

WE ARE BLESSED IN THE WORD

PSALM 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

This Psalm is the favorite of many of God's people. It is a great reminder for us to not get caught up in the affairs of this world, in listening to all the voices or worldly wisdom of the people of this world. The contrast to that is in following the Word of God and in meditating on the Word of God. My study Bible gives a sub-title to this Psalm as "Two men, two ways, two destinies." It could have been added after that, "so choose wisely", or more apropos (or relevant) is to say, "so live wisely."

What we see in this passage of Scripture is a calling to God's people, hopefully that includes all of us, to live an active faith in Christ. To those who think that since we are now in the New Covenant and not living anymore according to the law, that was in the Old Testament, according to the Old Covenant, listen to how Jesus responds when He was asked if few would be saved. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." (Luke 13:24-30)

There's two things I'll mention about what Jesus said. One, Jesus used that example by having the people calling Him Lord. For emphasis Jesus had them call out to Jesus saying, "Lord, Lord!" Sound

familiar? Jesus also said this, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but **he who does the will of My Father in heaven**. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

Secondly, Jesus had said they were workers of iniquity and those who practice lawlessness. What is that? That second saying of Jesus' explains that. It is those who are not doing the will of God. I'm not bringing all of that up to condemn anyone or to beat anybody up with the Word if you have fallen and are struggling to hang in there. What Jesus was saying is the same thing that the writer of Psalm 1 was saying. The author of Psalm 1 describes it as having "delight...in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." A correlation to that phrasing is in what Jesus said in **John 15**, "**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing**. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and **My words abide in you**, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:5-8)

Our faith in Christ IS an active faith. Hebrews 11, which we refer to as the "Hall of Faith" (which is a play on words of what we know from sports organizations as having a hall of fame), gives many examples of men and women of faith who trusted God by walking in that calling of faith, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain", "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him" but then says, "for before he was taken he had this testimony, **that he pleased God.**"

How does one please God, you may ask? The next verse in Hebrews 11 says this, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who **diligently seek Him.**" (Hebrews 11:6) As a child one learns how to manipulate others to get what we want. The baby cries and it gets fed, or gets their diaper changed. As adults, we learn how we can manipulate other people so that we can get what we want. But with God, we can't manipulate Him. He is All-Wise and All-Knowing: As **Proverbs 21:2** says, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs [or searches] the hearts". We can't play (or manipulate) God though. No one is going to fool God by greeting Him with "Lord, Lord" if we did not truly know Him and He us. We are expected by God to be looking for what is HIS will. You're on the right path when you are praying, as Jesus did, "**not My will, but Yours, be done.**" (Luke 22:42)

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (**Hebrews 11:6**) Likewise, this is how the Apostle Paul described His faith, "To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." (**Colossians 1:29**) THAT, is an active faith. As God is working in us, we walk in it. We must always remember and let it become us, to live out our faith in the understanding that as Jesus said, "without Me you can do nothing." We are not doing works to be saved, as it is with just about all of the other false religions, we are doing the works because we are saved and Christ is actively working in us.

Once again, I hope you are getting the gist of this, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) Yet then Paul continues by saying, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**verse 10**) Compare that to the writer of Hebrews saying, "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Compare that to Jesus saying, "Abide in Me, and I in you" and also Him saying, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate" and also, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

If you are a child of God, meaning that you are in Christ and have believed on Christ, then He will be working in you, as Paul said in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, His Wisdom, and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. He will be working in you the fruit of the Spirit which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) All of that comes from God, through His Spirit, the Holy Spirit. We can't save ourselves, deliver ourselves, or heal ourselves and we can't save anyone else, deliver anyone else, or heal anyone else. But we can seek the one who can! There is power in the name of Jesus! There is no need for us to be ashamed of the name of Jesus. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." (**Romans 1:16**) Are you worried that mentioning Jesus may offend someone? Why? He is the source of all that we need. That goes for the smallest of details. Jesus wants to be our Savior AND Lord. That has been God's plan for us even before we were born.

Jesus said, ""Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own

things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." "Strive to enter through the narrow gate". (Matthew 6:31-34) Abide in Jesus, the Word of God. Cling to Him, for He is your life! (Deuteronomy 30:20) We have been "predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. (Romans 8:29) Therefore we have to let Him become us. What we are letting Him do is to clean us up from the sin nature that we were born into and be made holy as He is holy. The choice though is ours. Calling Jesus Lord is not all that we are called to. Going to church and fellowshiping with Christians is not all we are called to.

The process begins when we are led by the Holy Spirit to believe on Christ as dying on the cross for our sins. We are believing that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, conquering death, so that we too will overcome death and live eternally IN HIM. That begins when we receive the Holy Spirit to dwell in us to is then , as Paul explains "a deposit guaranteeing what is to come." (1 Corinthians 1:22) "[A]s many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13) Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for your sins? Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead, conquering death? Have you received His Holy Spirit? If you answered yes to those questions, then praise God, you are a child of God, so now walk in that new life in Christ!

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." One may say that we are no longer under the law but are saved by the grace of God. That is true. But we are then, once we are called by God and given His Spirit, we then live according to His Word. We must realize that it is in the Word of God that the Holy Spirit uses to minister to us and is renewing our minds and changing our hearts. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." All Scripture means all of the Old and New Testaments. That does not mean we are to follow ceremonial laws, such as the sacrificing of animals or the tribal laws that God put on the Israelites, like stoning someone caught in adultery, but it does mean that we can know the heart of God and the desires that God has for us as His people.

Jesus summed up all of the law and the prophets by saying, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Mark 12:30-31) You know Jesus was referring to Old Testament Scripture in saying that. God does not change. His

plan may change based on His purpose and our obedience or disobedience but God does not change. He is truly perfect in all of His ways. (**Psalm 18:30**)

We are blessed to not sit in the seat of the scornful. That word scornful is the Hebrew word lesim. The root of that word is luts, which is used for ambassadors (like to other countries) or for interpreters. It then, in context is one who represents the mockers or those who are contrary to the Word of God. Everyone has an opinion and the world has one way of looking at wisdom and then there is the wisdom from God, which we find in His Word. There is but one way that God wants us follow and that is in His Wisdom and according to His Righteousness. "[I]n His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away."

God is leading us through His Holy Spirit for our hearts to want God to be glorified in our lives and that we bear fruit for His glory. Once again, that is not something we can do on our own and it is not so that we can be honored by man. God promises us that if we "humble [our]selves under the mighty hand of God, that He [will] exalt [us] in due time." (**1 Peter 5:6**) Also, God already promises His children that we will be joint-heirs with Jesus and that we will be glorified in Christ and that for all who endure in the faith, we will reign with Him. Now is the time where God is presently building His kingdom and He is wanting us to bear fruit for His glory. We don't want to be counted as one of the scoffers though, right? We should also all be spending time in His Word.

We have to seek Him for His wisdom in how we interact with others and not let the ungodly influence or corrupt us in their ways and in their worldly wisdom. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." That judgment is where we are rewarded according to what we have allowed God to do through us in this lifetime. The ungodly are already judged according to their rejection of Christ. Matthew 25 has Jesus' teaching of the "Parable of the Talents" and then Jesus separating the sheep from the goats. The distinguishing element in both of those parables is that the ones who are saved are the ones who were bearing fruit for God's glory. "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" (Matthew 25:35-40) Notice Jesus wasn't talking about leading 1000s to Christ or doing remarkable things to dazzle crowds. He is once again speaking of the love of God that works in us to love God with all that is in us and to love others. As we put it, we are "sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ".

Each of us have differing gifts and callings, ministerial speaking, yet we are all called to love God and others, even our enemies. As Jesus commanded, "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:44-48)

Jesus said that, those aren't my opinions on the Bible. Yet what Jesus is saying is that as we walk in what He is working in us, we will be rewarded accordingly. Yet we know our reward ultimately comes when we pass on to be in God's glory. We have that reward IN CHRIST JESUS. As God told Abram or Abraham, "'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.'" All of God's blessings and promises are to be found as we abide in Christ, "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ". (Philippians 1:6)

We have to remind ourselves, as I do frequently, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) We are in a spiritual battle for our souls. We have to put our trust in God that He is in control of all things and we have to continue to be in His Word and in prayer, for ourselves as well as for others. And we have to not let the affairs of this world get us off into stuff that we are not called to. Paul told his spiritual son, Timothy, "No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." (2 Timothy 2:4)

As the saying goes, the world is going one direction, yet God is leading us in a completely different direction. We are and will be forever blessed in the Word of God which is in Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord, and we are then a blessing to others. As the Lord spoke to Moses to have Aaron pray for the Israelites, I'll pray for us today, "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." (**Numbers 6:24-26**)