

The First Psalm

Introduction.

I. The text of our lesson today is the splendid first psalm. In this chapter the inspired writer gives us a vivid description of the godly man in contrast to the wicked. He tells us how to find happiness here in and in the hereafter.

II. Listen carefully as I read this rich, meaningful, beautiful psalm.

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

I. **Avoid The Wicked** - He opens this chapter by declaring. (Psa. 1:1).

A. The simple meaning of this verse is that the godly man avoids the way of wicked. His heart will be set on doing good. He pursues God and His righteousness.

B. The psalmist gives us here a vivid description of the progressiveness of sin. A man first listens to the advice of the wicked. He then goes to the places where they hang out and finally he becomes one of them by occupying a seat of scoffing with them.

C. Sin is always progressive. It does not remain idle. It is constantly active and advancing.

1. This was true with **Joseph's brothers**. They were envious of Joseph because of his favor with their father Jacob. This envy led them to beat Joseph and sell him into slavery and to lie to their father saying that Joseph had been killed.

2. This was true in **David**. He was a very good man. But he let lust take hold of him. He lusted after Bathsheba. This lust led him to commit adultery with Bathsheba and have her husband killed.

3. **Sin is progressive today.**

a. For example those today who listen to the wicked and go to the places where the wicked congregate find that it is not long before they participate in their wicked deeds.

b. The man who takes one drink soon finds that he wants a second and third. It isn't long before he becomes a problem drinker or an alcoholic.

- c. **Several years ago I received a telephone call, late one evening, from a man** who was in a hotel room. The man said he would like to talk with me. I got dressed and went to visit with him. When I reached the hotel I began to talk with the man and soon learned his problem. Tears flowed from his eyes as he told me about his wife and children leaving him because the drink had enslaved him and led him to abuse and neglect them.
- d. **Once I read a story of a young man that also illustrates the progressiveness of sin.** When this boy was small his parents divorced and his mother sent him to live with his grandparents. While he was in high school he started to dance despite the protests of his grandparents. Later he became a Christian and determined to live the Christian life. Several months after his conversion he started dancing again in order to be with the crowd. He also started drinking and smoking moderately. Later he met a girl who was running with a fast crowd and started dating her. Even though she was worldly, they were married and had a son. Then came World War II and he was drafted into the service. While he was in service his wife divorced him. This upset him so that he deserted the army and searched for her. He was picked up by some lumberjacks who mistreated him and he killed them for this. He was caught and sentenced to die in the electric chair. While in prison he repented of the many wrongs he had committed and became a devoted follower of Christ. He also wrote this heart-breaking letter to his son that was to be opened on his 16th birthday.

Dear Billy,

I have written your mother my last will and testament at the same time I wrote this letter to you. I have asked her not to let you open this until your sixteenth birthday. You should be about a junior in high school-which is a dangerous time in your life. By then your daddy will have been dead a long time. Though he died, as criminals do, he was never intentionally bad at heart. He never intended to cause anyone to suffer. But he made a lot of mistakes. He became a killer because he wouldn't listen to others.

Forgive me, my son, for causing you the shame and disgrace of being the son of an executed murderer. Forgive me for all the pain I have caused you. That was the last thing on earth I ever expected do.

Now you are a young man of sixteen. And if you are normal you will think you know a lot, possibly more than the teacher at school or even your mother. But let my experience tell you the truth. You are still young and you need lots of help..My birthday presents to you are meager, but they are all I had left of this world. Take my pocket knife. Carry it in your pocket every day as a constant reminder that your dad dreamed one day of taking you hunting and fishing with him. But someone else will have to do that in my place.

The gold watch and chain are yours too. They are to remind you that time is precious. I lived but twenty-eight years. Eternity comes too soon.

The Bible is yours too. Don't just read it, study it and memorize many of its beautiful passages, especially the 23rd Psalm. That was the last chapter I read before I went to meet the Good Shepherd.

And the ring. I want you to have your bride place it upon your finger at your wedding. It was mine and was given me by the girl I love more than life itself. My blessings are upon you and whatever girl you choose as your wife. I only pray that she will be a Christian young lady and that you will make a fine Christian man some day.

They have just told me that I must make ready to leave this world. I do not fear what is coming. I shall close

my eyes in prayer in a moment and I shall never leave the sacred nearness of the One who will guide me though the valley of the shadow of death.

Be a godly man and some day your daddy's fondest wish shall have come true.

d. **Indeed sin is progressive.** It robbed this man and family of so much and it robs us of many of the rich and wonderful things of life.

II. **Mediate On The Law** - The psalmist also tells us that the godly meditate on God's laws night and day. (Psa. 1:2).

A. The expression "day and night" means that he spends many long hours meditating on God's word. It is the lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path.

B. He spends hours reading and meditating on God's word for several reasons.

1. In the first place, he spends much time reading the Bible because it has God for its author. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

a. **Once a young lady purchased a book and began reading it.** In disgust, she threw it aside saying, "This is the most uninteresting book I've ever seen." A few months later, she fell in love with a young man and became engaged to him. He was a writer and one night casually mentioned the name of the first book he wrote. To the girl's amazement, it was the very book she had cast aside. When she got home, she rushed to the attic and found the book and began reading it again. In the early hours of the morning, as she read the last pages, she said, "This is the most interesting book I've read." What had happened? What had made the big change in her attitude toward the book? The answer is simple. She was in love with the author of the book.

b. When we love the Author of the Bible we will think it is the most interesting book we have ever read and spend countless hours studying it. We will pant after it as a deer pants after water.

2. In the second place, he spends much time studying the Bible because it **tells us about God and His Son.**

a. The universe reveals the reality and power of God, but not what God is like. The Bible alone gives this information.

b. The Bible also tells us about Jesus Christ the wonderful Savior of the world and how He can free us from the burden of sin.

In **Genesis**, I see Him prophesied as the promised seed and Shiloh.

In **Exodus**, I see Him as the Lamb of the Passover.

In **Leviticus**, I see Him as the Scapegoat.

In **Deuteronomy**, I see Him as the great "Prophet" to come.

In **Psalms**, I see Him as God's Son and as the King exalted at the right hand of God.

In **Isaiah**, I see Him as the One who would be born of a virgin and as the Suffering servant who would die in our place.

In **Jeremiah**, I see Him as the Branch of Righteousness

In **Daniel**, I see Him as the Holy One of God.

In **Micah**, I see Him as the child who would be born in Bethlehem, but whose goings forth were from everlasting.

In **Matthew**, I see Him as the Promised Messiah.

In **Mark**, I see Him as the Miracle Worker.

In **Luke**, I see Him as the Christ, the Son of God.

In **John**, I see Him as Deity manifested in the flesh - the One who was exactly like God the Father.

In **Acts**, I see Him as the Prince of Peace.

In **Romans**, I see Him as the Deliverer.

In **First Corinthians**, I see Him as the Wisdom of God.

In **Colossians**, I see Him as the First Born of all creation and as the Head of the body.

In **Hebrews**, I see Him as the Image of God and the One through whom God made the worlds

In **First Peter**, I see Him as the Chief Bishop of Souls and the One who shed His precious blood for me.

In **Revelation**, I see Him as Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

3. In the third place, the godly man **spends much time studying the Bible** because it tells him **how to be happy**.
 - a. The Bible reveals the secrets of being happy.
 - b.. The Bible tells us how to be happy now and in the life to come.
 - c. It tells us how to avoid eternal punishment and how to prepare that we might have a home with God.

D. **Once a lady died leaving her nephew her family Bible and a small sum of money.** The money was soon spent and the family Bible was neglected. After the money was gone he lived 35 years in poverty barely having enough food to eat. As an old man, when poverty was forcing him to go to a unwanted home, he opened the Bible and found \$45,000 dollars that was worth much more 35 years before. His neglect of the Bible cost him a treasure. Those who neglect to study the Bible lose even a greater treasure than did this man. They lose the rich spiritual blessings found in the Bible.

III. **Like A Tree** - The psalmist also tells us that the godly man, like a well-watered tree, prospers.

- A. His needs will be taken care of by God. (Psa. 37:25; 84:11; Matt. 6:25, 26).
- B. Paul penned these words about God's love and care. (Phil. 4:19).

Conclusion.

- I. The author closes this amazing psalm by affirming that the wicked will not stand acquitted in the judgment. They will be condemned. They will receive exactly what they have sown in life. (Gal. 6:7, 8).
- II. If you want to stand acquitted in the judgment and have a home with God in heaven, determine you are going to abide by the inspired instruction in this psalm. If you are not a follower of Christ, put Christ on in baptism this very hour. It will be the best and most decision you will ever make. Come as we sing the hymn of invitation.

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