

# MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

## MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

### THE BOOK OF PSALMS

#### Psalm 1

#### The Two Roads of Life

**MAIN IDEA:** Blessed are the righteous who live insulated from the deceptions and defilements of this **evil** world and who internalize God's Word while, to the contrary, the wicked are unstable and will perish.

*A The Way of the Godly (1:1–3)*

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** The godly are abundantly blessed because they do not live according to the sinful philosophies, practices, or associations of fallen men but are deeply rooted in God's Word.

**1:1a.** This psalm begins with the emphatic declaration that God's abundant favor will rest upon the person who lives a truly God-centered life. In the original language, **blessed** is repeated. This is the Hebrew method of indicating the plural, intensifying its meaning. Thus, the phrase should read, "O, how very happy" or "the happinesses!" In reality, this soul satisfaction is pleasure found in the Lord himself. This promise of blessing is precisely what Jesus announced in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3–12). True happiness is the experience of all who trust in the Lord (cp. Pss. 16:11; 21:6; 34:8). The righteous are genuinely satisfied in the Lord (Phil. 4:4).

**1:1b, c, d.** This God-blessed life is first described negatively, or what the godly person does *not* practice. First, He **does not walk in the counsel of the wicked**, meaning he refuses the secular philosophy and humanistic values of the godless. He refuses the worldview that places man at the center of the universe and entices him to live by his own standards of morality and pursuits of pleasure.

Second, neither does the righteous person **stand in the way of sinners**. This infers that his personal behavior resists the lure of the crowd to participate in their carnal activities and sensual living.

Third, the godly person does not **sit in the seat of mockers**, meaning he refuses to associate with those who scoff at God. He avoids close relationships with blasphemers, infidels, and atheists, no matter how prosperous they may be, because “bad company corrupts good character” (1 Cor. 15:33).

**1:2.** Positively, the **delight** of the godly **is in the law of the Lord**. The person who knows genuine **joy** reads and relishes God’s Word. This hunger for the Bible is a clear indication of the new birth as his new nature longs for the truths of God. This new appetite for God’s **truth** leads him to meditate upon the Word **day and night**. He constantly sets his mind on the truths of the Bible, throughout the day focusing on Scripture because it reveals the glory of God and his supremacy.

**1:3.** The person who delights in God’s **law** will be like a **tree planted by streams of water** which draws its life-sustaining nourishment from a stream flowing through its roots. The God-centered life draws its spiritual vitality from God’s Word, which is compared to many **streams**. This word *streams* is in the plural, representing the abundant, overflowing supply of strength and sustaining **grace** conveyed in God’s Word. The godly sets down deep roots into a reservoir which will never run dry—one that refreshes, revives, renews, cleanses, and satisfies those who draw upon it (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26). God’s Word can sustain the godly (cp. Ps. 19:7–10).

When indwelt by the living Word, the leaf of the righteous **does not wither**, meaning all that he does will have eternal value and lasting results. Furthermore, he is like a tree that **yields its fruit in season**. This pictures a continual fruitfulness in every season of life, whether good times or bad times, triumphs or **trials**. So potent is God’s Word that **whatever he does prospers**. He will enjoy a spiritually enriched life, the fullest life imaginable.

*B The Way of the Ungodly (1:4–6)*

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** By contrast, the person who lives without God is morally corrupt and will be condemned and damned forever.

**1:4.** Are the ungodly blessed? **Not so!** Are they happy? Not so! Successful? Not so! Fruitful? Not so! They may sound gregarious and look successful, but they are not so! The ungodly actually do what God forbids in verse 1. They walk in the counsel of the wicked; they stand in the way of sinners; and they sit in the seat of mockers.

Therefore, unlike the righteous who are like a tree whose leaf does not wither, the wicked are **like chaff that the wind blows away**. This is a picture drawn from harvest time. The part of the grain known as chaff was discarded as worthless and having no value. Accordingly, **the** wicked are empty, void, futile, unsubstantial, shallow, worthless, and, in the end, to be burned in the fire.

**1:5.** As a result, the wicked will not stand in the **judgment**. They will not have God's acceptance when they stand before him in the last day. Rather, they will be exposed for what they really are (Rev. 20:11–15). They will be justly condemned in their **sin**, sentenced to eternal punishment in **hell**. Such corrupt sinners will not be allowed to remain in the assembly of the righteous but will be excluded from the joyful fellowship of the **saints** (Rev. 21:8; 22:15). They will be revealed in the final **judgment** as unworthy sinners, rightly condemned by Christ (Acts 17:31), and removed from the presence of the godly forever.

**1:6.** The last verse summarizes the two ways in life—the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. The Lord watches over the way of the righteous, which means far more than that he is informed about their ways. Rather, he has a personal, intimate relationship with the godly and is involved with them in order to guard, guide, and **grace** them. But the way of the wicked will perish. The ungodly sinner, judged and condemned in the final **judgment**, will be damned forever. The wicked will suffer relentless torment in a real place called **hell**, always perishing, forever suffering the eternal **wrath of God**, never finding relief from God's just vengeance.

## MAIN IDEA REVIEW

Blessed are the righteous who do not participate in the deceptions and defilements of this **evil** world and who internalize God's Word.

## III. Conclusion

You Can Get There From Here!

Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells about a traveler in Ireland who once stopped a man working beside the road to ask directions. The traveler asked, "My friend, if you were going to Dublin, which way would you go?" The Irishman quipped, "I wouldn't go there from here." Many people want to start from some place other

than where they are in order to be where they want to be. But the **truth** is, we must start where we are, *now*, if we are to reach our desired destination. So it is, spiritually speaking. Many people want to enter the way of the godly, but they procrastinate, putting it off for another time, waiting to be at some other place in life. They want to start from somewhere other than where they are.

But if a person is to enter the way of the Lord, he must enter from where he is. He must face his **sin**, confessing it for what it is, and turn to the Lord by **faith**. Anyone who travels the broad path of the wicked may enter the way of the righteous. But he must start where he is. He must repent of his **sin** and believe on Christ, who bore the sins of his people in his body upon the **cross**. This is the good news of the gospel. One may enter the way of the godly if he will trust Christ. But it begins where a person is—right now.

#### IV. Life Application

##### What Path Am I Traveling?

Every person must ask the soul-searching question, What path in life am I traveling? Have I entered through the narrow gate that leads to the path of the godly? Or am I traveling the broad road that is headed to destruction? These are the important diagnostic questions that each person must ask himself and answer carefully and accurately. If you say that you are walking the path of the righteous, this brings on another series of questions to determine the genuineness of your profession of **faith**. Is there clear evidence of a transformed life that authenticates such a claim? Are you experiencing the blessedness of God's favor? Are you living a separated life, distinct from the beliefs and behavior of the ungodly? Have you made the break from the world? Is your delight in the **law** of the Lord?

The answer to these questions will reveal which path you travel. Many people today point to a mystical feeling or emotional “experience” for the validity of their **conversion**, but we must look for the fruit of a changed life. The authenticity and validity of a person's **faith** is proven by the spiritual fruit he produces. Fruit is the test of **salvation**. This includes personal holiness (Rom. 6:22), Christlike character (Gal. 5:22–23), good works (Col. 1:10), ministry (Rom. 1:13), stewardship (Rom. 15:25–28), and praising God (Heb. 13:15).

#### V. Prayer

*God, we praise your magnificent name for blessing us so abundantly. Thank you for your abounding goodness which has been lavished upon us in Jesus Christ. We praise you that our hearts are most satisfied in you. May you insulate our souls from the temptations and deceptions of this world. Anchor us in your Word. Help us to draw the spiritual nourishment we need from the Scripture so that we may stand strong and live fruitful lives for the honor of your name. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## VI. Deeper Discoveries

### *A. Blessed (1:1)*

This word (Heb. *esher*) means an overflowing **joy** and full contentment in God, a satisfaction and happiness in the Lord. This noun occurs forty-four times in the Old Testament, twenty-five of which are found in the Psalms. The word *happy* is a good synonym, although it must be understood that this word conveys far more than feelings of peace and contentment. This word is in the plural which intensifies its meaning, expressing God's redemptive favor upon the person who fears the Lord and pursues his will. An alternate translation in Psalm 1:1 would be, "Oh the blessednesses." This blessedness is not deserved, but it is a gift of God, not dependent upon our circumstances but upon the vitality of our relationship with God.

### *B. Walk, Stand, Sit (1:1)*

These words picture the way of the ungodly as devolving decadence into deeper strongholds of **sin**. This downward spiral descends from walking, to standing, to sitting. The power of **evil** always proceeds downward in the lives of wicked people—from bad to worse. To *walk* refers to the series of steps that the ungodly person takes in life, the decisions he makes, the direction he pursues. To *stand* pictures the commitments a person makes to various causes. To *sit* represents the settled attitudes of the heart, the fixed disposition of a person's heart.

Thus, the sinner descends from being one who is "wicked," meaning corrupt internally, to being a sinner, or one who practices **sin**, and finally, to being a mocker, one who scoffs at God and **holy** things. This downhill slide begins with "the counsel of the wicked," or ungodly thinking, digresses to "the way of sinners," which is the perverted practice of ungodly beliefs, and arrives at "the seat of mockers," or aligning oneself with the company of those who scoff at God.

### *C. Meditates (1:2)*

See “Deeper Discoveries,” 63:6.

### *D. Chaff (1:4)*

This word pictures a threshing floor at the time of the grain harvest. The threshing floors of Palestine were on hills that received the best breezes. The grain would be gathered and brought up to the elevated place of the threshing floor and crushed by animals pulling heavy instruments over it. Then the ground grain would be pitched high in the air, and the wind would blow the chaff, consisting of husks and broken straw, leaving the heavier grain to fall back to the threshing floor. The worthless chaff was gathered and burned, so it would not be blown back into the grain (Job 21:18; Ps. 35:5; Isa. 17:13; 29:5; 41:15; Hos. 13:3; Zeph. 2:2). The wicked and evildoers will face God’s **judgment** (Isa. 33:11; Matt. 3:12).

### *E. Perish (1:6)*

This word (Heb. *abad*) means “to die” or “to undergo destruction.” Among the various words which speak of destruction, *abad* is the most important. It is used to describe the loss of strength and knowledge, the decline of nations (Exod. 10:7; Num. 21:29–30), and is even applied to the destruction of pagan idols, images, and temples (Num. 33:52; Deut. 12:2–3). When used of people, the word generally refers to death and the cessation of life (Deut. 4:26; 11:4; Num. 16:33; Lev. 26:38; Josh. 23:16). Yet *abad* was also used of the eternal destruction of the wicked beyond physical death (Pss. 49:10, 12, 20; 73:27; 83:17; Prov. 10:28; 11:7; Ezek. 28:16). When used of destruction after death, *abad* was never used of a destruction that led into complete annihilation. Rather, it spoke of an unending, eternal destruction of the wicked that would never cease.

## VII. Teaching Outline

- A. The Way of the Godly (1–3)
  - 1. He is satisfied in the Lord (1a)
    - a. Favored by God (1a)
    - b. Fulfilled in God (1a)
  - 2. He is separated from the world (1b, c, d)

- a. Refusing secular beliefs (1b)
- b. Refusing sensual behavior (1c)
- c. Refusing shameful belongings (1d)
- 3. He is saturated with the Word (2–3)
  - a. Delighting in the Word (2a)
  - b. Dwelling upon the Word (2b)
  - c. Digging into the Word (3a)
  - d. Drawing from the Word (3b–e)
    - 1. Stability (3b)
    - 2. Productivity (3c)
    - 3. Constancy (3d)
    - 4. Prosperity (3e)
- B. The Way of the Ungodly (4–6)
  - 1. He is corrupted internally (4)
    - a. The wicked are useless, life chaff (4a)
    - b. The wicked are unstable, life chaff (4b)
  - 2. He is condemned judicially (5)
    - a. He will not stand in the **judgment** (5a)
    - b. He will not stand with the righteous (5b)
  - 3. He is damned eternally (6)
    - a. The righteous will prosper (6a)
    - b. The wicked will perish (6b)

## VIII. Issues for Discussion

- 1. How might I be in danger of walking in the counsel of the wicked?

2. In what ways might I be standing in the way of sinners?
3. Do I find myself reading and delighting in God's Word?
4. What fruit is God bearing in my life from the study of his Word?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Lawson, [\*Psalms 1–75\*](#), ed. Max Anders, vol. 11, Holman Old Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2004), 12–20.