

**Psalm 1: 1-3; “Christ – The Most Blessed of Men”; A Communion Sermon,
preached in preparation for the taking of the Lord’s Supper,
by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 3rd, 2016,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

This Psalm stands as the entrance door to all of the rest of the Psalms. It stands as a door-keeper to open up the door and let us look in at the experience and character of a godly man; what he looks like, and how he lives. This door-keeper is asking you – “Would you be godly?” “Then enter here.” To be a godly man or woman, your orientation must be that you are most concerned with God. You are most concerned to learn to do what is pleasing to Him. You are caught up with Him. It is not just that you want to be godly; but it is true of you that you have determined by the grace of Jesus Christ that you will be godly. Godliness is a matter of heart obedience. The direction of your heart; what you pay attention to, the most, in your thoughts; what gives you the greatest delight in your feelings; and what determines your will; is all to be found in God. So this afternoon as we draw near to the Lord’s Table, I would like to speak about the Lord Jesus; His heart and life. And then I want you to compare His life with your own life. Our Lord was the most blessed of men because He was the most godly man, when He walked upon this earth. Do you want to be blessed; do you want to be happy, and happy forever? Then listen as I give to you the 3 descriptions of a godly man as they were fulfilled perfectly in the heart and life of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1st - A man is godly if he is Separate. 2nd - A man is godly if he Meditates. And 3rd - A man is godly if he is Fruitful. Let us, each one, look carefully at our heart, look carefully at our life, to see whether we are a godly person. If we are not, we should pray to come to know God through the One; the only One; who was perfect here upon this earth; the Lord Jesus Christ.

1st of all - The first description of a godly man, as it was ultimately fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, is that he is Separate. (Verse 1)

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinner, nor sits in the seat of the scornful...” The word “Blessed” in the original Hebrew is in the noun plural; (Ashrey) which means “blessednesses”. So we should, conclude that there are many rich blessings which attend the way of the godly man; the person who will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. The word “ungodly” Matthew Henry says: “signifies such people who are unsettled, they aim at no rule, but are at the command of every lust, and at the beck of every temptation.” In other words, they are unstable souls and they like to believe that they are wise and can give advice and instruction to other people, when they do not know God; when they do not know the meaning of life, and when they do not know their own hearts. It is always a blessed thing when a person will live their life, walking separate from sinners. Our Lord Jesus Christ knew this better than anyone else. He knew that there is a progression in being a sinful and ungodly person. He knew that sinners never remain in a static state, but they will move ever downward and away from God. If He was standing here today, He would say to us: “This is why you should believe in Me when you are young, and learn to be separate.”

Do you see the progression of sin? First, you walk in the counsel of the ungodly; then you stand in the path of the sinner, and then finally you sit down in the seat of one who scorns the admonitions of God’s Word. You will no longer allow anyone to tell you where you might be wrong, or lead you toward what is right. This is why the Lord Jesus had to die. It was the counsel of the ungodly who found the Righteous One guilty, and put the Lord of Glory on the cross. But the Lord has used it for the ultimate good; the salvation of all who would believe in Him. As a believer, you have come to understand that there is a counsel of the Lord that He will give to you in His Word which must be heeded if you would come to have the assurance of your salvation. Real and true assurance comes to the person who has believed in the gospel and they

are now trying to bring into their heart all the Scriptural principles, precepts, and promises which will build them up and make them strong in Christ. There is wisdom in heeding this counsel which is found in the Bible. You will surely make progress in holiness if you heed it from a young age.

Turn with me to 2 Timothy 3: 12. "But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured." "And out of them all the Lord delivered me." "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." "But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." You can see here that the Apostle Paul had separated himself from the counsel of sinners. And he was willing to suffer for it. Are you? Let me ask you if you listen more to the counsel of your friends or to your godly parents if you are a young person? If you are an adult, do you listen to the counsel of worldly friends, relatives, and acquaintances, or do you listen to the counsel of the godly who will give you the truth and counsel of the Scriptures? But Paul is reminding Timothy, here, of how he came to be a Christian. He knew the Scriptures because he had been taught them from childhood. It was the Scriptures that were able to make him wise unto salvation. So salvation comes by faith in Jesus Christ. This is why the Lord Jesus suffered; so that you would be made wise.

Turn with me over to Proverbs chapter 1, verse 5. It says here: "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain (or acquire) wise counsel, to understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles." Solomon is here introducing us to the importance of listening to godly parents, and wise and godly men. He is saying that the Bible will seem like an enigma; godliness will seem unattainable when you are not believing in Christ. But Solomon points us in the right direction to the answer to our perplexities and our questions. He says in verse 7 – "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; for they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck." If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, then we must realize that this fear is good. It is not something to be afraid of. It comes by hearing and heeding a godly parent's instruction as they teach the Bible to their children. What happens if the Bible is taught and you do not response by faith to the instruction which is given you? Well, the counsel of the ungodly and the world will eventually prevail with you. Eventually you will come to stand in the way of sinners and finally you will come to sit in the seat of scorners.

Ah, how important it is, not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly; how very precious it is; how very blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But how does this strength and grace come to live that way? It comes through Jesus Christ our Lord whose death and resurrection we have come here to remember at this hour. The Lord Jesus is full of wisdom and the fear of the Lord. And He has much grace to give to you who believe in Him. We have come here to remember what He has done for us. You should remember that He was the most blessed among men because He was given the Spirit without measure. And He walked in the fear of the Lord all the day the long because He had a sinless heart and He kept His heart pure and unstained from sin. How was He able to do this as a Man? In Isaiah 11: 1 it says, "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and Branch shall grow out of his roots." "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." "His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His

ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.”

Listen to how Jesus was, when he was a young man. In Luke 2: 49, after His parents had been seeking for Him in Jerusalem for 3 days, they say to Him: “Son why have You done this to us?” “Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.” “And He said to them, Why did you seek Me?” “Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?” Was He being unkind? Was He being disrespectful? Was He being arrogant? No, He was being faithful to His Father, to love Him with all His heart. “Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?” “But they did not understand this statement which He spoke to them.” Did He then, after this, treat His parents as though they did not know what they were talking about, and that He was much smarter and wiser than they? No, not at all. It says in verse 51, “Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.” “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” He was separate from sinners. He loved God His Father with all of His heart, and He put God first in terms of all of His obedience. That is why we worship Him today. Because He was faithful in every way where we were not, when we were young and growing up.

This is also why we rejoice today. We have a Savior who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, as it says in Hebrews 7, verse 26. He was not detoured from His obedience by any man, He did not compromise to walk in the counsel of the ungodly at any point. In Hebrews Chapter 7, verse 22, it says that “Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant” than the Old Covenant. Jesus rendered a perfect obedience to God and went to the cross and bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. This is the New Covenant. In His righteousness He endured the mocking and the reviling of men who should have been worshiping Him. He had not walked in their counsel, and now they scorned Him. But He did this for our sakes. This is why you and I can become godly and increase in godliness; because of what Jesus did as the most Blessed of men.

Now the 2nd description of a godly man as it was ultimately fulfilled in Christ, is, that he Meditates.

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” To meditate is to think upon or to ponder the Scriptures long enough to grasp the greater and deeper meaning that is there. There is always something more for us in the Word of God because it is God's book. Let us remember that, and place it at the top of our reading list; not to read it occasionally, but day and night. Calvin says that God is only rightly served when His law is obeyed.” How then can you please God if you neglect what He is saying to you? Well you cannot. Thomas Watson says, “The Hebrew word to meditate, signifies to be intense in the mind.” “In meditation there must be a fixing of the thoughts upon the object.” “Meditation is the concoction of Scripture; reading brings a truth into our head, mediation brings it into our heart.” It is meditating upon this word that makes and shapes you into a godly man or woman. You are to meditate upon it day and night. Not just when it is convenient; but you are to incorporate it into all of your thinking. You think upon it long enough that you take it into yourself; into your soul, so that your soul is nourished and strengthened. The Christian man or woman learns, that in terms of their growth or spiritual strength, it is not enough just to have the spiritual food to eat, but that their food should be enjoyed. The Word of God, which is what it means here by “the law of the Lord”, is something that should be carefully chewed and swallowed and then digested. “It is not a good thing to wolf your food”, my mother used to tell me when I was young. Truth is not something simply to be hastily brought into the spiritual stomach of the mind and heart. It is to be thought upon in relation to ourselves and then ourselves in relation to God. Meditation is more like the chewing of the cud. You chew it, and then you chew it again to get more out of it.

Let me give you a couple of reasons that you should meditate on the Scriptures, which are called the law of the Lord in our text. In Psalm 119, verse 15 – “I will meditate on your precepts, and contemplate your ways.” You should meditate upon the moral commandments of God’s holy law in order to know more about His righteousness, His holiness, and His way of doing things. His ways are not your ways, nor His thoughts your thoughts. (Isaiah 55, verse 8) The more that you meditate on His precepts, His rules for you to live by, the more you come to understand something more of what He would have you to do for Him as a Christian, and in praying in regard to your meditation, you will even come to know how to go about doing it. When your mind and your heart are filled with the Scripture and you meditate upon it; it will speak to you. It will be living and active and sharper than a two edged sword; the truth coming to your heart. This is especially true when you remember that God has given you His Holy Spirit to reside in your heart, and to reveal more of Christ to you through this means. It will lead you personally to render to God a more loving and more thorough obedience to His commands. Christ must have been the Ultimate Meditator upon the Scripture. He was the One who said, “Behold, I have come - In the volume of the book it is written of Me – I delight to do Your will, O God, and Your law is within my heart.” How often He must have meditated upon it in terms of keeping all the commandments of God on our behalf. “I have food which you know nothing of,” He said to His disciples. His food was to the will of His Father God.

Second – Psalm 119: 48 – “My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, which I love and I will meditate on Your statutes.” Meditating on God’s statutes you will be able to praise Him for all of His wonderful commandments, confessing that you now love them, when once you hated them. You come to realize that this change of attitude comes also from Christ’s having died for you. You could have never praised Him before, for what you once thought was burdensome; that is, serving God by keeping His commandments, if the love of Christ did not now fill your heart. But now the word is sweet; sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb. So as we come down front now, let us meditate upon the fact that our Lord Jesus kept all of God’s commandments perfectly on our behalf. And let us rejoice that He is our Savior.

The 3rd Description of the godly man, as it was ultimately fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, is that He is fruitful.

“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.” A Christian is a tree planted beside the rivers of living water which Christ Jesus has brought to His soul. Jesus said to the woman at the well in John Chapter 4, verse 10, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” She thought that He was talking to her about physical water, coming from the well that was before them. But He was in the process of planting her as a tree beside His rivers of living water. “Whoever drinks of this earthly water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.” “But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” The woman, after Jesus spoke with her for a few minutes more about her sin, came to believe, when He told her that He was the Messiah. But as we now come to His table, let us realize that He has brought us spiritual life as well. He has spoken to us about our sin. He is living in our hearts. His grace is the basis of all of our spiritual growth, because we are planted next to these rivers of living water. And having been planted there, the Lord Jesus is expecting that we will bring forth the fruit of righteousness in good deeds that we will do, in our season. Because of Christ’s death on the cross our leaf (our profession of faith) will not wither. We have life in Jesus’ name, and our confession of Him will not at all disappoint us if we continue steadfast in our faith in Him. That is what this ordinance is all about. It is about strengthening and nourishing your faith in Him. It is feeding upon His faithfulness.