

A Tree Planted By The Waters

Psalm 1

There are great many treasures to be had by studying through the Psalms. They impart wisdom to the foolish, strengthen the weak, comfort the faint hearted and instruct a man in the way he should go. Many of the things Jesus taught concerning righteousness and godliness can be found within the book of Psalms. It will do well for all men to read these poems and learn how they must walk before their God.

The first Psalm is a fitting introduction to this book, for it directs our minds toward the nature of the instruction given within its pages. It shows us the benefits of heeding the words that are spoken. Let us therefore begin.

Blessed Is The Man (Vs. 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.” This man is happy; he is praised of God because he is not led away in the backward thinking of ungodly men who would choose to serve corruptible material things over our eternal heavenly Father. The delights of his heart bring true fulfillment and true wisdom. He is happy because of the blessed nature of God’s eternal wisdom and the eternal wealth it can bring to a soul. Therefore, as it says in Proverbs 4:14-18, *“Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on. For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; and their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.”*

The Delight of His Heart

The godly man does not go in the way of sinners, but seeks the way of the Lord. Therefore it is written, *“His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night”* (Psalm 1:2). Where is joy to be found? In doing the will of the Lord. Where is stability to be found? In the counsel of the almighty. Rich men may seek more treasure, poor mean may seek more bread, foolish men may seek destruction, but a godly man will seek the will of the Lord. With God’s counsel alone can a man live in this life with relative peace. In God’s counsel alone can a man avoid the turmoil and destitution that comes with the temptations of this life. With the word of God he is able to resist the evil one as Jesus did in Matthew 4. With the knowledge of God he is able to find joy and peace in times of famine as Habakkuk did in Habakkuk 3:17-19.

A Tree Planted By The Water

For this reason the Psalmist wrote, *“He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water”* (Psalm 1:3). Trees that grew in the wilderness of Judea were often shallow rooted and easily blown over in the stormy seasons. They were as the seed in the Parable of the sower that fell on the rocky soil, that quickly sprouted up, but withered due to the lack of moister (Luke 8:6). But the trees

that were planted near the rivers of water were able to dig their roots down deep and gain a sure grip in the ground. They were able to grow big and strong because of the abundance of running water and nutrients. Their leaves did not wither in hot weather, their growth was not stunted; they were established. The law of our Lord is as this water and we can be this tree if we make His word our desire. The ungodly today preach that God's word is corrupted and useless. This is the counsel that will cause a man to fall. But just as God's word will endure forever (Psalm 119:160), so will the man who walks in His ways.

This man will bear the fruit of godliness. He will not be lazy, nor will his growth be stunted. But as his heart is set on the law of the Lord, so his deeds will be filled with the abundance of the work of the Lord. He shall "*bear his fruit in his season*" (vs. 3). The godly man will not fade away, nor will he want for the living water. "*His leaves also shall not wither*" (vs. 3). This is the man that will acknowledge the Lord in all His ways (Prov. 3:6), and will therefore have his path directed by the Lord. "*And whatever he does will prosper*" (vs. 3). He is the one of whom it is written, "*And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight*" (1 John 3:22).

We today can have this stability. We can be firmly rooted as a tree planted by the water. But we must make the law of God the desire of our heart. Only then will we be able to into the tremendous spiritual blessings that God has to offer. Consider the words of the Psalmist as they are recorded in Psalm 119:1-16. Can you see the benefit of God's word? When we heed it we can be cleansed. When we hide it in our hearts and keep from sinning against God. We can rejoice in it as in much riches. We can contemplate the ways of God. This is what we will do if we are striving to be godly.

The Ungodly Are Not So

As firmly rooted as the godly are, the ungodly are not. Rather, as the Psalmist wrote, "*they are like the chaff that the wind blows away.*" So will we be if we do not seek the law of God; if we do not heed His instruction. In our world today the word of God is given in abundance. There was a time where men would risk their lives just to hear one verse from the word of God. But today one almost has to threaten a man's life in order to get him to read it. It is the ignorance brought about by this attitude that has caused so many to go in the way of the wicked. Christians are being lead astray, Churches are dying away because they have begun to walk in the counsel of the ungodly and stand in the path of sinners. Yes, they even sit in the seat of the scornful; so they scorn God's faithful people who hold true to the authority of His word.

Brethren, it must not be so! We must not let ignorance fill our hearts. It is because of a lack of knowledge of God's word that His people were destroyed in the days Hosea (4:6) and it is the same today. Those who walk in the way of the ungodly "*are as the chaff that the wind blows away*" (Psalm 1:4). They find no stability in human wisdom, they find no grounding in the wickedness but are tossed to and fro like a reed in the wind (Eph. 4:14). Yet their final destination is nothing compared to this.

When the Lord comes in His wrath the ungodly will not stand, but will fail miserably in that day. They will join the Devil and his angels in the fire that has been prepared for them (Matthew 25:41). Neither will they stand in the congregation of the righteous. Brethren, we must not let this be our end. Therefore let us heed the words of the Hebrew writer, "*But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end*" (Hebrews 3:6).

Conclusion

“The Lord knows the way of the righteous” (Psalm 1:6). This is because He is the one that establishes it. The righteous walk in the way of the Lord. They are blessed in that way; they do no iniquity and are firmly grounded in truth. If you desire stability in a world of turmoil, then turn your heart to the Lord and acknowledge Him by heeding His word and obeying His gospel. Then you can be like a tree, strong and firmly grounded in truth and righteousness, bearing fruit for the Lord. So long as you remain in the world there will be no rest for your soul. But God gives us that rest; He gives us wisdom unto eternal life.

Know this, *“The way of the ungodly shall perish.”* Many people feel confident in their decisions, though they do not include the Lord. But they will perish. So will you if you do not repent. Therefore Jesus said, *“I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3). But He also says, *“He who believes and is baptized shall be saved...”* (Mark 16:16).