

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening we are going to start a new book – we are going to be in the book of Psalms.

Has anyone done a study in the book of Psalms?

Has anyone read through the book of Psalms?

The root meaning of the Hebrew word for Psalms means “a melody of praise,” or “songs of praise”

And that is what the book of Psalms is – a collections of poems,

There are psalms of praise, psalms of wisdom, psalms of thanksgiving, psalms reflecting on God’s mighty acts, psalms celebrating God’s mighty acts and of course worship.

These were the songs that God’s people would sing to Him in the Temple.

We don’t have the music for the psalms we just have a collection of the lyrics.

Many of the worship songs that we sing here on Sunday morning and Wednesday night are straight from the book of Psalms.

So because it is a collection, the book of Psalms is the longest book in the bible.

It has 150 chapters and 2461 verses.

It was written by more than seven authors.

Including David who wrote almost half of them – he wrote 73 of them.

That is why we saw David referred to as the sweet Psalmist of Israel in 2 Samuel 23.

There are two significant reasons why I believe that the book of Psalms is important in the life of the believer.

First, the book of Psalm is the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament.

Jesus quoted directly from the book of Psalms more times than any other book.

His last words on the cross – spoken directly from the book of Psalms.

The second reason why they are so important is because through the Psalms, a window is provided into the souls of the ancient saints that wrote them.

And as we read them and meditate on them, we see that they went through the same issues that we go through today.

Times of prolonged loneliness, times where they faced alienation and pain, times of suffering, times where they sought protection and provisions and times where they simply sought the presence of God.

Most importantly, the Psalm prepared God's people for the coming Messiah.

And as we will see in our study this evening – both Psalms point to Jesus Christ.

Let's pray...

Now, we are going to do the Psalms a little differently – I want everyone to stand.

I will read the odd verses and you will read the even verses.

Psalm 1 -

[Psa 1:1-6 NKJV] 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.

Amen –

Have a seat.

[Psa 1:1 NKJV] 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;

The word that is used for blessed here at the beginning of verse one is the word for “happiness”

The problem with “happiness” is that it is hard to define because “happiness” is defined differently from people to people.

One person might define happiness as being wealthy.

Another person might define it as being loved.

Another might define it as feeling good all the time.

Which is it?

God, the Creator, says that this is it.

And it's His definition that matters.

If you are a believer who will go God's way, this is the ramification and the result.

This is how God has designed the Christian life.

Now, the fact that this Psalm gives us the roadmap to real happiness in life indicates that we don't know the way ourselves.

This is truth that we won't just stumble upon accidentally.

We needed a God of grace to reveal it to us and instruct us in the way.

The problem for many of us is that we would rather try to do it our own way even though God has defined for us the only way.

So – verse one continues to define Godly happiness by first telling us what it is not.

Sometimes it is easier to explain something if you reveal the opposite of what it actually is.

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly -

Nor stands in the path of sinners -

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful –

I want you to notice the verbs,

Walks, stands, sits

Because what it is describing is the behavior of someone who is doing the opposite of righteous man or woman should be doing.

Walk not in the council of the ungodly means that one is being persuaded by those providing opposite council to what God has provided.

In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of this one tree – they had a bunch of other trees that they could have eaten from.

But then Satan shows up and tells Eve – God doesn't want you to eat from the tree – He is holding back on you.

So what did Eve do?

She walked in ungodly council – she did the exact opposite to what God had instructed her.

A blessed man or woman needs discernment to be able to distinguish between godly and ungodly council.

And the best place to find godly council is in His word.

[Psa 119:24 NKJV] 24 Your testimonies also [are] my delight [And] my counselors.

Stands in the path of sinners, means that no longer is one simply listening to the council of the ungodly, it means that the individual has made the decision to walk in that path.

[Psa 16:11 NKJV] 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence [is] fullness of joy; At Your right hand [are] pleasures forevermore.

Church, we must remember that there are only two paths in life that we can walk on -

There is God's way and there is the opposite way.

Sits in the seat of the scornful – means that not only have you taken ungodly advice and decided to follow their path – and now, you are so far down the road that what the things they do don't bug you anymore and then they begin to criticize believers.

I want you to notice that there is a progression – walks, stands and sits.

So these are things that the right man or woman wouldn't be doing.

Now in verse two – we see what they would be doing.

[Psa 1:2 NKJV] 2 But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

The righteous man not only delights in the Law of the Lord – he meditates day and night.

A blessed person is one who finds great pleasure in God's Word.

I remember I was in college when the Harry Potter books started coming out – and there was a student in my public address class who said that he spent three days camping outside the bookstore, with no sleep, waiting for the release of the book.

Though God's Word is given for our instruction, it's much more than just a reference manual or a pile of information.

It's a whole library of truth and life-changing secrets.

It contains real wisdom.

It stirs us up with adventure.

It professes God's love to us.

It explains the mysteries of the world.

It provides perspective to make sense of everything around us.

It teaches us.

Comforts us.

Corrects us.

Prepares us.

It sets before us a delightful feast to enjoy as long as we live.

The delight in the Word is essential to Godly happiness.

It's essential to knowing how to make decisions and how to navigate relationships and whether God wants you to go one way or another.

When you read God's Word each day – we need to make sure we find something to “meditate” on. Find some principle, some verse, some promise, something to chew on as you go through your day.

I am pretty sure we all know that cows have four different compartments in their stomach – they don't have four stomachs – they actually have one.

And one of the things that they do when they graze is that they swallow the feed whole and then later regurgitate it chew it up again and then it goes on to the next compartment.

And they will do this a few times.

That is what we need to do with the bible – not gaze at it or try to rush through a reading – but meditate on it every day.

[Psa 1:3 NKJV] 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.

God's plan is to make you and me like a great fruit tree.

Not a statue, rigid and motionless.

But a tree. Strong. Growing. Beautiful. Useful. Fruitful.

A tree that's been specifically planted in a particular location for a purpose.

And that purpose is fruit.

I don't know if you ever thought about a fruit tree this way – but did you realize that a fruit tree doesn't enjoy its own fruit.

Fruit is for others.

It's for the farmer.

It's for the people who take it from the branches.

So as we mature in Christ, we produce fruit – it is a byproduct of our relationship with Jesus Christ – and it may be visible in how we serve one another.

Now, bearing fruit isn't something that God wants for our lives – He expects it.

[Jhn 15:2 NKJV] 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.

Every fruit tree has a season in the year that it is supposed to produce fruit.

Our peach tree would produce fruit in August

Our apple tree produces apples in September.

If we are going to be good fruit trees then we must produce fruit when the season calls for us to produce fruit.

I want you to notice that the tree is an evergreen tree –

Its leaves will not wither because of the cold winters or hot dry summers – why?

Because of where it is positioned - it is supplied by the unlimited supply of God's presence and His power – which is the river.

[Psa 1:4 NKJV] 4 The ungodly [are] not so, But [are] like the chaff which the wind drives away.

As we read through the Psalms, we will see that many of the Psalms wrestle with the fact that, from our vantage point, so often it seems like the wicked get everything they want.

It seems like they get away with what they are doing.

They have the strength.

They often have wealth and power and prominence.

But here in Psalm 1 – we are reminded of what they truly are – unstable – worthless

Once again, we see the contrast between the tree (righteous) and the chaff (unrighteous)

[Psa 1:5 NKJV] 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

What we're talking about here is not just theoretical.

It's not just a thought experiment. It's not just a dream someone has of a good life.

We're talking about a real course for your life that is going to end one day.

And, if you are not in Christ, your road will end in what is called here "the judgment."

You will not survive.

You will be lost.

Ruined.

I had you make a note where it states that the ungodly will not stand –

That's because there, before the Great White Throne, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But, by then, it will be too late for salvation.

There the wicked will be judged and sentenced and sent forever into the lake of fire. No pardons. No time off for good behavior. No appeals.

It is there that you will face the crushing wrath of God's judgment.

[Psa 1:6 NKJV] 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The righteous can have peace because a loving God in heaven knows their way, and will protect and preserve them.

The Lord is watching because your life matters. And so He has provided everything necessary for

each one of us to avoid ruin, find fulfillment, and bring others with us as we walk in heavenly happiness.

What does it mean to pursue happiness? Psalm 1 defines it as a person, going God's way, applying the Word to their lives and, as a result, growing, strengthening, and blessing others.

Now, Psalm 2 – let's go head read it.

**[Psa 2:1-12 NKJV] 1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed (Jesus Christ), [saying], 3 "Let us
break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."**

Psalm 2 was written by David – how do I know?

I will show you in second.

So as David writes this Psalm, he is mystified as to why the nations have turned their wrath against God.

Why does the world rebel against God?

David had seen God's goodness. He had experienced God's grace and forgiveness – yet the world still chooses to turn away from evil and embrace good.

It's the same reaction that I am sure many of us have when we watch the news.

Turn with me to Acts 4 –

Because the early church faced the same questions.

In Acts 4, Peter and John had been arrested because they had healed a man who had been lame since birth and they had insisted on giving Jesus the credit for it. This caused the first wave of persecution against the early church.

[Act 4:23-28 NKJV] 23 And being let go, they went to their own [companions] and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You [are] God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 "who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.' 27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 "to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

So in verse 25 and 26, they are quoting Psalm 2.

They are saying that Herod, Pilate, and the Romans were fulfilling David's prophecy about the nations being gathered together against God's Son.

They see God has planned for this all along. Jesus' death on the cross was not the fault of the Jews. It was God's purpose and plan for Jesus to die for our sins.

They felt that with this Scripture, they realized that there are no cosmic “mistakes” and God is still in control.

And instead of running with their tails between their legs, Peter and John ask for more boldness.

Casting the chord from us – is a reference to the world not wanting God or His Messiah ruling over them – they want to do their own thing.

“We don’t want God to govern us – we don’t want to abide by His laws – we don’t need His grace and mercy – leave us alone!

So how does God respond???

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

As the world plot against God – David writes that God is up in heaven laughing at man’s attempt.

Think about it – man which You created is rebelling against You – plotting against You.

Knowing that “with one word or look God could destroy all His enemies.”

And yet, He doesn’t. Because, despite their wickedness and their rage and their rebellion, God loves these people.

God isn’t confused, He isn’t afraid as the world plots against Him – He laughs.

He laughs because He sits on throne of heaven and He has authority over all creation.

God isn't laughing at the brokenness of humanity, He isn't laughing at our suffering, He is laughing against the proud boasting, the proud rejection of God in this world.

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Yet, at the same time He does truly hate our sin.

5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

Here God makes it known to these rebels that He already has a King in place.

They may wear crowns here on earth, but they are not in charge. There is one, true King: Jesus Christ.

And God is giving them a warning before He acts – He is giving them an opportunity to repent.

7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You [are] My Son, Today I have begotten You.'"

It may seem like David is speaking about himself, but he is speaking prophetically of Jesus. And that is what Psalm 2 is – as it points to Jesus Christ.

I want you to notice that it doesn't say that Today, I created you – because Jesus Christ was not created – He has existed from the beginning with God the Father.

8 Ask of Me, and I will give [You] The nations [for] Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth [for] Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

We see in this verse that despite all the plotting and rage in verses 1 and 2, the Lord will be the winner.

That is why it is so foolish for the nations to rebel against Him.

No one can take what is rightfully His.

And there's nothing too broken for Him to restore.

He alone can take the scroll and make right what we and the nations of the world have made wrong for these thousands of years of human history.

But the earth, from one end to the other, will be redeemed, filled with His glory, and made new.

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

God is giving these rulers another chance – God is showing mercy and grace towards them.

He is calling on them to humble themselves and to surrender to God.

The Lord isn't just looking for a ceasefire.

He doesn't just want them to submit politically, but personally.

What God desires is a true love relationship with you. One in which we worship Him and serve Him, not begrudgingly but in celebration.

He seeks a true, living faith which recognizes all that God is.

12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish [in] the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed [are] all those who put their trust in Him.

The phrase Kiss the Son means to pay homage to –

To fully to submit oneself to the authority of another.

It's a kiss of surrender and submission.

It's an intimate, personal act of embrace.

It's the closeness God wants with each of His people.

All judgment is submitted to Jesus Christ –

If we do this, there will be a tremendous blessing for us.

And just like we saw in Psalm 1, we have a choice to make.

Do we submit and place our trust in Jesus and be blessed or do we reject Him and be broken.

Amen

Let's pray...

