

**Series: God & Psalm 1 #1845**

**Title: Psalm 1**

***The Blessed***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. It's really great to have you as we start a short series on the first Psalm. If you have your Bible handy, please turn to Psalm chapter 1. This contains six true and powerful verses. You may know it well or be hearing this for the first time or perhaps you have not read this in some time. Either way, please give attention now to God's Word. Psalm 1.

**"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers. <sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."**

There is a great deal that is appealing about this Psalm, the first of one hundred forty-nine that follow. There are one hundred and fifty Psalms in the Bible and this is the preface or introductory one. Rather than musing about what's here, let's dig in and go verse by verse. Please plan to be with us in the coming days as we meditate on these words of invitation to blessing and warning for destruction. The Holy Spirit will have something to say to each one of us. I hope we will all have ears to hear and eyes to see what that is. Friends, let's apply this to our lives.

The Psalmist, commonly thought to be David, writes this in two parts. In verses 1-3 he presents the blessings of a godly person. In verses 4-6 he presents the curses of a wicked person. Verses 4-6 *contrast* with verses 1-3. In part one we learn the state of the righteous person. In part two we learn the state of the unrighteous person. And verse 1 begins, "How blessed is..." That word blessed speaks profoundly to happiness. Blessed is the man, happy is the man. The righteous person really is a happy person, whereas the unrighteous person really is a miserable person.

You can be thinking of yourself right at the start. Are you a happy person? You will find yourself in verses 1-3 of Psalm 1. By happy we do not mean some sappy, sentimental moodiness in which we are up more than we are down. By blessed or happy we mean what the Psalmist will soon describe. True, genuine, soul level happiness is blessedness. And blessedness is happiness. And remember this is the word Jesus used to begin His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5. "Blessed are the poor in spirit...blessed are those who mourn," etcetera. Happy are those who... If you would like to know what happiness looks like, these first three verses will tell you. And the last three verses will tell you what *unhappiness* is. Are you a miserable person? You will find yourself in verses 4-6 of Psalm 1.

The word "blessed" is plural, meaning multiple blessings. Blessings upon blessings. Listen to what John Trapp wrote in the year 1660. Quote, "The Psalmist [says] more to the point about true happiness in this short Psalm than any one of the philosophers, or all of them put together; they did but beat the bush, God [has] put here the bird into our hand." End quote. The ancient and modern philosophers, the writers, the singer-songwriters, and the influencers all tell us how to be happy, but none of them get it right. To be a blessed and happy person, be the man, be the woman described here.

And the Psalmist continues, "How blessed is the man..." *The man* is emphatic in the Hebrew, the original language of this Psalm. The Bible commentator of old, Adam Clarke writes this, "The word is emphatic, *that man*; that one among a thousand who lives for the accomplishment of the end for which God created him." Wise words. The Psalmist is emphatic about who *this* man and *this* woman is. Blessed is *the man* who and he goes on to describe the person.

As the writer describes the blessed person in verse 1 he talks about three things this person does *not* do. And in verse 2 he talks about what this blessed person *does* do. First we have the negative, then we have the positive, if you will. Psalm 1, verse 1, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" The first thing is *not* to walk in the counsel of the wicked. As we well know, the counsel of the wicked is everywhere. This is a message we receive loud and clear every single day of our lives, because we live in an evil world in which wickedness abounds. It is easy to walk in the counsel of the wicked. That's natural.

But, we have a choice. We can walk in the Word of God rather than in the counsel of the wicked. Walk with the Word, not with the wicked. Another way to say this is the blessed man and the blessed woman is the one counselled by the Word, not the world. Who is your counsellor? Where do you get your advice from? From what source do you draw wisdom to live your life? Is it from the counsel of the wicked? Or is it from the counsel of God?

Something I have noticed about people in our culture is that they *do* want advice. One of the fastest growing forms of media are podcasts. And there are a multitude of podcasts telling us how to live, what to do, how to think on a plethora of topics. But in so many of these the counsel is wickedness. Thanks be to God there are also a growing number of podcasts that offer the counsel of godliness where the Bible is taught accurately, correctly, clearly, and passionately *because* the Word offers us the best wisdom on how to live. This first verse of Psalm 1 says, walk in the Word of God rather than in the counsel of the wicked.

How much time are you and I spending in the world versus the Word? This is worth evaluating, because "blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked." If we want to avoid walking in the counsel of the wicked, then we must walk in the counsel of God, which is found in abundance in His Word (the Scripture, the Bible), like here in the Psalms and in the next book, the Proverbs.

That's first. Following along in Psalm 1, verse 1 the second thing the blessed person does *not* do is to "stand in the path of sinners." I take this to mean get out of the way of sinners. Do not stand around or sit around developing long association with the multitude who do evil. Instead, we should stand in "the assembly of the righteous," which we will read about in verse 5. The blessed person is not the one who fits in well with the crowd, who melts in because they think, say, and do what everyone else does. No! The blessed person stands out from the crowd because they think, say, and do what *God* does.

Recently I was in London, England and I went out with a small group of Christian friends for fish and chips. Every time I visit there I do this (at least once), because it is so tasty. We walked down a narrow pathway to the restaurant, which was on the left. But just across the stone pathway was a popular bar and outside, lined up all the way to the main road where hundreds of people waiting to enter the bar for a concert. Many of them were dressed as anime characters. What is that? Anime is a style of Japanese film and television animation watched by both children and adults. In this case, the adults dressed up as the characters from those TV shows and films. And I mean they were really costumed head to toe.

It is true that we must use wisdom in judging by appearance, but if you know anything about people dressed as anime, then you already know it is very suggestive dress. It is overly sexualized, dark, and disturbing to look at. Now it is true that both myself and my Christian friends as well as the people standing in the line for the bar – all of us – are sinners. But how grateful I was to be a sinner saved by God's grace and so now blessed to *not* be standing in the path of the yet as *unredeemed* sinners waiting for that concert to begin.

My friends and I got out of their way. We did not stand in the path of sinners. We sat down together out of their path, we said grace for our meal, and enjoyed edifying conversation. We were blessed to do so. How blessed is the man and woman who does not stand in the path of sinners.

First, the blessed do not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Second, the blessed do not stand in the path of sinners. And next time we find a third thing the blessed do *not* do and then we will turn to what the blessed *do* do! All of this in Psalm 1. Please join us then as we continue to discover who God Is!

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