

Psalms 1-3

Well we are going to begin a new book of the Bible this week and of course as you all know it is the book of Psalms and really we will work our way through Psalms in several different sections and for this first portion we'll be looking at the first 41 chapters so it will take several weeks.

As we begin to look at some of these, I have to say that the Psalms are so encouraging to me as I look to follow and serve the Lord Jesus. The Psalms really give us significant insight into the lives of those who lived in the Old Testament and their relationship with God.

There are several different authors of these chapters of the Bible with David being the one that wrote some 73 of the 150. Moses is also one of the authors and then there is Solomon and a Levite named Asaph who is credited with 12 of the Psalms. There are also several Psalms to which we do not know who the author is.

The Psalms really express all kinds of emotions that the writers were going through as they went through life and we'll see the authors cry out to God as they went through both difficult and praiseworthy situations.

There are also what we call messianic Psalms and these are prophetic Psalms that speak of the Messiah and we'll actually be looking at one of those in our study today.

I suppose the last thing I'll share and then we'll get into it is that the Psalms can be seen of course as poetic but they can also be songs that were sung and some of them mention instruments that were used.

Often times when I am passing through difficult times in my life the Psalms are especially helpful for I love how David will be expressing how hard things are in his life and how he feels as though his enemies are going to catch up to him and then as he seeks the Lord and finds strength in Him by the end of the Psalm David is in a whole different place when it comes to his attitude and heart.

I find in my own life as I go through trials that spending time with my Lord in prayer seeking Him is the best place for me to find myself and as I bring my cares to Him He just has a way of ministering to my heart and helping me through. I can't encourage you enough and you will hear this a lot as we work through the book of Psalms but the Lord wants to hear from you and desires to work in your life whether life is good and grand or tough and depressing. We have a God that is fully available to us.

Well let's jump in here if you look with me at Psalm 1 and let's go ahead and look at verse 1 which says this **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;** Well right away here in Psalm 1 the writer tells us that there is a way that a man can be blessed and of course this also includes women as well.

Now that word blessed when we see it should be thought of as a spiritual or deep in the soul kind of satisfaction, happiness and well being that is only found in a life lived for God...For believers in Christ it can be defined as the prosperity of our souls in Him...Often times people think of blessedness from a material viewpoint but I have to tell you that is not the case in this instance. To be blessed or blessed

could be said to find the favor of God or to be content in God's work in your life.

I don't know about you but if there are clear guidelines for having this kind of life then I want to know all about it. Now being blessed or blessed by God does not necessarily mean that life is going to be easy and you are going to get everything you want. You and I know that our God is a good heavenly Father and as such He guides us to the places He wants us to be and allows that which is going to be best for our lives...What we can trust is that whatever the Lord allows is for our development and for His work within us...In this way we are blessed in all we do.

The first thing we see here is that God makes it clear that a person is blessed when they choose to stay away from the ungodly, the sinners and the scornful. In other words if you choose to get away from those who are wicked in this world you are going to find the blessing and favor of God upon your life.

Now that doesn't mean you never spend time with those that don't know Jesus but in the text here I just want to point out to you that there is a progression we see...Notice the progression of this verse when it comes to your relationship with the wicked...It begins by using the word walk then it moves to standing and then it goes to sitting.

When you walk next to someone you are on the move and eventually you part ways...to stand next to someone gives the idea that you might spend a decent amount of time together but I don't like to stand somewhere for more than a few minutes...it then moves over to sitting with the scornful...when you sit with someone the idea is you are

together with them, you are communing, you are sharing in life in a more intimate way.

Have you ever heard the saying “You are what you eat?” That’s kind of what this Psalm is going to convey...if you walk, stand and sit with the wicked you’ll find yourself slowly stepping away from the blessing of God. Over in 1 Corinthians 15:33 the Word puts it this way when it says ³³**Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”**

I have to say one more thing and then we’ll move on but notice it says not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. I want to tell you today if you are a believer in Jesus that getting advice from friends, family or those in the medical field of helping others with mental struggles who are ungodly won’t really help you all that much. Those of this world are going to have the world’s solutions to your problems which won’t line up with what God’s Word says. I would just caution you to be careful that you don’t put your confidence in those who give worldly advice.

Ok so the writer here tells us what to stay away from if you want a godly life and then in verses 2-3 they are going to tell us what we should be seeking and pursuing if we want a life that is considered blessed. They say this 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.

So stay away from the ungodly the sinner and the scornful and instead become a person that delights in the law of God...Specifically the law

refers to the first 5 books of the Bible but beyond that you and I as believers in Christ have the entire Bible at our disposal and we should delight in it. In other words we should cherish it, we should love it, we should take it in as often as we can.

I have to ask you do you delight in God's Word? Above all the books in the world you could ever read there is one that has an eternal impact on your life and that is the Bible. Some people will spend an awful lot of time looking at self-help books and articles from magazines to find answers to life's difficulties...but the reality is you just need the One Book. I believe that the Bible has so much valuable information in it that you could live your whole life seeking it out.

Don't get me wrong other books and devotionals can be a help in life along with Christian magazines and other things but here the writer says to delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night...Now typically when the word meditate comes up you and I have this thought of sitting in an uncomfortable position and trying to focus our minds but that's not what the writer means here.

It's interesting that when the world talks about meditation what are they trying to do? They are trying to clear their minds and push out any outside thoughts...When a believer meditates, they should be thinking about God's word and how to get more of it into their heart.

I hate to use this illustration but have you ever heard of how a cow eats their food? They mash up the grass and then they swallow it but then later on when they feel like they need a snack they bring it back up again so they can chew it some more and get all of the nutrients out of it...For lack of a better illustration at the time of my writing these notes you and I need to be chewing on God's Word like old Bessie is

chewing on the grass in the fields...God's Word should constantly be the focus of our thoughts and the primary diet that we eat.

I can't encourage you enough to be regularly consuming God's Word. Over in Isaiah 55:11 we have the following **So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**

Now when you and I are regularly consuming God's Word and thinking on it regularly we are then told that we become like a tree planted by the rivers of water...The idea I have is the roots are strong and the tree is well nourished.

We are told those who live this way will bring forth fruit in its season meaning they will bear much fruit and all the conditions are ripe for good things happening to this tree.

The text goes on to say that the leaf won't wither meaning it will endure even in those tough times when the weather may not be all that accommodating to growth.

And then notice it says whatever he does will prosper...One of the verses that comes to mind is found in Proverbs 3:5-6 which says **Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.** Those who put these verses in Psalm 1 into practice and they are consuming the Word regularly will find themselves acknowledging the Lord in all their ways and they will discover that He will direct their paths.

So if you want to be a blessed person this is the formula that you and I can apply to our lives and then we turn back to the ungodly if you look at verses 4-5 which say **4The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.** The ungodly aren't stable at all compared to a tree that has some deep strong roots...they are seen like they are chaff that is blown away in the wind...The chaff was the outside shell of the wheat and the harvesters would toss the wheat and the chaff together and the chaff was so light it would just blow away causing a separation.

We can also see here that the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment...I'll just be simple here that if you don't have Jesus in your life then your status is that you are ungodly...and there are many that take offense to that but according to the Word of God just one single sin in all of your life means that you are seen as ungodly.

I want you to know today if you don't know Jesus then you don't have life eternal and that when you die you shall be judged by the living God. Clearly from verse 5 we can see that one day there will be a separation of those who are righteous from those who are sinful. It's always good for us to remember that we shouldn't mess around in our lives. Our decisions matter and our decision about receiving Jesus Christ or rejecting Him has eternal consequences.

Verse 6 to close out chapter 1 says 6For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish. Just understand that there is no fooling God as you go through life. The Lord looks past the outward appearance of a man and sees the depths of every person's heart. I think we may be surprised one day at

what we observe in someone and what the Lord has observed in someone.

Ok let's move on to chapter 2 here and this like I said earlier is what is called a Messianic Psalm which points us to Jesus. Now when we read this Psalm we don't see who wrote it, but we do get the answer to this over in Acts 4:25-26 when we are told it was actually David who said these things.

Let's go ahead and look at it if you look at verses 1-3 which say this **2 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, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us."

So David as he writes this is certainly speaking of the Messiah and how the world is against Him.

It says here the nations rage and plot a vain thing. I want to ask you if you realize that we live in a world that is currently run by the enemy of our souls Satan. Jesus has purchased the world for Himself, but He currently refrains from taking possession in the hopes that as many as possible will come to Him that they might be saved... Since Satan is currently the ruler of this world as we are told in John 12:31 we know that he is constantly plotting for some kind of victory against God... It will never happen but he does so nonetheless.

In addition to this the rulers of this world are decidedly against God. We can see how the governing authorities are looking to remove the laws of the land, indoctrinate our children and destroy our society... All

of this is done in very clear acts against what God's Word teaches. Everything God is...constantly finds itself being challenged. Creation is challenged, sexuality is challenge and of course marriage is constantly under assault.

I've given examples of how rulers come against Christ in today's world but this Psalm also speaks prophetically of Jesus and how the rulers of the world were against Him. We might think of the constant plots of the religious leaders and even Pilate was against the Lord in the end sentencing Him to death by crucifixion.

You might even know individuals that just flat out hate God and come against Him regularly...It's a sad thing that the world hates the One that gave His life for them. All Jesus did was loved and lived with others in mind and yet because humanity loves to live in the darkness and hates the light they refuse the Lord and choose to plot against him.

Look at verses 4-6 which say this and I have to say I just love this as we see God's response. It says this **4He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5Then 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." Evil humanity plots against God...God sits in the heavens and laughs at their plans, the Lord will hold them in derision it says which means ridicule or mockery, in other words the Lord is not phased one bit by the plans of man. In other words God is not one bit intimidated by the plots of humanity.

It is not as if God is in heaven and he has a chess match going on with the rulers of this world and he is sweating it out in fear of being

defeated...Proverbs 21:1 says this of kings when it says **The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord,**

Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes. Man may plot against God, but we should just simply remember God is sovereign, that He has plans laid out for how all of history is going to unfold and that there is not one thing that man can do to change it.

Not only does God laugh at the attempts of man but He will also pour out wrath on them one day...Now you and I as believers in Jesus are not appointed for wrath but God will certainly one day pour out His wrath on the wicked of this world. Those that plot against God will be held accountable.

And then notice in verse 6 that God says I have set My King on My Holy Hill in Zion...in other words though the world may try to rule and defeat Him at the end of the day the Lord Jesus shall rule and reign.

Look at verses 7-9 say the following ⁷**"I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 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.'"**

Jesus is certainly the Son of God and the nations will be His inheritance...One day you and I know the Lord Jesus will come back to this earth in a time that is called the Millennial Kingdom and let me just give you a fast run down of prophetic events very briefly...First the rapture of the church takes place, then there are 7 years that will happen in this world in which God will work with the people of Israel primarily once again bringing them to a place of salvation. The

antichrist who will be a world leader will be at work in the world at this time as well and then at the end of the 7 years the Lord Jesus will come back with the saints to rule and reign smashing the wicked...It is at this time that Jesus will rule the nations.

I think you and I need to remember that Jesus will rule and reign one day. The Bible says very clearly that one day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess and certainly during the time of the millennial reign the Lord shall rule with an iron scepter meaning what He says goes and there won't be any space for rebellion.

Then David as he is inspired by the Holy Spirit gives some advice to the kings of the world if you look at verses 10-12 which say ¹⁰**Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 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.** David's advice...Be wise O kings and choose to submit to the One that has all authority. Why fight against One that is going to defeat you every time.

I don't know about you but I love this Psalm...it's a great reminder for us that though the nations plot the Lord shall rule and reign...I suppose this might be good advice for those that reject Jesus today as they go through life that you are on the wrong side of history.

I was reminded of what Jesus said over in Matthew 5:25-26 which says **this ²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of**

there till you have paid the last penny. Spiritually speaking those that hate God should recognize they are going to lose, that God will judge them and they will enter into His wrath...and before they get to the time of judgment they should make amends with God Almighty and the way to do that is to come to Jesus and seek forgiveness, to submit to His will for your life, to give your heart to Him....and those of you that have put your trust in Him are said to be blessed and I think that's an understatement...We are the most blessed people in all the world.

All right Psalm 3 if you want to look at that with me and in most of your Bible you are going to see the words **A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.** I want you to know that those words at the top of the Psalm are actually considered to be part of the inspired text...so the Holy Spirit has seen fit with this Psalm to let us know that it was written when David was on the run from his son Absalom.

I want you to bear with me here for a moment or two because I want you to have the context of what happened as it is beneficial to us I believe as we look through this. And for homework you might read through 2 Samuel 11-12 and then 2 Samuel 15-19 to get the complete picture.

David was a man of God, a man after God's own heart we are told. He was willing to follow the Lord wherever he was led, he trusted God, he slew the giant, he persevered when Saul came after him...David did all kinds of mighty deeds as he chose to honor God in his life.

But for all his great deeds we also know David made mistakes. This Psalm is tied to probably David's largest mistake in life and it all happened because David was not where he was supposed to be...we

are told it was the time that King's went to war but David chose to stay home and then he chose to sleep with another man's wife whose name was Bathsheba who then became pregnant and not only that but David then chose to try and cover up his sin by having her husband Uriah come home from the battlefield in the hopes he would sleep with her and think it was his child...That didn't work though and David then wrote a letter to his commander in the field saying that he was to essentially put Uriah on the front lines where he would be struck down and that's exactly what happened.

It seemed on the outside like David might have gotten away with it, but God sees everything and eventually sent a prophet by the name of Nathan to David and this prophet called him out and then we see David repent and return to the Lord...but what I want to point out to you briefly is found in 2 Samuel 12:11-12 and it says this ¹¹ **"This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"**

It was a sad time in David's life...He had failed...and yet in that same passage of scripture we see the Lord forgive David and we watch as God continued to use him and minister to him...It's amazing really because I think all of us can relate to this in that we all make mistakes...some are bigger than others but our great God and Savior Jesus Christ can forgive us and restore us and continue to use us...I think the real key to this is humility, being willing to accept

responsibility for your actions and being willing to heed the voice of God for your life.

It's never easy to go through but if you submit to His plans, Jesus can do some amazing works that we certainly don't deserve.

Later on we see his own son Absalom come against David winning the hearts of the people to himself and then David actually chose to leave the city of Jerusalem while his son slept with his concubines...Eventually this rebellion was put down but as we read this Psalm just have in your mind that David's own son has come against him.

Let's look at this here if you look at chapter 3 verses 1-2 which say **Lord, how they have increased who trouble me!**

Many are they who rise up against me.

² Many are they who say of me,

"There is no help for him in God." Selah

Just a quick note you might mark that word Selah which will come up all over the book of Psalms...You might think of it as meaning let's take a break and think about it when you see it...God wants us to put ourselves in the shoes of David.

David was surrounded...there were many that rose up against him. We might remember there was a man named Shimei who we are told was a descendant of Saul and this man cursed David and threw rocks at him...and then there was Mephibosheth who David had taken care of for many years and it wasn't true but David was told this man had turned on him...not to mention all those that had gathered with Absalom against him.

And you can imagine those who opposed David thought he was done for, that he had nothing to stand on, that God was decidedly done with him, that there was no help for him in God.

Sometimes we can feel that way can't we...When everything is falling apart around us and the trials are heavy you might think that God has no help for you...Let's read on and we'll see that this isn't the case at all.

Look at verses 3-4 which say ³But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

⁴I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah

David had been through so much in his life and once again as David cried out to the Lord in his life the Lord became his shield. The idea of a shield is you hide behind it and it protects you from the blows of the enemy...How often do we try to protect ourselves in our own strength and our own abilities...and what ends up happening is we fail and fall short...But if we learn to hide behind the Lord He becomes our guard and our strength.

As David cried out to the Lord he makes mention that God is the one that lifts up his head...perhaps David was ashamed at having to leave the city hanging his head and the Lord here ministers to him lifting him up.

And then David says the Lord heard him when he cried out to him. I want you to know today that your cries unto the Lord do not go unnoticed. You are not alone if you have Jesus in your life...I don't know how many times in my life I have felt a little like David in that I

was just overwhelmed with what was happening around me...and every time I have cried out to Him He has met me and helped me and become my shield.

And then look at what David says in verses 5-6 which say ⁵I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me.

⁶I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people

Who have set themselves against me all around. I don't know

about you but I don't think I would sleep all that much if I was surrounded by enemies and in fear of losing my life and yet I am reminded that God is the One that gives you and I a peace that goes beyond understanding and for David that is exactly what he experienced.

David took his burdens to the Lord and dropped them off and knew he could trust God to watch over him and help him and then he slept...it reminds me of Peter in Acts 12 when Herod had killed James and then arrested Peter putting him in prison and the idea was that Peter was a dead man and we are told in the middle of the night an angel showed up to set him free and actually had to wake him up and pull him out of the prison.

It is amazing how God can give rest when the circumstances dictate we shouldn't have it...That's not always the case but it certainly can be at times as the Lord strengthens and helps us even supernaturally.

And then notice David woke up refreshed in the Lord saying I won't be afraid of ten thousands of people that come against me even though they are all around me.

Look at verses 7-8 which say this ⁷ Arise, O Lord;

Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.

⁸ Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah

David calls upon the Lord to save Him to rise up on his behalf and he mentions that God has struck his enemies on the cheekbone breaking the teeth of the ungodly...I couldn't help but think of my parents and how they used to have this little Yorkie puppy and if you aren't familiar with that breed they can be cute little things or they can be pretty mangy and beat up...well my parents had a little Yorkie whose name was Larry and this dog had maybe a few teeth left when he was with my parents and you know my little brother being as mature as he was decided he would pick on that dog...I guess I would say they had a love hate relationship...but anyways my brother would antagonize the little guy and the dog would freak out and kind of go after my brother but because he had no teeth he would just chew him with his gums...sometimes all it took was my little brother getting near the dog to set him off...And of course he didn't abuse the dog or anything but Larry the Yorkie was rendered powerless because he had no teeth.

And that's what the Lord would do to the enemies of David...They might plot against him, they might desire to end his life but God Almighty had his back...the Lord has your back also as you live for Him...He stands up for His kids when they are picked on you need only hide under the shadow of his wings and the protection of His shield.

I would say to us today as we close that we must learn to find our refuge in the Lord, that we must learn to submit to His authority, that we must strive to be as the trees that are planted near the rivers whose roots are strong and bear fruit in season.

Today if you need to repent of your sins and give your heart to Jesus the Bible says today is the day of salvation and if you want you can come up while we close in worship and I would love to pray with you.

Let me pray for us.

Psalms 1-3 “The Lord Is A Shield”

Psalm 1

Verse 1

1 Corinthians 15:33

Verses 2-3

Isaiah 55:11

Proverbs 3:5-6

Psalm 2

Verses 4-6

Proverbs 21:1

Verses 10-12

Matthew 5:25-26

Psalm 3

Introduction

2 Samuel 12:11-12