

## Psalm 1 – The Blessed Man

**Introduction:** Are you “blessed?” This is one of those questions that many, whether Christian or not, would answer with a confident “yes.” What is often understood by this question that what is being asked is whether a person is merely happy, or perhaps whether they are aware of good things in their life.

- I want us to look at a Psalm this morning that gives us an understanding of what it means to be blessed, so that we can answer this question with a solidly biblical answer.
- This is the opening Psalm of all the others, that orients and sets the tone for the rest of the Psalms.
- This can be considered a Wisdom Psalm, describe the difference of the godly/ungodly person. This is a vivid contrast of two kinds of people. As is true in much of Scripture, when it lays out principles it is black and white. Like in Proverbs, there is the fool and the wise. While there can be some crossover (the righteous can do some foolish things, and even the fool can do some wise things) it is a description of the fundamental and overall character of a person.
- It could also be considered a Beatitude Psalm. A beatitude is God’s declaration of true blessedness. Not only blessed in the subjective sense (how I feel or what I experience), but also in the sense that God will bless such a person.
- Keep in mind that when it speaks of “man”, what is meant is a person, regardless of gender or age. So this applies to whoever you are man, woman, boy, or girl.

### THREE THINGS THE BLESSED MAN DOES NOT DO – v.1

- There is probably intended a kind of progression here. There is a progression or parallel in the verbs (walk, stand, sit) and in the subjects (ungodly, sinners, scornful).

#### 1.) *Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly*

- What is the counsel of the ungodly? It is what the ungodly, those who do not live by biblical principles, say to do. This is their counsel or their advise. This includes anything that is contrary to what God says in His Word.
- There are many examples that we hear every day: live by how you feel, buy more than you can afford, get revenge, don’t forgive, exercise your pride, speak evil of others, grumble and complain (because you have a right), fantasize (about things that aren’t right), lie and cheat, commit sexual immorality (because it is just “natural”), get away with what you can, always assert your rights, pursue more pleasure, use your time as you wish (for it is your own), tell that person off, don’t worry about honoring your parents, listen/watch anything you want. This counsel can also include that suggestion that one should “seem” spiritual, but not to “be” spiritual.
- The blessed person is one who does not walk in that counsel. They don’t obey it, they don’t live that way.

#### 2.) *Nor stands in the path of sinners*

- A person who walks in this false counsel stands in the path of sinners, that is they join that company and become participants with them. They become their companions. They join them in the way they live because they have chosen that way.
- Not so of the blessed person, while they live in and among the world physically speaking, it is clear by their life that they are not companions with them of those ways. They don’t do so just to “fit in” or “reach” the ungodly, knowing that to do so is to join in a rebellion against the Lord.

#### 3.) *Nor sits in the seat of the scornful*

- Ultimately, a person who listens to and follows this advise and counsel becomes a teacher of those ways. They may know they should do it or should live differently, they are teaching by how they live.
- The scornful is one who mocks the way of righteousness by their words. This “seat” refers to a settled position, and probably that of joining in in giving that advise to others. Though they may say “do as I say and not as I do”, their actions speak louder than their words.
- The blessed person does not do so, for they speak and live the Word of righteousness, and become not only teachers with what they say but also with what they do.
- How does a person, in the midst of being surrounded by those who do not live with a heart for God, keep from being corrupted by the voices and lives of those around them? This we see in v.2.

### WHAT THE BLESSED MAN DOES DO – v.2

- There is a strong contrast here. It is more than just “but”, but in the Hebrew “because.” It is not just because they passively don’t enter into that way of living, but there is something active going on that keeps them.
- This has to do with the “law of the LORD.” The blessed person listens to the counsel of someone else. It isn’t that they reject the counsel of the wicked and rely on their own ideas, but rather they realize God has spoken. And what He has spoken is law. This word can be translated direction or instruction. There is a recognition that the God who is over all, in whom we live and move and have our being, has spoken. He has done so for our good.
- There is more described here than a knowledge of that law, for there are many who have had much exposure to the Word of God and who do not live accordingly. Rather, we are told that this person has “delight” in that instruction from the LORD. This word means desire, pleasure, or longing.
- The blessed person is one who knows God has spoken, and takes pleasure in His words with a desire to live accordingly. With all the struggles and failures and sin, there is an ongoing pursuit of rejecting ungodly advise and receiving God’s counsel.

## Psalm 1 – The Blessed Man

- How is this seen? We are told that this man meditates on God's Word day and night. The word "meditate" in the Hebrew includes the ideas of mumbling to oneself. Illustration: Perhaps you have had the experience where you want to do something, but think you are likely to forget it. So you repeat it over and over as you go to do it so you don't forget. This is how it is with the Word of God. There is something in particular you want to apply, so you repeat it to yourself through the day (or 3x5 card).
- God's instruction becomes in this way a constant companion, informing and instructing the righteous person in all of their life. He doesn't assign importance to God's Word just to a devotional time or to Sundays, but what is learned becomes a constant companion. He or she thinks about it, what it says about them and their situations, whether during the day, when they lie awake at night. They know that the only time the Word of God is not relevant is when it is neither day or night (IOW, never).

### A PICTURE OF THE BLESSED MAN – v.3

- The Psalmist begins to use a picture taken from nature to vividly describe this kind of person. It is the illustration of a tree. This is a tree which is planted by rivers of water. In the Psalmist's climate and geography, this would be a very well known imagery. In many areas it would be dry without much rainfall. The trees that grew would often be scrawny, and if a fruit producing tree very limited in what it could produce. But a tree that was planted by a river, whose roots went down deep and strong, would receive water from the soil. Picture a desert and an oasis, and you get the picture.
- What is the result for the tree? It brings forth fruit that is luscious and has leaves that are flourishing. It is a prosperous tree. It is useful, it is productive, it does what it was intended to do.
- And so it is with this man. Because he is doing that which pleases the Lord, the fruit of his life is good. Even when his circumstances are difficult he can flourish and grow in it. The Word of God is like that river of life to him.

### A PICTURE OF THE UNGODLY – v.4

- Remembering that the ungodly are actually those described in v.1. It is one who, even if they know the Word, are not applying it to their life day and night.
- Such a person is described as chaff. This is in contrast to the tree already described. Unlike a tree that has life, it is dead. A tree has moisture, the chaff is dry. The tree produces fruit, the chaff doesn't, and is worthless, to be blown away like the wind.
- You can arrange the chaff nicely, cover it with gold paint, pile it up in large piles, but it is still worthless.

### THE FINAL DESTINY OF BOTH – vv.5-6

- In these verses, there is a movement from the merely temporal conditions in this life to something even greater. While these two kinds of people are contrasted in how they live, what counsel they follow, their practical application of and delight in the Word of God, the Psalmist points out that this has eternal repercussions.
- He tells us two things about the ungodly, which are really a description of the eternal condition of that kind of person. We are told that they shall not stand in the judgment. What this doesn't mean is that they won't stand in judgment, for we are told that all will stand in judgment before the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:10). Rather it means that when judgment comes, they will not stand, but fall. This word means endure or established. In other words, they won't survive.
- He goes on to describe them as not being in the "congregation of the righteous." This refers to those who do survive the judgment, and are considered as a part of the congregation (or the Greek word for church). Despite their religious knowledge, baptism, attachment to a church, or knowledge of the Bible, this person will not know the ultimate blessing of being among God's people and spending eternity with them.
- There are two final things the Psalmist tells us, and both of them are connected to the fact that God "knows" the way of the righteous. This means more than that God knows by way of knowledge these two ways (for He knows all things), but rather it expresses the idea that He knows and affirms and approves of those who walk in that righteousness. This is in contrast to His not approving the way of the ungodly, and for that reason they will perish.

### Are you the blessed person described in this Psalm?

- I'm not asking if you are "blessed" in a general sense. I'm not asking if you are just happy, or if you realize that God has been good to you...but are you blessed in that you don't \_\_\_\_\_ and do \_\_\_\_\_?
- Everyone one of us can be marked out in one of these two categories. It comes down both to whose counsel we are listening to and living according to (either the ungodly or God's).
- We know that the only way to enter the path of the righteous is through Jesus Christ, and if we have done so we know it is only by His grace and mercy. There is no self-righteousness, for Psalm 130:3 asks if God should mark iniquities, who could stand? The answer is and emphatic "no one."
- Yet, the one who has known the grace of the Lord will live differently, and that difference is intimately joined to a delight in God's instruction which bears fruit as we recall it day and night.
- If you are not this person described, I would urge you to face your condition now and eternally. There is so much more that you can know and experience of God's blessing.
- If you are one who, by God's grace is such a person, continue to do so, resist the ways of the world, and know God's promise of your condition eternally.