

# The Living Word Of God

## A Reflection on Psalm 1 and the Power of God's Word

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This morning, I'll be preaching from God's Word, focusing on Psalm 1. Similar to the book of Proverbs, which is wisdom literature, Psalm 1 contrasts the ways of the wise versus the wicked, highlighting the different paths they take and the consequences they face. Wise individuals are characterized by their humility, seeking counsel, acting with prudence, making wise decisions, and using good judgment with careful consideration and foresight. On the other hand, the wicked are often reckless, speaking without thinking, rushing to conclusions, and pursuing evil without seeking God.

Psalm 1, along with Psalms 37 and 119, is sometimes designated as a wisdom psalm because it offers two clear paths: the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. Verses 1 to 3 describe the righteous, verses 4 to 5 address the wicked, and verse 6 summarizes the contrast between the two. The righteous person is described in three steps: first, negatively, by whom they avoid; second, positively, by what they embrace; and third, metaphorically, as a tree. Whenever we hear God's Word, we are to receive His instruction and understand His will for us. That is the purpose of this sermon today.

Let's observe verses 1 to 3. First, notice in verse 1 where it speaks about, "Blessed is the man." There's no qualifier with the word "man"—nothing extraordinary or amazing about this person. It's just an ordinary man or woman, which is crucial because it highlights God's work in them. They are a vessel, as we all are. This man is not sheltered from normal human experiences, such as sorrows, and he's not shielded from temptation. He understands sorrows, just like us, and we can relate to his place. We're all acquainted with sorrows, aren't we?

Verses 1 to 3 begin by addressing the wicked counsel, the way of sinners, and the party of scoffers. This person is not in a bubble but faces the day-to-day challenges like any ordinary man or woman. From the world's perspective, people might wonder how this man can be blessed or filled with happiness and true joy. But through God's lens, particularly through the Lord Jesus Christ, we see true joy. In Luke 6:20-23, Jesus says, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom. Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven." This joy is a paradox, seen through God's perspective.

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-3, we learn about the Macedonian church, which, despite great trials and poverty, had an abundance of joy that abounded unto the riches of their liberality. God acknowledges their extraordinary joy amidst difficult times, showing that we don't need to be sheltered or rich to know happiness. This man does not isolate himself or withdraw from society, as the world might suggest by "getting off the grid." Jesus prayed in John 17:15, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." God helps us avoid evil while we engage in the world.

How can believers engage in today's culture and find true happiness? Verse 1 encourages us to be truly happy even when negative things happen, because Christ is the source of all our blessings. This ordinary man is a recipient of God's grace, not based on circumstances but on a converted heart. Verse 6 says, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." It's more important that God knows we are righteous than that we think we are. The ungodly may think they know, but their way leads to perishing. This man's heart is changed; he is righteous, honors God, and lives righteously because he is made righteous by God.

This man is stationed by God, like a tree planted by rivers of water. The Hebrew word for "plant" means to transplant, a deliberate relocation by God from a desert to a place with a continuous life-giving source. As believers, we are to be noticed by our growth, like a tree maturing with deep roots. Our spiritual lives, often unseen, produce fruit through righteous conduct. Psalm 127:2 says, "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, eat the bread of sorrows, for so He giveth His beloved sleep." Psalm 116:15 adds, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." God cares for us, watches over our rest, and cherishes us, ensuring we don't live or die alone.

The conduct of this righteous person is reflected in the fruit the tree bears, showing outward actions that distinguish believers. We don't chase fleeting worldly things for happiness; God provides all we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). To bear fruit, the righteous must avoid three things: the counsel of the ungodly, the way of sinners, and the seat of the scornful. The counsel of the ungodly represents worldly thought patterns, rooted in a deceitful heart (Jeremiah 17:9). By rejecting these thoughts, we reject their lifestyle and habits, avoiding a life where God is not at the center. 1 Corinthians 10:31 instructs us to do all to the glory of God, putting Him first.

The scornful openly mock God and Christians, but believers don't associate with their assemblies. We evangelize but don't sit with them. This downward trend of sinful living—walking, standing, and sitting—grinds a person to a halt, cutting them off from the life-giving source. Believers must avoid these compromises. Verse 2 contrasts this by stating the righteous delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night. This constant engagement brings sustaining joy, not based on circumstances but on a heart condition. Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." God's Word is trustworthy and life-giving because He is unchanging.

The righteous give their time to knowing God's Word, not in a surface manner but through deep meditation. This involves humility, reflecting on how Scripture applies to life, relationships, and choices. Psalm 90:12 prays, "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." By valuing time with God's Word, we avoid wasting it on fleeting pursuits and find constant joy.

Verse 3 shows the results of these choices: a blessed life, spiritual growth, bearing fruit in season, and stability. Like a tree planted by water, the righteous are stable, with deep roots tested in trials. James 1:5-8 contrasts the unstable, doubting person with the steadfast believer rooted in God's unchanging Word. 1 Timothy 4:8 promises godliness for both this life and the life to come, impacting relationships like marriage and parenting by adhering to God's instructions.

Jesus affirms in Luke 24:25, 44 that all Scriptures, including the Psalms, testify of Him. Psalm 2:12 urges, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way." We live in a time of grace, where salvation comes through trusting Jesus, who did all the work on the cross (Acts 16:31). Revelation 6:16-17 warns of God's wrath, but James 1:19 calls us to be quick to hear God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 describes it as a two-edged sword, discerning the heart's thoughts and intents. God knows us and our struggles, offering salvation to those who believe.

I invite both believers and non-believers to talk one-on-one after the service about salvation or spiritual growth. Let's pray together to grow in maturity or find salvation. Father, thank You for Your Word and its clarity. Help it do the work only You can provide, encouraging the saved and awakening the lost. We acknowledge we can't do anything without You. Christ has saved us perfectly through His blood. Grant wisdom and show Your mighty, loving, gracious nature. Bless us to this end, in Jesus' name. Amen.