

9-10-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: Your Best Life Now!

Purpose: Explain Psalm 1 and provoke people to choose God's path for their best life now.

Truth for Today: God's path for us leads to blessings now and eternal rewards in heaven.

Text: Psalm 1

Topic: Pathways, Best Life, Blessing, Wicked

Series Title: "Your Best Life Now" ...is found by following God's ways!

Series purpose: Provoke people to embrace the path of Biblical truth to have a blessed life now and rewards in eternity.

## **Your Best Life Now**

### **I. Introduction**

A. New Series: "Your Best Life Now" ...is found by following God's ways!

B. What comes to mind if I asked you, "What is your best life?" What are you striving for? What do you dream about? Pics: House, car, clothes, family fun, exercising, diploma, pile of money, football touchdown, hunting ducks but where does God fit in in our 'best life'? Cross/ church What path are we following to find our best life?

C. The Bible tells us there are 2 paths to follow in life, God's way, or the world's way. The right way or the wrong way. [Ps. 1 (NCV) <sup>1</sup> Happy (*ESV blessed*) are those who don't listen to the wicked (*those who are guilty of sin and do wrong*), who don't go where sinners go, who don't do what evil people do. <sup>2</sup> They love the Lord's teachings, and they think about those teachings day and night. <sup>3</sup> They are strong, like a tree planted by a river. The tree produces fruit in season, and its leaves don't die. Everything they do will succeed. <sup>4</sup> But wicked people are not like that. They are like chaff that the wind blows away. <sup>5</sup> (NLT) They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. <sup>6</sup> (NCV)...because the Lord takes care of his people, but the wicked will be destroyed.]

1. God has given us the power to choose the path we take in life. We can follow His path as outlined in the Bible or the ways of the world/wicked.

D. Series purpose: Provoke people to embrace the path of Biblical truth to have a blessed life now and rewards in eternity. We'll deal with practical subjects of everyday life, and we'll find out what the Bible says about following God's path: work, fun, money, family, sex, how to treat people,

what's the big deal about sin, living with eternity in mind, and what it means to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.

E. Today we will contrast the two paths of life everyone must choose from Psalm 1, God's way, or the world's way, the right way, or the wrong way.

F. Title: Your Best Life Now!

## II. 2 Pathways in life from Psalm 1 Pic Path fork road

A. 1<sup>st</sup> path is taken by the wicked. Def. wicked: those who are guilty of sin and do wrong

1. 'Good wicked' (Oxymoron). They don't murder or rape. They're not 'bad' people, but they're distracted by the wrong priorities. They live a self-centered life instead of a God-centered life. They usually work hard but their goal in life is money, pleasure and doing what they want. They may believe in God but they're not a committed follower of Jesus. This path leads to 'blessings' now but judgment in eternity, e.g., Video God's Not Dead. Mom is dying, son isn't a believer but made it to the top of the corporate ladder, wealthy, expensive lifestyle in pursuit of selfish pleasure. He chose the wrong path.

2. 'Bad wicked', This path leads to heartache in this life and judgment in eternity. These people choose a path of lawlessness, selfishness, violence, etc. Pic. Drugs, murder, molestation, jail, etc. They reject God and will stand before Him on Judgment Day. They lived a totally wasted life.

B. 2<sup>nd</sup> path Pic: This path leads to blessings now and rewards in eternity. God usually blesses them with a home to live in, people to love them, food to eat and a life they enjoy. They have joy, contentment, and peace even when they experience hardship and sorrow, e.g., Christians in the persecuted church vs. Americans. The key is, vs. 2, They love the Lord's teachings; they are "God's People". That's why they experience God's blessings now and His reward in eternity.

C. Summary: The path we choose is up to us. (1) The 1<sup>st</sup> path of those who are guilty of sin and do wrong leads to 'blessings' now but judgment in eternity, (2) A similar path for those who are guilty of sin and do wrong leads to heartache now and judgment in eternity, (3) The path of the godly leads to blessings now and rewards in eternity.

## III. The pathway to our best life

A. [Psalm 1 (NCV) <sup>1</sup> Happy (*ESV blessed*) are those who don't listen to the wicked (*those who are guilty of sin and do wrong*), who don't go where

sinner go, who don't do what evil people do.<sup>2</sup> They love the LORD's teachings, and they think about those teachings day and night.<sup>3</sup> They are strong, like a tree planted by a river. The tree produces fruit in season, and its leaves don't die. Everything they do will succeed.] Our best life is a life blessed by God. People who follow God's path are strong and successful.

B. Those who will experience blessings now and rewards in eternity have 3 things in common:

1. *They love the Lord's teaching.* They could hate, ignore or think they can follow the Lord's ways later. [Psalm 119:2–3 (NCV) Happy (*NLT joyful*) are those who keep his rules, who try to obey him with their whole heart.<sup>3</sup> They don't do what is wrong; they follow his ways.] The Bible is like an instruction manual that helps us know the best path to follow to get the results we want, Pic JH Legos
2. *They think about those teachings day and night*, i.e. God's Word guides their decisions. [Joshua 1:8 (NIV) Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.] There's a principle in life that applies to everyone. Our thinking usually precedes our choices and actions. We become what we think about. (This doesn't mean we're a monk in a monastery)
  - a. Why is it so important to let God's Word, the Bible guide us? [2 Timothy 3:15–16 (NLT) You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the **wisdom to receive the salvation** that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to ...corrects us when we are **wrong** and teaches us to do what is **right**.] Sometimes people don't know the difference between right and wrong and sometimes they know and do wrong any way.
3. *They don't listen to the wicked, who don't go where sinners go, who don't do what evil people do.* Who am I listening to? Who's influencing me? [1 Corinthians 15:33 (NCV) Do not be fooled: "Bad friends will ruin good habits." (ESV) "Bad company ruins good morals."] There's a truism in life; we most likely become like the people we are with the most. If we answer the questions, (1) who are my friends; (2) where are we going and (3) what are we doing? I'll tell you what path you're on and what your future will be.

- a. There's a balance in this; Christians are called to reach people who need Christ...wicked. Most people are messed up before Jesus starts changing their life. We befriend them unless they're influencing us down the wrong path.

IV. The wrong path promises happiness but doesn't have a happy ending.

A. [Psalm 1:4–6 (NCV) <sup>4</sup> But **wicked people** (Def. *those who are guilty of sin and do wrong*) are not like that. They are like **chaff that the wind blows away.**]

1. Chaff...throwing leaves in the air on a windy day.

B. Vs. 5 (NLT) They will be condemned at the **time of judgment**. Sinners will have no place among the godly. <sup>6</sup> (NCV) This is because the Lord takes care of his people, but the wicked will be destroyed.]

1. There is a day of reward coming for people who stay on the right path but there is a Judgment Day for those on the wrong path. Heaven and hell are real. Why would anyone want to risk where you'll spend eternity by walking on the wrong path when God's path is so good.

C. Next week: Our best life is lived with eternity in mind.

v. Conclusion/ Summary: The path we choose is up to us.

A.(1) The 1<sup>st</sup> path of those who are guilty of sin and do wrong leads to 'blessings' now but judgment in eternity, (2) A similar path for those who are guilty of sin and do wrong leads to heartache now and judgment in eternity, (3) The path of the godly leads to blessings now and rewards in eternity.

1. It's really true, "Our Best Life Now"...is found by following God's ways!

B. Response/ Prayer:

1. I'm on the wrong path and I want God to help me get on the right path.
2. I want to do my best to stay on the right path.
3. Souls: Getting on the right path is more than willpower and doing good works. It has a starting place, // get in a taxi, turn to God and begin following Christ.

VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message

VII. Supplemental Material

A. Jesus also said there are 2 paths in life. Jesus referred to them in [Matthew 7:13–14 (NLT) "You can enter **God's Kingdom only through the narrow**

**gate.** The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. <sup>14</sup> But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.]

B. [Job 21:7–15 (NLT) <sup>7</sup> “Why do the wicked prosper, growing old and powerful?...<sup>13</sup> They spend their days in prosperity...<sup>14</sup> And yet they say to God, ‘Go away. We want no part of you and your ways.’<sup>15</sup> Who is the Almighty, and why should we obey him?] One day they’ll find out.

C. Context, Sermon on the Mount, [Matthew 7:24–27 (NCV) <sup>24</sup> “Everyone who **hears my words and obeys them** is like a **wise man** who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup> It rained hard, the floods came, and the winds blew and hit that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who **hears my words and does not obey** them is like a **foolish man** who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> It rained hard, the floods came, and the winds blew and hit that house, and it fell with a big crash.”

1. Pic 2 houses. The house you build will be determined by the path you take in life.