

SUNDAY SCHOOL

A. P. 05-06-2018

HIGHLIGHT: Psalm 1

H

¹Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.
²But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
³He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.
⁴Not so the wicked! They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
⁶For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

E

EXPLAIN

In the first Psalm, the ungodly and the Godly are contrasted with competing images set against each other. The ungodly man is shown slowly stopping his forward motion and becoming like chaff in the wind, but the Godly man is compared to a tree planted by never-ending streams of nourishment. As we unpack the first Psalm, remember that this dilemma—the decision to follow the pattern of the world or to follow the paths of righteousness—is presented to us every day, and that we must wake up each morning, intentionally pursue righteousness, and submit ourselves to Christ.

v.1 German author Walter Käser wrote that the expression “blessed is” refers to the blessings of covenantal life and the joy of living continually in the presence of God. “Blessings” in this context has little to nothing to do with physical possessions or prosperity.



- v.3 In Wisdom literature, trees are used as metaphors for wisdom itself (like in Proverbs 3:18). Both healthy trees and the wise are deeply rooted in good soil, they are provided the resources they need to survive, they stretch constantly to the sun, they withstand harsh conditions with grace, and they prove their health by bearing the kind of fruit they were planted to grow.
- v.4 Chaff is the stiff, straw-like stuff that grows around grains of wheat. When harvesting the wheat, the chaff must be removed. It is a useful metaphor for how the wicked will end because it reveals two things: how utterly useless a wicked person is and how easily God will deal with them. Chaff only gets in the way, and it is blown away by just a breeze. The thresher has only to toss it into the air and it will not even be remembered.
- v.5 “Assembly” refers to the people of God, not necessarily to just the Israelites. This language suggests that, even as far back as the composition of this Psalm, it was understood that God’s judgment would come on circumcised Israelites who refused to live by God’s commands.

A

APPLY

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you read in the text?
2. The Psalmist says that the Godly will be “happy” or “blessed.” What do you consider “blessed” to mean? How does the world promise to make us happy? What should a believer consider to be a happy life?
3. The Psalmist says that “whatever [the righteous man] does prospers.” Does that mean that everything a believer does will be successful? If your delight is in the Word of God, what will your definition of prosperity or success be?
4. How does the Psalmist contrast the two people in this chapter? How can our surroundings give us a clue as to which of the two people we are? What do your surroundings, in particular, say about you?
5. Share about a time when you have been influenced by those around you, either for the better or for the worse. If we asked someone you know the same question about you, what category would they put you in—Godly or wicked? Why?

R

RESPOND

In what area of your life are you most prone to giving in to wicked counsel? How will you combat that this week?
Who is one person you need to display the Word of God to this week?

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.

