



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 16th February 2025

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This week we explore how we might grow deep roots that will enable us to withstand the storms of life.

Opening prayer

Holy God, we gather to worship you in all of your glory.

Fill this place with your Holy Spirit and help us
to see more of who you really are.

Come, meet us and prepare us to do your will. **Amen**

Song: Mission Praise 88

Come bless the Lord

All ye servants of the Lord

Who stand by night in the house of the Lord

Lift up your hands in the holy place

And bless the Lord

And bless the Lord

words from Psalm 134 arranged by Roger Mayor (1951-2022)

Psalm 1 is one of the most popular psalms in the Bible not just because it is the first psalm, but also because it properly introduces the book of Psalms and serves as its inaugural chapter. It offers a profound introduction and sets the foundational theme for the entire collection of psalms. Psalm 1 is a poetic and wisdom-filled alignment that differentiates the paths of the righteous and the wicked and their ultimate destiny.

The authorship and dating of Psalm 1 remain uncertain, and scholars provide diverse perspectives on these aspects in Psalm 1. Some, suggest a likely date in the first or second century before Christ, while others, lean towards the traditional early date and has also led some, to propose that Psalm 1 and the next were added later to introduce the collection.

Despite these debates, Psalm 1, with no explicit attribution of authorship, serves as an introduction to the entire Book of Psalms, setting the thematic tone for the collection.

So let's read Psalm 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.

⁴The ungodly *are* not so,
But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.

⁵Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

⁶For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Continue with saying the Lord's Prayer...

Psalms 1 holds powerful, compelling, and life-changing lessons for all of us today. While there are obvious lessons such as the importance of walking in the righteous path, there are also those that need deeper contemplation to dramatically dig out its little-known lessons.

The first word of Psalm 1 is "blessed." According to some estimates, the Book of Psalms has more than 40,000 words and yet, this longest book in the Bible starts with the word, "Blessed." It's quite interesting if you think about it.

Blessed here came from the Hebrew word, "esher." It basically means happiness or blessedness. Thus, you would read Psalm 1:1 as written in some Bible versions as, "Happy is the man."

However, this just tells us one thing: a righteous person may not always be happy, but he can always be blessed. This means that you may not be happy, but you are blessed. As you may already know, this world is filled with pain and suffering. God does not forbid us to be sad. That's a normal emotion for humans. However, in the midst of this messy life, God promised that there's a blessing for all the people who will follow Him.

A normal person will not wake up one day and decide that he wants to be an evil person. Sin starts small and when you don't overcome sin, it will overcome you. Sin has its peculiar way of deceiving you into thinking that you can withstand its deadly grasp. When you're lured in, you will not simply walk by it, but you'll stand by it and finally, sit down until you can't leave its evil claws anymore.

So, the main lesson here in Psalm 1 is to avoid sin as soon as possible. Overcome it when it is still small and don't wait until it is full-blown and it will lead to your death.

After the writer of Psalm 1 talks about what the righteous do NOT do, he goes on discussing what the righteous instead do and what is it. It is by delighting in the law of the LORD or the law of Yahweh.

Here, we can see one of the reasons the righteous is happy or blessed is because he DELIGHTS in the law of God. Now, if you read the rest of Psalms, you would soon see that the Law of the LORD does not only refer to the "law" portion, but rather to the entire Word of God.

A lot of people place their happiness on the wrong things in life. They based their happiness on material wealth, position and money. Some might place their happiness on relationships, which is good to some extent. However, there's a greater source of joy and that is the Word of Yahweh.

For the righteous in Psalm 1, reading the Bible isn't boring or a waste of time. Instead, the righteous person looks forward to reading the Word of God. He gains happiness by reading it and by meditating on it! How about you? Is your delight in the law of the LORD?

In short, you can delight in God's word without meditating on it and you can't meditate on God's word without delighting in it. It works both ways. Now, meditating in God's word doesn't simply mean reading God's word or reading it. It goes deeper than that. Meditation means to stop what you are doing and fully focus on what you're reading. It is asking for God to open your understanding and gain the sweetness and beauty of God's word.

Continuing with Psalm 1, A righteous man is likened to a tree that is planted not in the middle of the desert, but rather, he is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. Notice the word, "rivers." It didn't say river, but rivers! This means that the righteous man has a continual source of water. God will supply all our needs and what that means is that God will bless us in our life.

The Bible tells us that we ought to bear fruit. Our lives should be filled with so much fruit that it will not only bless your life, but also the lives of others. Bearing fruit is a sign of good health according to Psalm 1. A healthy tree eventually bears fruits. Not only that but his leaf is green and not withering away. What does this tell you?

This tells you that because you are planted near the source of the water, which represents the Holy Spirit, you get the right nutrition. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you will inevitably produce its fruit! 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.' *Galatians 5:22-23*

When you live your life according to God's way, then you will have more love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, and so on. What's amazing about this is that as long as you stay close to God, you'll continue having these fruits. However, if you decide to leave the nourishing care of God, away from the water, the Holy Spirit, you will soon fade away and eventually die.

Let us Pray

Living, loving God, we praise and thank you for opportunities to follow you, to do your will, to love our neighbours and to grow in faith.

We thank you for places and times that enlarge our vision, our love and concern for the world and its people.

We thank you for all that nourishes us in body, mind and soul.

We thank you for challenges that cause our faith to deepen.

Living God, keep us growing, keep us loving, keep us faithful to your call. **Amen**

Continuing with verse 4, it says that the ungodly are not so. The psalmist is stating a fact here. Some people may see wicked people as blessed. They have material wealth. They get what they want. They are in power. So, in a sense, they are the light of the righteous who are prosperous. That's why, the psalmist needs to say, "the ungodly are not so". They may look blessed and prosperous, but whatever they have will perish. They will fade away, which is not the case for the righteous person.

The psalmist describes the ungodly as a chaff. The chaff is the outer shell around a kernel of grain. They are removed from the crop because they are useless. They are so light that they can easily be blown away by the wind. The chaff is like the ungodly in many ways. They are not here to stay. They are worthless and dead. They don't have substance. They can easily be carried away by the wind.

Thus, when Judgment Day comes, the ungodly won't be able to stand before the Great Judge, Jesus Christ. God will separate the sinners from the righteous so that there will be no sinners in His presence.

There you have it, Psalm 1, I hope that this has helped you get a deeper understanding of Psalm 1. I know, it is just mind-blowing how many lessons and insights you can get from this short chapter. Indeed, Psalm 1 is full of powerful lessons for us to learn today. From what it means to live a blessed life to knowing the ultimate destiny of the wicked, we all can use these lessons in our spiritual walk with the Lord, Yahweh.

Song: Mission Praise 770

1] Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

2] Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?
While the surges rage, and the wild winds blow,
shall the angry waves then your bark o'erflow?

We have an anchor

3] Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill your latest breath?
On the rising tide you can never fail,
while your anchor holds within the veil.

We have an anchor

4] Will your eyes behold through the morning light
the city of gold and the harbour bright?
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,
when life's storms are past for evermore?

We have an anchor

Prescilla Owens (1829-1907)

Final Prayer

Life-giving God,
keep us well rooted in you,
so we can grow and be strong
through all that happens this week.
As you encourage us,
may we encourage others to live and grow well. **Amen**

Give it a go, try meditating reading Psalm 1 again and immerse yourself