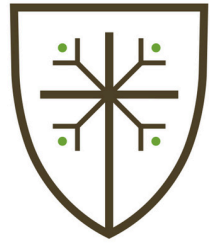


SERMON NOTES



July 14, 2024

PRIMARY
PSALMS SERMON SERIES
PRAYER

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"A Preparation to Pray"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Psalms 1

Galatians 2:15-20

Matthew 5:3-11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The idea of the unencumbered self can be enticing. From Tim's sermon or from your own experience, what ultimately becomes the problem with a life turned inward?
2. Into what are you sinking your roots? What is enabling you to live regardless of what is happening around you?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

What do we need in order to pray? That is the question that began our sermon series this week on the Psalms – the prayers of ancient Israel. Tim began at the very beginning with Psalm one which is not itself a prayer but a preparation to pray. It reveals to us what is necessary to be able to pray.

The Degrees

Psalm one begins with a three-fold negative describing the degrees of departure from God. The psalmist moves from talking about the one who walks in the counsel of the wicked, then the one who stands in the way of sinners, and finally, the one who sits in the seat of scoffers. It is an active descent away from God ending in a resolved, seated posture, committed to a way that is against Him. Whatever it is to which we commit ourselves, that is what ultimately owns us and rules us. It is far easier to change course while still walking or even while standing than it is once we've committed and taken a seat.

A common refrain in modernity - and one to which countless have committed and taken a seat at its table - speaks of "the unencumbered self." This is a self that is completely free from any outside influence and that is left with no other option than to turn inward, relying on individual emotions to dictate truth. But we can never not be listening to something, some stream of thought, some voice is always pressing us into its image. And as the Psalmist shows us in the second half of Psalm one, there are only two possible images toward which we can walk

The Images

The first image is that of a tree. This tree is planted next to a stream. And trees planted next to streams have deep, long roots sunk into subterranean waters so that whatever the conditions above ground, they are able to survive. This image shows us the uniqueness of our faith. If you are a Christian, God lives in you. We are like trees with the roots of our souls sunk deeply into the very life of God. Roots absorb what courses through them and the entire plant is changed by it.

The second image is that of chaff. Chaff is the hard covering that surrounds seeds. It is weightless and in the harvesting process, the chaff is blown away by the wind. And the Psalmist says, that's what will happen to you in the counsel of the wicked, in the way of sinners, in the seat of scoffers. It will make you empty and light in your soul so you're easily blown away. To be chaff is to be an empty shell of a person.

We are all like chaff before God. But Jesus, the true tree with his roots sunk fully into the life of God, gives us his life, his weightiness and rootedness that we might drink deeply from the living water. The more we listen to God's voice, His Word, the more deeply we sink our roots into what it is we listen to.