

The Truly Blessed Life

Text: Psalm 1:1-6

Introduction:

1. The Psalms: The Psalms are the hymn book of the Bible and they should be the sound track of our Christian lives. The Psalms contain so many wonderful insights into the ways and the worship of God.
2. Theme of Psalm 1: A contrast between two ways – the way of the godly which is the way of life and blessing and the way of the ungodly which is the way of death and judgment. The pathway of prosperity vs. the pathway of perdition. In this Psalm there are two men, two ways and two destinies. The Psalm divides neatly into two portions:
 - Vs. 1-3 – The way of the godly which is blessed of God.
 - Vs. 4-6 – the way of the ungodly which is cursed of God.
3. The two ways are juxtaposed in order that we might choose the pathway of blessing God has for us.
4. Psalm 1 has been called a preface by Bible expositors. Spurgeon writes, “This Psalm may be regarded as the Preface Psalm having in it a notification of the contents of the entire Book. It is the psalmist’s desire to teach us the way to blessedness, and to warn of the sure destruction of sinners. This then, is the matter of the first Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a Divine sermon.”
5. Following the natural division within the Psalm, we will study it under 2 headings:

I. THE GODLY MAN (VS. 1-3)

There are three main truths presented in these verses about the godly man:

A. The Purity of a Godly Man (Vs. 1)

This verse emphasizes what a godly man will **not do**. The next verse (Vs. 2) emphasizes what a godly man **will do**. It is interesting to note the order. It commences with the power of negative thinking! It starts with the practice and principle of separation in the life of the believer. This is a life of blessing, not bondage! He maintains separation from sinners in 3 key areas:

1. From the Counsel of the World (Vs. 1a)
 - a. “blessed” = the word is translated elsewhere ‘happy’ (e.g. Deut. 33:29; 1 Kings 10:8; Psalm 127:5; 128:2; 144:15). Interestingly, the word is plural in number, revealing that God loves to bestow many rich blessings upon those who know Him and walk in His ways. Blessed is “a term that refers to the joyful spiritual

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condition of those who are right with God and the pleasure and satisfaction that is derived from that." (Ross)

- b. "walketh not" = the word 'walk' in the Bible is a word frequently used to describe our manner of life, the way we live. This means the godly man does not order and pattern his life according to the standards of sinful men.
 - c. "counsel of the ungodly" = the opinions, philosophies and advice of the world. In brief, it is what is described in 1 Cor. 3:19 as the "wisdom of this world" which is "foolishness with God."
 - d. Phillips: "Modern psychology tell us to emphasize the positive; God begins by emphasizing the negative. The happy man is marked by the things he does not do, the places to which he does not go, by the books he does not read, by the movies he does not watch, by the company he does not keep."
 - e. Challenge: Be very careful where you get your counsel from!
 - Beware it is not the "counsel of the ungodly" in the mass media (e.g. T.V. radio, Magazines etc.).
 - Beware it is not movies and movie stars, rock music and rock artists. The separated believer will be careful in his choices of media consumption and will seek to review secular research in light of Biblical truth. While he may stay in touch with the news in order to have an understanding of the times (1 Chr. 12:32), he does not look to journalists, T.V. and radio anchors for wisdom and guidance for life.
 - Beware it is not counsel from unsaved family members, acquaintances or work colleagues. While the separated believer will be a soul-winner and seek to pull lost souls out of the fire, he will also remember the importance of maintaining personal purity by hating the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 1:23).
 - Prov. 19:27 "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."
2. From the Conduct of the World (Vs. 1b)
- a. "the way of sinners" = the word 'way' means "a road" and thus speaks of "a course of life or mode of action" (Strongs).
 - b. 'standeth' = the godly man avoids the paths that lead to temptation and sin. He does not linger or pause in them, knowing his vulnerability to temptation. This word "indicates a halting to consider the life style of the sinner." (Ross)
 - c. Challenge: The Bible teaches us to not only avoid the sin, but to avoid the pathway of temptation that leads to that sin.

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- Prov. 4:14-16 “**Enter not** into the path of the wicked, and **go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For** they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, **unless they cause some to fall.**”
 - Matt. 6:13 “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”
 - Illustration: Joseph is a good example of a man who did not tarry in the place of temptation but fled from it (Gen. 39:1-12)
3. From the Companionship of the World (Vs. 1c)
- a. “the seat of the scornful” = The word ‘scornful’ means “to make mouths at; that is, to scoff.”
 - i. “They make that which is divine, holy and true a subject of frivolous jesting.” (Delitzsch)
 - ii. It also includes those who make light of sin – “Fools make a mock at sin...” (Prov. 14:9) It describes the life of one who is in rebellion against God.. A scornful attitude goes hand in hand with a spirit of rebellion and a life of ungodliness.
 - iii. Illustration: Young people mocking the hymns during church.
 - b. “sitteth not” = the godly man does not keep company with or place himself under the influence of men who despise God and His truth. The word ‘sitteth’ would “signify joining in collusion with scorners and being identified with them.” (Ross) Illustration: Lot sitting in Sodom’s gate.
 - c. Spurgeon: “The seat of the scorner may be very lofty but it is very near the gate of hell.”
4. Note: You will discern a progression in this verse and it describes well the sequence of backsliding – walketh, standeth & sitteth; ungodly, sinners, scornful. It all starts with an acceptance of the ungodly counsel which leads to ungodly conduct which leads to ungodly companionship.

B. The Passion of a Godly Man (Vs. 2)

This is the positive contrast to the picture of Verse 1. The godly man looks to the Word rather than the world for the wisdom he needs for his walk as a Believer. There are two evidences of this:

- 1. He Delights in the Word (Vs. 2a)
 - a. ‘delight’ = means to have “a high degree of pleasure, or satisfaction of mind; joy.” (Webster)
 - b. For the godly man, the Word of God thrills his heart and soul. He loves and cherishes it.

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- c. Psalm 19:10 "**More to be desired** *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."
 - d. Psalm 119:72 "The law of thy mouth *is* **better unto me** than thousands of gold and silver."
 - e. Jeremiah 15:16 "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me **the joy and rejoicing of mine heart**: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts."
2. He Devours the Word (Vs. 2b)
- a. This is the evidence of his love of the Word. His is not a love for God's truth that is expressed in word only. His inner passion for the Word of God drives him to saturate His life in the Word.
 - b. 'meditate' = to think and ponder upon. The word literally means to speak or murmur and so it conveys the concept of speaking the truth over and over to oneself. The same Hebrew word is translated 'imagine' (Ps. 2:1), 'utter' (Job 27:4); 'speaketh' (Ps. 37:30); 'talk' (Ps. 71:24); 'studieth' (Prov. 24:2). It is the opposite to the Eastern concept of transcendental meditation where the mind is disengaged. In Biblical meditation the is mind being exercised. Meditation in the Word is God's antidote to the "counsel of the ungodly." As one old commentator put it, "As the meditation is, such is the man." (See Prov. 23:7)
 - c. "day and night" = this is the evidence of his passion for God's Word. This man does not visit the Bible on the odd occasion, he lives in the Bible. He is occupied with the things of God. His life is consumed with the things of God.

C. The Picture of a Godly Man (Vs. 3)

This verse presents the blessed existence of the man who makes the Word of God his delight under the figure of an oasis. There are five words that summarize the picture of this man. He is...

1. Firm – "a tree planted". The picture is one of stability. He is planted by the Lord. Matthew 15:13 "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my **heavenly Father hath not planted**, shall be rooted up."
2. Fed – "by the rivers of water." A reference to channels of water or irrigation ditches (Ross). The picture is of the nourishing ministry of the Word of God. He is kept from spiritual dryness by consistently drawing on the fresh springs of truth. "For cleansing, water represents the Word of God, for drinking, water represents the Spirit of God. The Word of God purifies, refreshes and beautifies our lives." (Phillips)
3. Fruitful – "bringeth forth his fruit in his season". Because the Word of God fills and nourishes his inner life, he bears fruit for the Lord in the seasons God appoints.

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4. Flourishing – “his leaf also shall not wither”. The Word of God ensures he remains sustained even in the withering trials and testings of life. “The Lord’s trees are all evergreens.” (Spurgeon)
5. Fortunate – “and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper”. His relationship to the Word of God is such that he achieves true success in the spiritual and Scriptural sense of the word. 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.**”

II. THE GODLESS MAN (VS. 4-6)

The Psalmists now contrasts the blessed existence of the godly man with the cursed and wretched existence of the godless man. This is to further impress on the minds of the godly the importance of choosing the way of blessing and to avoid the advice of the ungodly.

A. The Description of the Godless Man (Vs.4)

1. “the ungodly are not so” = a short, pointed statement of the contrasting position of the ungodly. “Whatever good thing is said of the righteous is not true in the case of the ungodly.” (C.H. Spurgeon)
2. “but are like the chaff” = a striking contrast to the figure of the tree in the previous verse which is pictured as strong, sustained, stable and enduring. Chaff is the worthless husks that have been separated from the grain. The wicked are light and lifeless.
3. “which the wind driveth away” = not only do the ungodly perish but they leave nothing that lasts for eternity.
4. This picture of the chaff is used by Christ to describe the judgment of the wicked: Matt. 3:11-12 “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but **he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**”

B. The Damnation of the Godless Man (Vs. 5-6)

1. Their Doom (Vs. 5)
 - a. Separated from God – “not stand in the judgment”. We know that the ungodly will stand before God’s throne in judgment but the word stand is used here in this sense, they have no standing with God. “They shall stand there to be judged, but not to be acquitted.” (Spurgeon)
 - b. Separated from God’s people – “nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous”. The final judgment also seems to be in view.

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The unrepentant sinner will have no place in the heavenly throng of God's people described in Hebrews as "the general assembly and church of the firstborn..." (Heb. 12:23).

2. Their Destiny (Vs. 6)

The way of the righteous and the way of the unrighteous is contrasted. The way of the righteous is the way of salvation; the way of the ungodly is the way of judgment.

a. The way of the righteous (6a).

i. The word 'knoweth' is in the present tense. Delitzsch notes that this is "a knowledge which is in living relationship to its subject and at the same time was inclined to it and bound to it by love." It is the knowledge of Psalm 139 and Matt. 10:29-31. God is intimately and affectionately acquainted with us as His people.

ii. Because God knows His people, they will not perish. They find success both in this life and in the life to come by virtue of their relationship to God.

iii. See Matt. 7:23 and John 10:14.

b. The way of the unrighteous (6b). Again, we see that not only does the ungodly man perish himself but even his "way" perishes as well. That is, he leaves nothing that lasts for eternity. Like chaff blown away in the wind never to be seen again, his life and all its accomplishments fades from view and is lost in the inky blackness of a Christless eternity.

i. Prov. 16:25 "There is **a way** that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof **are the ways of death.**"

ii. Matt. 7:13 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and **broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction**, and many there be which go in thereat:"

iii. Prov. 24:20 "For there shall be no reward to the evil *man*; the candle of the wicked shall be put out."

Conclusion:

1. Theological lessons (what we learn about the Lord)

- God knows, loves and abundantly blesses His people.
- God will judge the unrepentant.

2. Practical lessons (what we learn about the Christian life)

- The necessity of separation in the Christian life.
- The centrality of the Scriptures in the Christian life.