

GM // name // online // new

Starting new series going through Psalms (right in the middle of your Bible).

This book is a collection of 150 poems written thousands of years ago. **[not going thru all 150 :)]**

But these poems aren't the work of one person ...

They were written by different Jewish authors spanning generations ...

written from a variety of experiences, but all from the perspective of being part of God's covenant people.

That is why the Psalter (fancy name) has been called the hymnbook or prayerbook of God's people.

That is true for the Jew and the Christian as well.

The Psalms have always been treasured by the church.

In fact, the N.T. writers reference the Psalms more than any other book to prove that Jesus was the long-awaited Savior.

But the Psalms aren't just for the N.T. scholars ...

They are for you and me.

And if you're here and aren't a Christian yet ... as we talk about the Psalms I think it is going to give you an insight into what God is really like and how we are meant to live before him.

The great hope of this series is that we will grow into being more authentic with God and others.

It's why the subtitle of the series is "Bringing the real you to God."

It's worth acknowledging that for many of us, poetry isn't our thing.

It can be hard to read and understand.

On the other hand ... a good poem accomplishes what no other form of writing can.

The beauty of poetry is that it often paints a picture that gives deeper insight and feeling to the human experience where words would otherwise fail.

The Psalms are just that ... it is poetry that covers the whole human experience.

Poetry as a form of linguistic expression is designed to move us at a deeper level.

Think about it this way ...

You can explain a sunset in a scientific way or read its definition in the dictionary. (hits your mind)

But a good poem about a sunset connects to a deeper part of us ... it stirs the emotion & moves the soul.

The beauty of the sunset never changed ... but our experience of its beauty became more true.

(That is the power of poetry)

What a poem can do to connect us to the beauty of a sunset is what the Psalms can do with connecting us to the glory of God.

It gives us words where words fail ... as is usual when trying to describe something transcendent.

But the Psalms aren't just poems that fill our soul with joy and wonder.

They also deal with the darkness of life that fill our souls with hurt and heaviness.

Did you know there are more psalms of lament (anguish/sorrow) than there are psalms of praise?

See, God doesn't just want our praise ... He wants our sorrows too.

There are psalms that vent over betrayal, evil, injustice.

There are also psalms that vexate over depression, loneliness, and unfulfilled longing.

Every emotion you will ever feel for every life circumstance is given rich treatment in the Psalms.

John Calvin said "The Psalms give us an anatomy of all parts of the soul."

The Psalms teach us how to bring every situation, and every emotion -- good, bad & ugly -- to God.

Which is so helpful ... especially for us guys!

We tend to be more emotionally disconnected ...

(Hayley, “What are you feeling?” me ... “I dk!” :)) ... we are like Buddy the Elf “I feel warm ... tongue is swollen.”

I’m picking on the guys, but that is true for so many of us ...

We don’t know how to get very deep with God and others.

The Psalms can help us with that.

The good news is we don’t have to start talking like we're in a Shakespear play or overuse emojis.

Just be yourself and use the Psalms!

God’s given us a collection of 150 pre-written prayers for every occasion!

And they aren’t just *any* prayers...

The Bible says about itself that every word in it is breathed out by God.

Which means these Psalms aren’t just man’s words...

God influenced and guided the author of each Psalm as they sought to give expression and meaning to what was in their soul.

If one of your hang-ups about prayer is that you DK what to pray, or that you might be praying the wrong thing ...

Pray the Psalms with confidence knowing that there isn't a better prayer to be prayed.

If you follow us on Facebook, One Harbor Church Havelock, a new Psalm is going to be posted each morning M-F for you to use for prayer on that day.

I hope you're excited ... I am, so let's get into it ...

We are going to kick off this series in Psalm 1.

Because it is so short I'm going to read it slowly for the purpose of allowing us room to take in every word that is said ...

and hopefully to see the beauty and feel the tension in this poem.

Psalm 1:1-6

1 Blessed is the man

**who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;**

**2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.**

3 He is like a tree

**planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.**

In all that he does, he prospers.

4 The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

**5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;**

**6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.**

This Psalm shows us a few things about the righteous:

What they need... // What they love... // What they
become... // And Where they are going.

First, let's look at what the Righteous need.

The Righteous Need Discernment

Discernment is the ability to judge well.

Spiritually it is seeing things clearly for what they really are. Particularly what is true and what is false. What is good and what is evil.

The righteous need discernment because we live in a world where morality and ethics are constantly changing.

Right and wrong are not always black & white.

Good and evil is always in flux.

You can look back across generations and see how things have switched.

And that's not all bad!

Slavery was once deemed good by the cultural majority.

Thankfully, that's flipped.

But that makes my point.

How can you know that what the culture today says is good is really good?

The problem is that every generation thinks they have a more righteous mind than the previous one.

This Psalm is saying that the righteous, in any generation, will always be able to discern what is good and what is evil.

And that means we can celebrate and join in when society gets it right ...

But we must reject and call it out when it gets it wrong.

In verse 1 there are 3 things the blessed man/righteous man DOES NOT DO:

- doesn't Walk in the counsel of the wicked
- nor Stand in the way of sinners
- nor Sit in the seat of scoffers

At first glance this seems like three different warnings.

But this is a poetic device called parallelism that is meant to drive home a point.

It's a way of looking at the same thing three different ways.

Is our life informed and influenced by the counsel of the wicked?

Are we taking our stand on the right things or the wrong things?

Are we sitting in the judgment seat with humility or with the arrogant know-it-alls?

These warnings call us to be cautious of adopting what society makes normative and celebrates as good.

This doesn't mean we demonize our culture and remove ourselves from it.

Rather we need to engage it with discernment.

And that discernment doesn't come in an instant... its cultivated by being in God's Word.

Psalm 1:2

“but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

The righteous become discerning b/c of where they spend their time.

The Righteous Love Being In God's Word

This Psalm is calling us to consider where we are spending our time, because that is shaping your discernment.

This was written before Jesus and when it talks about the Law of the Lord it's referring to the Torah (1st 5 books).

The Torah are Israel's testimony of God's covenant with them.

In them they learned who God was, and who they were called to be.

They were set apart not to live for themselves but to live to God.

In this way they would stand out from the nations, yet be a blessing to the nations.

Whenever Israel drifted away from God and went after the idols and practices of other nations it coincided with forgetting the Torah.

Throughout church history this has been a danger too.

Many times in many places Christians have been deceived by societal norms and values.

You don't have to look back that far to find that there were Christians and churches that adopted the majority's sentiments about slavery.

That doesn't mean all Christianity did that.

Thankfully those richly invested in God's Word were able to discern those lies and stand against it ... eventually bringing it to an end!

It's easy to look back with what we know now and wonder how any Christian could have compromised like that.

But every generation of the church is in a battle to hold fast to the truth of God's Word.

There will always be pressure to compromise with the moral majority.

But we have always been the moral minority ... a prophetic people that speak truth and call out what is false.

But that won't happen if God's people forsake his Word.

That's Satan's best weapon against the church.

If he can keep us out of God's Word he can keep us from discerning what is false and what is true.

B/C he doesn't come at us with obvious lies ...

His messages are often lined with half-truth.

So it's tempting to accept them in whole b/c we can see common ground with what we believe.

But half-truths are also half-lies.

And while they sound good they lead to death not life.

That is why the serpent's temptation of Eve was so crafty.

It was a little bit of truth mixed with lies.

Satan's deceptions ... even when it's mixed with some truth will always lead to disobedience.

What is interesting about that story is that Satan speaks through the form of a serpent.

Eve was not scared of the serpent ... it was familiar.

That could mean a lot of things ... but ultimately what God is teaching us is that Satan speaks through familiar things.

I think one of the ways he's getting his message into the church today is through politics.

I'm talking about both sides of the aisle.

We've become trusting and familiar with "our side."

Everything they say and do seems righteous to us.

Too much of our time, energy, passion, and money are given to politics.

Too many Christians spend more time in that arena than they do in God's Word.

Here is the thing ...

Whether you are a Blue Christian or Red Christian ...

Your side doesn't have it all right.

**Can you discern where it's right and where it's wrong?
Or do you see your side as righteous and the other evil?**

My challenge to the Christians in the room is this ...

Let's spend less time in our political bubble and more time in God's Word.

I guarantee that you will start to see things more clearly.

You'll love your party less and God's word more ...

**You'll put less hope in what your party can accomplish
and more in what God can accomplish through His
church.**

When Christians start doing that the church becomes more effective and impactful.

Some will hate us ... but they hated Jesus too.

But for the hopeless, the hurting, the sinner, the seeker, the lonely, the poor or oppressed...

We are their champion and the church is their place of refuge.

**B/C when we delight in God's Word and live it ... our life
will bless others.**

Psalm 1:3-4

**3 He [the righteous] is like a tree
planted by streams of water**

that yields its fruit in its season,

and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

4 The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Life gets better the more you're in God's word ...

B/C the more you're in His Word the more it gets in you.

And the more it gets in you the more God's life comes out of you.

The Righteous Become Faithful and Fruitful Which Blesses Everyone

Now when it talks about trees planted by water ... its written by someone who lived in the desert.

So when they talk about a stream ... don't think a big river like the Neuse.

Think a small trickling stream surrounded by arid wasteland that doesn't get a lot of rain.

Water to a psalmist is a precious and rare commodity.

It is a life-source you don't take for granted.

In the desert a tree by a stream is unlike other plants of the desert that depend on rain.

The difference is that in times of drought, the tree by the stream is okay ... it still has leaves and fruit.

B/C its pulling life from a dependable water source, while the plants that depend on rain wither and die.

When the heat of life comes we quickly find out what our water source is ...

I know men & women that are life-giving to be around even when their own life is marked by trial and hardship.

They aren't being fake and ignoring their own pain ...

But they aren't falling apart either ... B/C they are tapped into a life-source that never ends.

They are like trees by the stream of God's living water.

They are faithful people ... rooted and grounded, drinking deeply from God's Word.

- They can mourn the trial and hold on to hope.
- They can lament being sinned against without becoming bitter.
- They can be content in times of plenty and times of need.

This picture is about a faithfulness that leads to fruitfulness.

The one who delights in God's law and meditates on it day and night is like a tree by a stream of water in the desert.

God's word is our life source...

You cannot truly abide in God without abiding in His word.

Some may think that sounds legalistic...

But I would contend that God is the one who has established that His word is life.

This has been from creation...

God spoke ... His word went into emptiness and chaos and darkness and it brought forth life and light and order.

Whenever you open the Bible ... God is sending his words into your heart ... it brings life and beauty and order.

The more we are in it the more it spills out of our life, which in turn blesses others.

You can't control your fruitfulness ...

Leave that for God to bring through your life.

But you can do something about your faithfulness.

And here's the thing ... faithfulness will lead to fruitfulness.

This Psalm gives a clear path for how the righteous live and are blessed in this life.

But it also shows that the blessing of the righteous goes beyond this life.

Psalm 1:4-6

**4 The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.**

We are being asked to consider how short this life is ... and then what?

What are you living for?

B/C one way leads to life and the other to death.

The Righteous Will Remain, But The Wicked Will Perish

The wicked do not delight in God's law.
They do not want to submit to His authority.
They do not want to draw their life from Him.

They aren't a strong immovable tree whose leaves never fail.

They are chaff ...

Let me tell you something about chaff ...

It's a part of the stalk of wheat that is absolutely useless.

It doesn't taste good ...

It isn't a seed to be used for the next harvest.

It doesn't make a good gift.

Part of the harvesting season involved separating the wheat from the chaff. (throwing it up in the breeze)

They kept the wheat for bread.

The chaff would disappear in the wind.

The wicked are like chaff ...

Their life and their way is blown around by the wind.

You never know when its direction will suddenly change.

And ultimately it will disappear ... it will perish.

**It says that the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**

There is a judgment that we will all face after we die.

We will stand before God and our lives will be weighed.

The way of the righteous will remain, but the wicked will perish.

The wicked will not stand in the judgment ... no sinner will be welcomed into heaven's great congregation of the righteous.

This is not meant to lead us to put our hope in our works of righteousness.

It should cause everyone ... Christian or not ... to despair.

B/C none of us live up to the charge of this Psalm.

I may kind of delight in Gods' Word and in His law.

But I don't meditate on it day and night.

I don't delight in it that I obey it and submit to its commandments 100%.

I lack discernment and trust and care about the wrong stuff.

But this is the good news of the Gospel.

Jesus came to be our righteousness.

He is the fulfillment of Psalm 1.

Sin would knock us off the way of the righteous and disqualify us ...

But through Jesus we are qualified to stay on that path.

By faith in Jesus your sins are forgiven ...

You are robed in His righteousness and are saved from perishing with the wicked.

This doesn't free us FROM pursuing the way of the righteous ...

It frees us TO pursue it despite our failures and shortcomings.

BAND COME UP

NOT YET A CHRISTIAN:

- Is Jesus your righteousness?
- Don't perish with the wicked... Repent / Believe

CHRISTIANS:

Are you living the righteous path of delighting in God's Word?

How is God calling you to respond ... what adjustments do you need to make?

TIME OF EXAMINATION:

COMMUNION:

We do this every week because it brings us face-to-face with needing Jesus.

He is our righteousness b/c he died for us.

This meal reminds us of that.

And its also a confession that by faith we will follow Him as he leads us in the path of righteousness.

[Body broken / blood shed]