

chaff: *'The wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.'* (Psalm 1:4)

- In contrast to the blessed, who are like trees, the wicked are dead, rootless, blown about, and destined to be thrown away. Chaff is worth nothing, and yet those who are going their own way and not God's, can often appear rich and substantial. But from God's point of view the chaff is cheap, unsubstantial and destined for judgement.
- There is a coming day of judgement and the Lord, the righteous judge, will separate the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, the chaff from the trees. Only those who are walking in relationship with God will remain with Him. Those who aren't will eternally be cast away from him: *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.* (Psalm 1:5-6)



2.6 Conclusion

- This jewel of a psalm begins with the word 'blessed' and ends with the word 'perish.' Those who are walking in close relationship with God, receive God's blessing and they ought to be a blessing to others, especially to the chaff that will one day be thrown away.

3. Questions to consider at home?

- 3.1 How would you describe the Book of Psalms to a friend? What makes this book unique in the canon of scripture?
- 3.2 How do we delight and meditate on the word of God?
- 3.3 What do the 'blessed' need to avoid?
- 3.4 How do we become a 'blessing' to others?
- 3.5 Would you describe yourself or your church as a 'fruit tree planted by streams of water?' (Psalm 1:3). If so, what fruit would others expect to see?
- 3.6 How might you or your church reach those who need to know God and receive His blessings?
- 3.7 Why does the psalmist describe the wicked as 'chaff that the wind blows away.' (Psalm 1:4)

Matthew Street 9th October 2022



The St J's Group

Psalm 1 - Which way?

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage – Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 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, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Introduction

- The author of Psalm 1 asks each one of us three questions.
 1. Are we walking in close relationship with God and receiving his blessings?
 2. Are we a blessing to others?
 3. Do we long for those who are not walking in relationship with God to receive his blessings?

2.2 Background and Context

- The Book of 150 Psalms:
 - is unique in the canon of scripture.
 - is a devotional guide, prayer book and hymnal of the people God.
 - is full of people: crying out to God, praising Him, confessing their sins and going deeper in worship.
 - is split into 5 books probably to mirror the five books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)
 - has clearly been added to over a period of time. David the most prolific author wrote 37 of the 41 psalms in Book 1.
 - is quoted over 400 times in the New Testament.
- We do not know who wrote Psalm 1 and some have suggested that it was an 'Introduction' to the Book of Psalms. What an apt introduction it is as it deals with the subject matter of many Psalms presenting two ways of living: the way of blessing and the way of judgement. This was a daily choice that every Israelite and ultimately each one of us needs to make. Will we go God's way and receive his blessings and be a blessing to others or will we go our way and ultimately receive God's judgement?

2.3 Are we walking in close relationship with God and receiving his blessings? (Psalm 1-2)

- We receive God's blessings: *'Blessed is the man who'* (Psalm 1:1) when we are walking in close relationship with God. The psalmist paints in verse 1 what we should not be doing followed by what we should be doing in verse 2.
 - a) So what we should be doing? *Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on it day and night'* (Psalm 1:1a, 2)
- We receive God's blessings when we delight and meditate on his word.
- Are we prepared to do that? Are we prepared to *'delight in God's word, and to meditate on it day and night?'* (Psalm 1:2) - Jesus resisted Satan's three temptations each time with a portion of scripture.

- Do we spend time reading God's word? Do we do this daily? Have we tried using notes or commentaries to help us?
 - When a concert pianist plays in front of a live audience they do so without the music. They have practised and learnt the music. They have internalised it.
 - The more we are soaked in God's word the closer our relationship with God will be.
- b) So what we should not be doing: *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.* (Psalm 1:1)
- We are in the world but not of the world. The psalmist warns us here not to conform to the world around us to such a degree that we are indistinguishable from it.
 - We are encouraged not to:
 - i) *'Walk in the counsel of the wicked'* (Psalm 1:1) Walk with and seek the advice of bad people.
 - ii) *'Stand in the way of sinners'* (Psalm 1:1) To linger in their company and entertain their ways.
 - iii) *'Sit in the seat of mockers'* (Psalm 1:1) To avoid at all costs making a home with those who scoff at God.
 - Psalm 1 verse 1 reminds us that sin (which is ultimately a description of doing things our way rather than God's) is addictive. All of our sinful habits start in a small way. The Psalmist uses three words to suggest a downward spiral of addiction towards sin. We start by *'walking'* then we move to *'standing'* and finally to *'sitting'*.
 - Jesus knows about the addictive power of sin, in John 6:34 he states: *'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin'*.
 - The Apostle Peter warns us to *'be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around you like a roaring lion'* (1 Peter 5:8)

2.4 Are we a blessing to others? – (Psalm 1:3)

- *"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing"* (Genesis 12:2) God promises to bless Abraham so that he might become a blessing to others. God blesses us so that we too might become a blessing to others. We are not meant to hold onto his blessing but to become channels of God's blessing to others. Let us not forget Jesus's words: *'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'* (Acts 20:35)
- How do we do that? Psalm 1 paints a fantastic picture for us of a *'fruit tree planted by streams of water'* (Psalm 1:3) Like a tree, the godly person is alive, beautiful, fruitful, useful, and enduring.
- The most important part of any tree is the hidden root system that draws up water and nourishment, and the most important part of any believer's life should be the *'spiritual root system'* that draws on the hidden resources we have in Christ. Paul explained this in his letter to the church in Colosse as follows: We should be *'rooted and built up in him'* (Colossians 2:7)
- We can't nourish and support ourselves; we need to be rooted in Christ and drawing upon His spiritual power. We do that by meditating on God's word, spending time in prayer and in fellowship with God's people.
- Trees may wither and die, but the believer who abides in Christ stays fresh, green, and fruitful. We must always remember that the tree doesn't eat the fruit; others eat it. We are not producing fruit to please ourselves but to *serve* others.
- The Bible says we bear fruit when:
 - *'We abide in Christ: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.'* (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - We win others: *'I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many*



times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.' (Romans 1:13)

- We grow in holiness and obedience: *'But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.'* (Romans 6:22)
- We give generously: *'For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way.'* (Romans 15:27-8)
- We serve others and grow in knowledge of God: *'And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God'* (Colossians 1:10)
- We worship and praise God: *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.* (Hebrews 13:15)
- As individuals are we people who bless others with our words and our works?
- How much of our personal giving be it time or money or our church giving is directed at serving and blessing others?

2.5 Do we long for those who are not walking in relationship with God to receive his blessings? (Psalm 1:4-6)

- The first half of this psalm describes the blessed, those who are walking in relationship with God. The last half focuses on those who are going their own way rather than God's. These are the very people the blessed must seek and reach with the gospel. Do we, who are in relationship, recognise how desperately these people need to know God and receive His blessings?
- The wicked are pictured in many ways in scripture, but the image in this psalm is of