

¹ Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
³ 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.
⁴ The ungodly *are* not so,
But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Introduction

Today we begin a new series in the book of Psalms.

I will call this series Psalms- No. 1.

We will not be covering every Psalm but we will study enough so that you can get the best understanding of why the Psalms are in the Bible and what God wants to teach us through them.

Before we begin Psalm One, I would like to give you some introductory facts about the book of Psalms.

1. **The meaning of the word "Psalms"**. The Hebrew title is called "The book of Praises". The Greek translation of the Old Testament calls the Psalms "A Song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument". It is clear that the Psalms were written to be sung.
2. **The writers of the "Psalms"**. Only two thirds of the Psalms identify their writer. King David leads the way with 73 Psalms. David was Israel's beloved "singer of songs". He was also the man who organised the temple ministry, including the singers. (2 Samuel 23:v.1, 1 Chronicles 15:16, 16:7, 25:1.)
Eleven Psalms were written by the "Sons of Korah" who served as musicians in the temple. Asaph wrote twelve psalms, King Solomon two, Ethan one, and Moses wrote one Psalm also.
3. **The Psalms are written as Hebrew Poetry**. Hebrew poetry is very different from western style poetry, and also from Japanese poetry.
Hebrew poetry is basically teaching that is designed to be easily understood.
It often **repeats the same idea in a different way**. In other words, if you don't understand this idea, perhaps I will say it in another way.
The Psalms are divided into 5 books.
Each of the first three books ends with a double "Amen", the fourth ends with an Amen and a hallelujah and the last book closes the entire collection with a "Hallelujah" (Psalm 150)
4. **The Value of the Psalms -** There are over four hundred quotations or allusions to the Psalms in the New Testament.
Jesus quoted from the book of Psalms quite often.
(Matt. 5: v. 5 = Psalm 37:11)
God gave guidance from the book of Psalms when the early Church in Jerusalem chose a new Apostle. (Acts 1: 15 = Psalm 69:25, & Psalm 108:9)
The early church used the psalms in their preaching and to find encouragement in times of persecution. (Acts 2:31= Psalm 16: v. 10, Acts 4:23-31 = Psalm 2)
Singing selected Psalms was part of the worship of the early Church.
(Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16, 1 Cor. 14:26)

You can study Bible history from the Psalms. Creation, the flood, Joseph, the Exodus, the wilderness wanderings, the captivity of Israel are all contained in the Psalms.
However, the big value of the Psalms for us today is that the **Psalms are about God and His relationship to His creation**, the nations of the world, Israel, and His believing people.
In the Psalms God is revealed as a **powerful God with a tender heart.**
The Psalms show God as a person who **keeps His promises and lovingly cares for His people.**
The Psalms also reveal the hearts of people who follow after God.
It reveals their faith, their doubts, their victories, their failures and their hopes for the future.
In the Psalms we will meet **all kinds of people in a variety of circumstances**, crying out to God.
They are praising God, confessing their sins, and seeking to worship God in a deeper way.
The Psalms teach us to **seek God with a sincere heart**, to tell Him the truth, and to worship Him because of who He is, and not just because of what He gives.

So let us now begin with Psalm One.

Psalm one is the gateway to the Psalms. It is one of the many "**wisdom**" psalms.

It focuses on God's word.

The psalm offers a blessing upon people who meditate and obey God's word.

However, the psalm pronounces a judgement on those who rebel against God's word.

I will divide the Psalm into three sections.

In section one we will discover something about the person who receives a blessing from God.

In section two we will find out something about people who are a blessing to others.

In section three we will come into contact with people who need a blessing from God, but so far are having that withheld at this present time.

1. The Person who receives a blessing from God. – v. 1-2.

In Japan during the rainy season, naturally it rains very much.

However, if during the rainy season you took a rice bowl outside in the pouring rain and placed it upside down, you wouldn't collect any rain at all.

It is like this with many people today.

God is willing to shower His blessing upon people, but sadly those people are not in the right **attitude of heart** to receive God's blessing.

As a result, they fail to receive the blessing that God wants to give them.

Like all things in God's created world there are rules, and consequences for disobeying those rules.

When God set apart the Israelite nation as a witness to the world, he promised to bless their obedience and judge their disobedience.

This teaching is clearly detailed in Leviticus Chapter 26 and Deuteronomy Chapter 28.

In the same way, if we want to be blessed by God, then we will need to meet the conditions for these blessings.

In v. 1 we are told that if we want to be blessed by God, then we will need to avoid being involved with ungodly people.

In v. 1 we are introduced to the subtle enticement to compromise our faith and be aligned to the ways of the world.

The way in which the devil tries to lure believers away from God's blessing is by gradual subtle steps, that often happen seductively.

Walking alongside ungodly people suggests **spending time with ungodly people, but not actually letting them influence you in any way. (or so you think?)**

Standing in the path of sinners means that you are now spending a lot more time with these people, listening to their ideas, and considering their thoughts.

Sitting down with these people means that you are now **receiving instructions** from these people, and being **influenced by them.**

It was always God's intention to bless the world through the Israelite nation.

They were intended to be a unique and separate people.

They were to live among the nations but were not to be contaminated by them.

(Numbers 23: v. 9, Exodus 19: v. 5-6, Deuteronomy 32:8 -10)

The teaching in the New Testament is no different today.

John 17: v. 11-17.

¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We *are*. ¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

The one thing that Jesus prayed concerning His disciples was to keep them free from worldly influences.

1 John 2: v. 15-17.

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

James Chapter 4: v. 4.

⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Application

Q. Who and what is influencing our lives, and guiding our decisions?

Is it the God of the Bible, His word, and godly people, full of the Holy Spirit?

Or is it the influence of people who don't follow the God of the Bible, don't read his word and are Not full of the Holy Spirit?

If you want to be blessed by the God of the Bible, then you need to **follow His instructions to obtain that blessing.**

Jesus said..." Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go in by it..... because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

(Matthew 7: v. 13-14)

Jesus told a parable to highlight the danger of focusing our thoughts on the things of this world.

Luke 12: v. 16-21. (N.K.J.)

¹⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' ¹⁸ So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.'" ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' ²¹ "So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Don't be like the rich fool, seek God while He may be found.

We now move from the person who receives a blessing to the person who IS a blessing.

2. The Person who is a blessing to others - v. 3.

God blesses us so that we might be a blessing to others.

If the blessing stays with us, then **the gifts become more important than the giver, and this is idolatry.**

We are to become channels of God's blessing to others.

It is a joy to receive a blessing but an even **greater joy to be a blessing.**

Acts 20: v. 35 quotes that Jesus said..." It is more blessed to give than to receive".

In v. 3 we are told that the person who is a blessing to others is compared to a **tree planted by the rivers of water.**

The tree is a familiar image in the Bible. It is a symbol both of a kingdom and an individual.

Balaam saw the people of Israel as a "garden by a river" with trees in abundance.

(Numbers 24: v. 6)

Ezekiel 17:24. (N.K.J.)

²⁴ And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*."

Notice that it was God who was able to make the dry tree flourish!!!

The most important part of a tree is the **hidden root system** that draws up water and nourishment from the ground.

God wants us to understand from this verse that the most important part of the believer's life is the "**spiritual root system**".

Christians continue healthy spiritual lives by drawing on the hidden resources that are ours in Christ.

Ephesians 3: v. 14-17. (N.K.J.)

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love...

When Paul wrote a letter to the Church in Ephesus, he used the words, **rooted and grounded.** He was thinking about the same principle that the Psalmist was referring to in Psalm 1: v. 3.

In John Chapter 15: v. 1-9 the same principle is also applied here, but the term "**abiding in Christ**" is used.

John 15: v. 1-9.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. ⁹ "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

Notice that in v. 3 the tree is planted by rivers of water.

In the Bible, water for drinking is a picture of the **Holy Spirit of God**, while water for washing is a picture of the **word of God in action.**

(John 7: v. 37-39)

³⁷ On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

(1 Cor. 10:4)

⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

(Ephesians 5: v. 25-26) – all in N.K.J.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

Thirst for water is an image of a thirst for God.

(Revelation 22: v. 17)

¹⁷And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

The river is often a picture of God’s spiritual blessing and help for His people.

The idea here is that **we can’t nourish and support ourselves**, we need to be **rooted in Christ** and to be **drawing upon His spiritual power**.

Q. How do we do this?

a) **Meditate on God’s word** - Meditation involves focused thinking about a Bible verse with the idea of applying it to your own personal life.

We have to persevere with God’s word.

b) **Prayer & More prayer** – Our lives need to be soaked in prayer. We need to include Jesus with everything that is going on in our lives.

c) **Fellowship with sincere believers in Christ -**

Proverbs 27: v. 17.

¹⁷As iron sharpens iron,

So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

d) **Saying sorry to Jesus when we displease the Holy Spirit**

(1 John 1: v. 8-9)

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The closer we get to Jesus, the more we have to say sorry.

If we practice these four challenges, then we will be a great blessing to other people.

We will also remain **“fresh”** in our own spiritual life, and God will supply all that we need in order to serve Him.

We now move on to v. 4-6.

3. The person who needs a blessing - v. 4-6.

In v. 4-6 the Psalmist identifies the person who needs a blessing from God, but **presently they are not getting it.**

Unless change takes place in that person’s life, instead of blessing, they will face **God’s judgement.**

The Bible gives a picture of people who do not know and love Jesus in many different ways.

Here the Psalmist describes them as “chaff”.

Firstly, we need to understand the word “chaff”.

“CHAFF” is the outer layer that is separated from grains such as wheat before they are used for food.

So in contrast to the righteous, who are like trees, the ungodly are dead, rootless, blown about, and destined for the fire.

Chaff is worth nothing.

When the grain is taken out, the wind blows the chaff away, and whatever remains is thrown into the fire.

The thing we need to bear in mind is that the chaff is so near the grain, but in the end the two are separated, and the chaff is blown away or burned.

However, until that happens, we have an opportunity to witness to these people and to seek to bring them to Jesus Christ.

These people **need a blessing, and we are the only people who can give them an opportunity to receive the greatest blessing of all, Salvation through Jesus Christ.**

In v. 6 it says "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous"

This same Hebrew word is used in Amos Chapter 3: v. 2. It means a deep and intimate relationship.

The Jewish Bible translates the first half of Amos 3: v. 2 this way, " You alone have I singled out of all the families of the earth...."

God knows those people who are His children through faith in Jesus Christ.

God keeps his children in perfect peace when they focus their heart and mind upon Him.

(1 Peter 5: v. 7)

casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Closing Challenge and application

Q. Do we know and love Jesus Christ as our own personal saviour?

If your answer is Yes, then the next question is "Are you being blessed by God?"

If the answer to that question is yes, then you are following the advice of the Psalmist not to spend time with ungodly people and to focus on God and His word.

If you want to be blessed by the God of the Bible and you feel that it is not happening for you, then you have come to the right place.

You need to know Jesus Christ as your own personal saviour.

You need to understand your sin and know about God's love in sending His Son to die for your sins.

You can know that today.

If you are really seeking God's love and forgiveness, you will find it.

Please stay behind for prayer after the service.