

A Life to Be Envied, Part 2

Psalm 1

Psalm 1, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the way of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, And in his law he meditates day and night. 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. The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not rise in the judgment, nor sinners in this congregation of the righteous. For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, the way of the wicked will perish."

The blessed picture in verses 3 and 4, you got two different outputs that correspond to each of the inputs in verses 1 and 2. Two different outputs in verses 3 and 4. First of all, the blessed Man, the taking in the word of God, it says this "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. The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.”

Now let's meditate on this, Okay. Let's, let's apply verse 2 and just start chewing this over. As we meditate on this, we'll make several observations about David's word picture. It illustrates the enviable man who lives an enviable life and what comes out of it.

First, he's like a mature tree. He's like a mature tree. The picture of vitality is the picture of the tree. Strength, usefulness. I mean usefulness up and down the age scale, right? Little kids climbing in the tree, grown people picking the fruit of the tree, older men sometimes chopping down the tree and using the wood of the tree to build a house. Whatever it is, we understand a mature tree doesn't start out as a mature tree. It had to grow that way, right? And growth takes time.

It's a perfect illustration of what the Christian life looks like, what the believing life looks like, what an enviable

life looks like. It's, it's not instantaneous. It, it takes time. It has to grow. This is God's way, isn't it? To plant the seed of the gospel into the soil of a prepared heart and cause that good seed to take deep root to germinate, to grow. And over time, that little plant, it's been growing underneath the soil. You haven't been able to see it, but then all of a sudden, boop, it pops through the soil.

Its growth seems imperceptible at first, but eventually it breaks the surface of the ground. It gets bigger, thicker in the trunk. It, it, it gets stronger until it stands up strong and proud and tall as a mighty tree. And that happens because, second, God plants that tree next to a plentiful water source. "He is like a tree firmly planted by streams of water." The LSB here adds the word firmly because it conveys the picture accurately, that the tree is firmly planted by God.

It has a strong root system, healthy, strong because it's planted in rich prepared soil and it is well supplied with clean flowing water. The water here pictures the Word that's always flowing, flowing water. It's an infinite supply that never runs out, never runs dry. No drought can touch it, no poison can

affect it, no dam can stop its abundant supply. The tree planted in that place by those waters, it's going to grow strong like a mature tree which, which can, even when strong hurricane force winds can bend this thing. It never breaks.

And the blessed man is like that. Even in trial he's immovable, unshakable in the storm, never uprooted in the trial and third because of the water supply this tree, this tree yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither. Yields fruit in its season and its leaf doesn't wither. Fruit in its season. Fruit is the sign of life and health. Fruit is the evidence of fecundity, of the tree's health, of its, of its actual growth and productivity, its usefulness. We know this from John 15, the tree may have trunk and branches, stems and leaves, but if it bears no fruit, it's good for nothing but the fire, right?

The enviable life of the blessed man is like a productive fruit bearing tree. It's not cut down, thrown into the fire. Instead, it bears fruit. It bears fruit in its season and it bears abundant fruit. The sweet fruit from the tree comes in its season. I think that's important to understand because it's

comes in according to the perfect will of God. Fruit bearing comes as a, a matter of God's will on his timetable. It appears at the appropriate time in fitting seasons to accomplish God's good purposes. Whatever the season.

We see that another sign of the strength and health of this tree is that little phrase in the middle verse 3, and its leaf does not wither. I love that picture because even the smallest, most delicate parts that a little two year old can reach up with his pudgy little hand and rip off a leaf, that leaf doesn't wither. Those flimsy little leaves are still strong and healthy and vibrant and thriving, and they do their job. They stretch forth to capture light from the sun and then take the energy from that sun and bring it down into the root through the whole wonderful process of photosynthesis.

Some of you homeschooling families know all about that. I, I can't explain it right now, but energy light, turns energy, causes growth. It's amazing. Happens through the flimsy little leaves. This leaf doesn't wither. None of the leaves wither life giving nourishment from the streams of water coming up through the root, up the trunk, out of, out of each and every branch.

And that vitality extends to each individual part, even the most seemingly insignificant but very important part. No part of the tree, no part of the life of the blessed is untouched by God's life-giving waters or by the life of his divine light.

Fourth part of this picture, in here David departs from the tree imagery to complete the picture of the enviable, enviable life of the blessed man. He says, "and in whatever he does, he prospers." Now, trees don't do or plan anything, they just sit there. All right, so David, he's no slave to his metaphor. He sets the figure aside and allows us to see that the blessed man is not just a static stationary tree, but he is an image-bearer and he is filled with God's instruction and filled with God's instruction, he thinks like his teacher. As a child of his father. He starts to think like his father and act like his father and make plans according to God's will.

So, the blessed man is fruitful like a tree, but the bearers best comparison we can make is this. He's like his father in heaven. He's got him, he's created in God's image. He has a mind, he has a will, and he's like his savior Jesus

Christ, who has an active participant in his own fruitfulness and his own usefulness. Gives himself to the work.

“But,” verse 4 says, “the wicked are not so,” “the wicked are not so.” Stark contrast here. It's arresting language. It's meant to stop us in our tracks. We've been enjoying the pleasant scene of the tree, planted by a stream of flowing water. We can imagine ourselves underneath the tree, enjoying its shade and laying up against its trunk. But now we're ripped out of that context, and we're thinking about dead, dry, worthless chaff that the wind drives away.

Picture there is a picture of winnowing. As people would gather, you know, cut the field, harvest, and then take it into the winnowing threshing floor. And they cast the grain up into the air. And the wind is used to separate out the light useless chaff from the heavy fruit of the grain. And the grain, and being heavier, falls to the ground first. And that's where it's gathered, and pulled away, and made useful, to make bread and those kinds of things, and flour.

The chaff, which are the dead husks of the grain. They float down later, and they're swept into a pile and then taken out later for burning, in the burning pile. The blessed posture toward God's perfect word, intentionally away from the counsel of the world, creates this blessed picture, which guarantees the blessed future. The blessed posture leads to the blessed picture, which leads to the blessed future.

When you take a long hard look at your life, are you living a life that others envy? Are you living a life that will be congratulated, commended? The question requires you to think not about your own view of your life, your subjective sense about how things are going, how you feel about how you're doing. Those things are really irrelevant, aren't they? I mean, we're self-deceived all the time. Rather, the question requires you to realize that there is an objective view about your life, what someone else sees, how someone else judges your life. Is it enviable and blessed or is it not?

The question also requires you to set aside the selfie. A, a mere snapshot that lacks any true perspective, that's distorted out of all true proportion, and instead to consider



how the comprehensive view of your life really measures up. And the objectivity I'm talking about here, the comprehensive judgement of your life and the evaluation of whether or not your life is blessed and enviable or not. Notice in these final verses, it's not a human evaluation that matters in the end, it's not your view that matters. It's not your faith in your own faith. It's not the strength of how much you think you believe. It's not about your spouse's view. It's not about your parents' view, or your grandparents' view. It's not about your, what your children or your grandchildren think about you. It's not about the estimation of a teacher or a coach or a boss, a relative, friends on social media. None of that matters.

The evaluation of our lives that matters in the end is one that is objective, and comprehensive, and omniscient. It's a divine evaluation that calls the shot of whether our lives are enviable and blessed or unenviable and cursed. Look at the verses. "Therefore the wicked will not rise in the judgment." It's kind of a take on the chaff, the chaff that blows in the wind. It's not going to rise there. They're not, ry, gonna rise in the judgment. Sinners are not gonna be standing in the congregation of the righteous, "For," verse 6, "Yahweh knows the

way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.”  
And that's how the Psalm ends.

The Psalm about happiness, and blessing, and blessedness, and what's enviable, it ends with a note of warning, right? And yet in the warning is the promise of eternal life to the righteous, in the company of the godly, the blessed assembly, they will enter into the joy of God forever to learn, and to grow, and to achieve, and to accomplish, and to discover, and be blessed, and benefited forever.

Turn with me for a moment to Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12. Because the writer of Hebrews addresses those who walk now in the blessed way and they are experiencing, for taking up the challenge of walking in the blessed way, and following Christ, you know, Christ called them. He said, “let everyone who would come after me deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” That means it will cost you your friends, and your relatives, and your acquaintances, and people will turn away from you, and they will despise you, and hate you.

And Jesus promised this, he said, if they hated me, they're going to hate you too. And the Hebrews, the recipients of this letter, they're feeling that. In fact, they're feeling that pressure so much. They want to give up on this whole Christian thing, and they want to return to the synagogue and return to their former life, because it was easier, because that's where all the people that are respected in society go. That's where their business connections are. That's where they can get their kids into good colleges and good training under rabbis, and that's where all the connections are made. They're just having a hard, hard time.

So the writer of the Hebrews is, is trying to encourage them. He's addressing those who walk in the blessed way and embrace the truly enviable life, one that is not envied by so many in this world today. And he encourages the blessed on their way. Join me in verse 14 of Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 14. The writer says, "pursue peace with all men", some just, some general exhortations here. "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." That is holiness.

Pursue holiness in your life, without which no one will see the Lord. No one will see the evidence, the transforming power of the Lord in your life if you do not pursue holiness, if you do not grow in sanctification, and "see to it," verse 15, "that no one falls short of the grace of God;" and then, "no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."

Watch your influences. Watch the influences. See that they're also, verse 16, here being "no sexually immoral or godless person like," like, "Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal." I mean, what a foolish trade. I'm hungry. Give me some of that red stuff to eat. I don't care about this birthright. I don't care about honor. I don't care about carrying on the family name. I don't care about what has been given to me by divine providence. This honor, this responsibility, this duty that I can cherish and bless my family with. I don't care about it. Just give me some stuff to eat.

How many people are trading their souls for a pot of red stuff, like Esau? He sold his own birthright for a single meal. But you know that afterwards, verse 17, "even afterwards when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears." Oh lot of remorse, lot of regret, lot of crying. Many people live in remorse and regret with a lot of crying, a lot of tears, but they find no room in their hearts for repentance. They just refuse to do the deep spade work in their hearts and look themselves honestly in the mirror and say I got to give it up, I got to repent.

Verse 18, "For you," you believers, you Hebrews, "you've not come to a mountain that can be touched into a blazing fire." He's referring to Sinai here, "and to darkness and gloom and a whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which was such that those who heard beg that no further word be spoken to them. They cannot bear what was being commanded, 'If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.' So terrible was what appeared, that Moses said; 'I am full of fear and trembling.'"

In our weekly bible reading, if you're, we do this together as a church and if you're keeping up, you realize that last week we read Exodus 20. I'm describing this very scene and we see that most of the people, the nation, million children of Israel walking through the wilderness and there they are at Sinai. And they're repelled by the holiness of God. They don't want to come near. They turn away in fear. Moses, though, was compelled by the holiness of God. He wanted to draw near. Yes, he trembled. Who wouldn't? He was longing to draw near to God, longing to come near to Yahweh, to see him, to know him, to love God, to worship him, to give his life for him.

We read in Exodus 20, verse 20 that Moses said to the people, don't be afraid. God has come in order to test you and to, in order that the fear of him may remain in you, so that you may not sin. Isn't that interesting, don't fear, but fear. Don't turn away in cowering fear. Your God wants to save you, reveal himself to you. Draw near in a holy reverential fear, the fear of a son for his father. But the people stood at a distance. Moses approached the thick cloud where God was. We also read this last week in Exodus 24:9 that Moses, along with his brother

Aaron, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, along with 70 elders of Israel, and remember the, the privilege that they had.

They were called up to Sinai, up to the mountain, approached Sinai and they saw the God of Israel. Sites that no one else saw. Even since they beheld God, they ate, they drank, but listen, even that amazing experience didn't affect them. The experience as dramatic and amazing as it was, didn't change their hearts, didn't make a dent. Only Moses entered the cloud that day, communed with God. Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, the 70. They descended the mountain and led Israel in the dance of the golden calf. That's our reading for this week. Their hearts weren't right.

Even in the presence of holiness, their hearts were not right; wicked desires, sinful actions. They would never join the sacred assembly along with Moses, along with all the blessed, along with those who are living an enviable life. Let's continue reading in Hebrews 12:22. "But you," beloved, "you have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the festal gathering, an assembly of the first born who are enrolled in heaven, and to

God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks better than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking.”

This is David's message too. “See to it that you don't refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned him on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from him who warns us from heaven. And his voice shook the earth then, but now he is promised, saying, ‘yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.’”

“Now this expression, ‘yet once more’ indicates the removing of those things which can be shaken, as I've created things, so that those which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude by which mean we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.”



Oh, listen, that is our charge. That is our call. The wicked will continue keeping their own counsel. Sinners will go their own way. Scoffers are gonna continue sitting down, enjoying eating, and drinking, and laughing, and joking, and having a ball. But woe to them when they come before the judgement of God.

Go back to Psalm 1 again. David says, they will not rise in the judgement. They won't stand there. If they won't kneel there, they will be flat on their face there, cowering before the God that they have spurned all their life, and they will be cast down forever because of it. They will not join in the eternal assembly of the righteous, but they will be excluded, exiled, cast out forever into the eternal fire. By choosing now, the way envied by sinners in this life, a way that we know God has condemned, sinners forfeit the enviable life that God himself knows, the way that he knows Yahweh knows the way of the righteous.

They forfeit that. They forfeit all that he's offered them. And so they will perish in the way that they have chosen. It's so tragic. It's so tragic. It's such a sobering picture, isn't

it, frightening reality. And that's we want to note again that that's the tone that David sets for the reader of the Psalms. As this Psalm 1 stands at the entry point into the rest of the Psalter. We have to enter into the blessed, enviable life God offers to give us, really repenting of our sin, and turning away from the world, and obeying his word.

Because all the rich beauty, all the, pictured here is the kind of the Psalter, all the glory of the treasure of the Psalms. Oh, the doors are wide open to those who delight in the instruction of Yahweh, to those who meditate day and night, those who draw near to God in praise and worship, who are devoted to him and devoted to nothing else. God will tolerate no rivals. He's not going to share his affection with any idol in your life. No other gods before him. He'll share us with no lover. He will always demand we abandon every single idol in our hearts and give ourselves wholly unto him. He does that for his glory, yes, and for our good.

It's a loving command and those who follow it, like the blessed man David writes about, live the truly enviable life and that judgement, that it is an enviable life, though it's spurned

and scorned in the present moment now by the world, that judgement will be vindicated in the end by all, but especially, and most importantly, by the all knowing, all seeing God. Friend, what about you? Will you repent of your sin, turn from the world and follow this blessed way?

By the grace of God, empowered, empowered by his spirit, and informed by his word, will you live now an enviable life, one that is judged to be enviable, enviable by God himself? That's my prayer for you today, that you will forsake death, the deadness of the chaff, and that you will instead choose new life in Christ and live a life that is truly to be envied. For it is in the life of Christ that we see the ultimate life of his that is to be envied.

Bow your heads with me please, and listen to this from Philippians chapter 2, which was also in our reading this past week. Jesus Christ "being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. And therefore, God also highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in

heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Our Father, you have put before us in Christ, the blessed man, the truly enviable life. And though he was judged a criminal, though he'd committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth, though he was crucified along with robbers and thieves, Father, you exalted him to your very throne, given him the name that is above every name. And now, from the perspective of your eternal view, your perspective, your vantage point, we see that the life that was despised on this earth and crucified, treated as a criminal, that one perfect life has been raised up on high, that anybody who looks to him may be saved.

Father, would you be pleased to pour out your saving grace, even today on those who desperately need it? And for those of us who do know your saving grace, we pray that you would help us to repent of any sin, any sinful way, any wrong counsel we've been listening to, any pathway that we've been walking in, any seat that we've been sitting in. Help us to rise up and turn 180 out and follow Christ. It's in his name we pray. Amen.