this passage came to mind. It is a powerful scripture that reminds us to spend time in God's Word and be assured that God will use His Word to guide and bless our lives. This psalm shows us how to have a blessed life. The word "blessed" is the Hebrew word for "happy" and it is plural in number, so it could be translated "How blessed, how blessed is the man...."

When we look down to verses 5-6, we see that the blessed man is the righteous man, the man who is right with God. The blessed man is the man who lives right and has a right standing with God. We understand of course that "the man" is generic meaning "the person." The Bible describes people in two categories. It makes a sharp distinction between the two: saints and sinners, the godly and the ungodly, the just and the unjust, the righteous and the wicked, friends of God and enemies of God, those who love God and those who hate Him, believers and unbelievers, sheep and wolves, children of God and children of the devil, children of obedience and children of disobedience, children of light and children of darkness, children of the kingdom and children of wrath, the wheat and the tares, the saved and the lost. Nowhere are those clear contrasts more evident than in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. By definition a person is either married or unmarried, thankful or unthankful, godly or ungodly, blessed or cursed.

The blessed man rejects the ways of the world (vs. 1)

He is in the world, but not of the world. He makes his choices carefully and correctly. It has been said that we make our choices and then our choices make us. The blessed or happy man is marked by the things he rejects or does not do.

- He rejects the world's advice. He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He does not listen to the counsel of the ungodly. His view of life and his values are not shaped by the world. ***Romans 12:2*** *And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.* John MacArthur made this observation: "The greatest failure of modern Christianity is not in people's inability to recognize problems. The failure is when they look to human wisdom for the answers because they don't understand God's Word enough to trust it." Worldly philosophy has been described like a blind man searching in a dark room for a black cat that isn't there. The world doesn't have the right answers because it doesn't even know the right questions. But God's Word has the answers we need. ***Psalms 119:105*** *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* ***Psalms 119:130*** *The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*
- He rejects the world's activities. He does not stand in the way of sinners. We are in the world, but we are not to be of the world. Jesus came into this world and He was called "a friend of sinners," but He was on a mission to save them and lead them to whole new way of life. ***Proverbs 4:14-15*** ¹⁴ *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.* ¹⁵ *Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*
- He rejects the world's attitudes. He does not sit down in the seat of the scornful. Notice the progression here: "walking, standing, sitting." This is the settled

attitude or disposition of the world. It refers to the hard hearts of people who openly oppose the truth of God's Word and make fun of the Christian faith. Worldly advice leads to worldly activities which lead to worldly attitudes. **Proverbs 14:12** *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

The blessed man avoids the counsel of the atheist and the humanist. But the greater danger is the entertainment world and the things it promotes. The blessed man does not think like the world, act like the world, talk like the world, or feel like the world. God warns us in **1 John 2:15** *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

The blessed man is rooted in the Word of God (vs. 2-3)

He is able to reject what is wrong because he chooses what is right. He gets counsel and guidance from God's Word. **Psalms 119:1** *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.* The blessed man listens to a different counselor. His first love is the Word of God.

- **He desires the Word** – *his delight is in the law of the LORD*
Reading and studying the Bible is a delight, not a duty. **1 Peter 2:2** *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.* We need to be like Ezra the scribe, **Ezra 7:10** *For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.*
- **He dives into the Word** – *in his law doth he meditate day and night.* Whatever gets your attention will get you. To meditate is to think deeply on scripture. Meditation does for our spirit what digestion does for our body. The world has a form of meditation that encourages a person to put everything out of his mind, to put his mind in neutral. But biblical meditation is just the opposite. We don't put our mind in neutral; we put it in gear as we read, think, and reflect on what we have read. We ask questions like: Is there a sin to confess? Is there a promise to claim? Is there an attitude to change? Is there a command to obey? Is there an example to follow? Is there a prayer to pray? Is there an error to avoid? Is there a truth to believe? Is there something to praise God for? The godly person has a different source of counsel. He lives for a different cause. He keeps different company.

Verse 2 describes what goes on inside the blessed man's heart and mind. Verse 3 describes what is revealed on the outside. In other words, verse 2 describes the root and verse 3 describes the fruit. The blessed man is like a tree thriving beside a refreshing river.

- **His stability** – *like a tree planted* – He has deep roots, a hidden source of life and strength. Notice that a tree is planted. It cannot plant itself. God will plant us with deep roots if we give time and attention to His Word.
- **His productivity** – *that brings forth his fruit* – He has a fruitful life that blesses other people. **Galatians 5:22-23** ²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,* ²³ *Meekness, temperance (self-control): against such there is no law.* People in this world see too many religious nuts and not enough spiritual fruit.

- His vitality – *his leaf also shall not wither* – He is like an evergreen tree.
- His prosperity – *whatsoever he doeth shall prosper* – The godly person prospers in a spiritual way. God wants to prosper us in every way, so that we are truly blessed and successful in our families, our church, our job, our schools, in public life as well as private life. He wants to bless every area of our lives. God told Joshua the same key to success, **Joshua 1:8** *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

We are so blessed to have God's Word. Millions of people in this world have never seen or heard the Word of God. The sad thing about our nation is that most people have a Bible, but they don't read it. Many people claim to believe the Bible cover to cover, but they have never read and studied it cover to cover. Someone said that if all the people who neglected their Bibles were to dust them off at the same time, it would create the worst dust storm the world has ever known.