

Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Devotional from Psalm 1

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;

² But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

³ 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.

⁴ The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall 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 ungodly shall perish.

Christ is the blessed Man *for* us. If our blessedness rests ultimately upon the level of our delight in God's law, the consistency of our meditation upon it, or the quality and abundance of our fruitfulness from it... then we are doomed. But, if our blessedness rests ultimately upon Christ—whose delighting, meditation, and fruitfulness are perfect—then that blessedness is sure and great!

Christ is the blessed Man *to* us. There are warnings here of with whom not to walk, and where not to stand or to sit. Surely, Christ's worthiness to be our Counselor is infinitely greater than any other! Whatever other decisions this Psalm leads us to make by the counsel that we take and the company that we keep, let it first compel us to make Him the great Companion of every hour of every day of our life in this world, and especially every moment of His holy day. This Psalm urges us to meditate upon His Word day and night, not only because this is the path to blessedness like His (and from Him), but also because this is precisely how we walk in His own perfect counsel.

But let us not merely learn from Him, intellectually, His path; we must stand in it. We must act. We must live. We sing not merely "teach me about" paths of righteousness for Your Name's sake, but "*lead me in*" those paths of righteousness!

And, let us grow in gratitude, submissiveness, and obedience by the knowledge of the fact that we are seated with Christ (already!) in the heavenly places! Surely, we may be steady and content, rather than grumbling or murmuring or scornful. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." (Col 3:1–4). How very far the seat of the Christian is from the seat of the scornful!

Christ is the blessed Man *in* us. Though we lack any worthiness of our own in any of the marks of blessedness that this Psalm describes, yet we will come into the blessedness that Christ has won for us precisely by being made like this. By being made *like Him*. When we have been conformed to His image, and He is the Firstborn among many brethren, we will have come into that holiness that is requisite for seeing the Lord.

So, this delighting in His law is something to pursue. And this continual meditation upon it is something to pursue. And this bringing forth fruit is something to pursue.

That pursuit is sure, since it is guaranteed by His finished work and carried out by His Spirit applying Christ Himself to us. So since we depend upon Him for it, then we must carry out the pursuit by the means that He has appointed.

Christ, our curse, and the wicked's great warning. But let us conclude on this sober note: the ungodly will not stand in the judgment; their way will perish. Though Christ has all of this blessedness in Himself, none of this blessedness can be had without Christ. And if we are not being made like Him, by His working in us, then we can be sure that we do not have Him at all. We can see in Christ's cross—what He suffered, and the fact that *it was He* Who suffered this—how dreadful God's wrath is upon sin.

So, let us take care that we not be among the self-deceived who think themselves blessed but will find that the wind blows that pseudo-blessedness away like so much chaff. "*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*" (Rom 8:9–13)

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

So we're starting a new series on the Wednesday nights through the Psalms. We'll often take a psalm a night. Sometimes the Psalm will be long enough that we'll want to take in four more parts. But tonight we have Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who walks not in the council 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 Yahweh. 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 season. His leaf shall 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 Yahweh knows the way of the righteous. But the way of the ungodly.

Shall perish.

So far the reading of God's word.

Well, it's important to. Remember that the Psalms are especially the Psalms of Christ. There is absolutely a truth here that those who are ultimately blessed will look like what this Psalm describes the blessed man, but we don't come into our blessedness on the merits of how well we do these things first and foremost.

Christ is the blessed man for us. He is the one. Who is walking and standing and sitting and delighting in God's law and meditating on God's law are perfectly worthy. Jesus did all of those things exactly perfectly righteously. And so our blessedness doesn't ultimately rest upon our level of those things.

In that case, we would be doomed. But since our blessedness rests upon Christ. Then our blessedness is sure and our blessedness is great. It has never discouraging for the one who is clinging to Jesus to read of the righteous requirements of God's Word. Because we have the one who perfectly fulfills all of them.

And so we cling to him. He's the blessed man for us. He's also the blessed man to us. There's an important principle about the company that we keep in the counsel that we take in verse 1. Blessed is a man who walks not in the council of the ungodly and just hearing a couple minutes ago discussion of social media that some folks aren't using anymore and that's probably a good idea.

There's a lot of the council of the ungodly to be had. And. We do well to consider. Whose counsel we take whose paths we stand in who's seats we sit in those who are our companions those whose opinions matter to us and we hear them often and they shape our thoughts and so you might think of that in terms of.

You know, whether it's in the congregation or more broadly in some other circumstance in your life identifying the people who you want to have as you're closer companions based on. Their thinking and speaking and acting in accordance with the Bible you want to have godly companionship and even more so when you're talking about those whose counsel you take.

And. You know, if someone's hair is always a rat's nest you probably aren't going to go to her and ask her for advice on doing your hair.

So even more so but there is one who ought to be our constant companion there is one whose counsel is always perfect and so Christ is not only the blessed man for us in our place he is that blessed man to us with whom we want to walk and stand and sit.

Our whole life should be a companionship with him he should be the great companion of every hour of every day of our life in this world and if that is our desire how much better does that make the Lord's day which he has set apart for us to enjoy in a special way that companionship the whole day and how it ought to.

Bleed into or color or shape the rest of our days should have a Lord's day flavor, even if they cannot be Lord's days themselves because of the other duties that fill those days and then standing in the path, we don't want to stand in the path of sinners we want to stand in the path of the Lord Jesus the path of the Godly the path of the righteous this means more than just having him as your counselor.

Yeah, it's bad enough that some people don't like to take directions but what would you think of someone who finally broke down and stopped and asked a local for directions and then didn't go the way the local person told them to go? And yet this is the way many of us live our lives we take the Council of Jesus we study our Bibles we read it and then we go out and live exactly as we would have otherwise.

Maybe even feeling better about having a box checkmark for our Bible reading or Bible study for the day. No, there is a change in where you stand. There is the direction that you go. We do not in the 23rd Psalm when we get there Sing and pray teach us about paths of righteousness for your namesake.

We sing and pray lead us. And paths of righteousness. For your namesake. There is action to be taken. There is life to be lived according to the Council of the Lord Jesus and then our seat is as opposite the seat of the scornful as it could possibly be rather than living lives of grumbling and murmuring and rebellion how content and stable and glad and thankful and submissive and obedient we ought to be for we are see.

Ed with Christ in the heavenly places. A lot of overlap between Ephesians and Colossians and we've we're coming to the end of Ephesians in our Ephesians studies and so we know that this being seated with Jesus in the heavenlies is a very significant idea in Ephesians. Well in the companion letter in Colossians, he says this in chapter 3 applying the same idea.

If then you were raised with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ is. Sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above not on things on the earth for you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. So you think about that seated in the heavenly places and this other way that he says it here your life is hidden with Christ in God when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

We are seated with Christ. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. This ought to be a great antidote to our murmuring or grumbling or discouragement unbelief doubt fear of circumstances fear of men and things which every day and every year bring us a pile of temptations and in those directions and yet it does feel doesn't it like there has been a an uptick an increase in opportunity for that doubt and that grumbling.

Deceipe in but we don't need to sit in the seat of the scornful. If we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies. And we can sit in that place of thankfulness and joy and peace and stability and we can serve submissively and obediently in the earth rather than being those corners who resist and rebel against our Lord.

So Christ is the blessed man for us it's his blessedness that is our it's his worthiness that gains our blessedness. He's the blessed man to us this walking and standing and sitting is done by delighting in his law meditating in his law on his law day and night that's how we take his counsel and then we live it out.

Drawing his life as our life the tree that's planted by the river of water has a great advantage. Over trees that aren't doesn't it? Because it's not so dependent upon the rainfall. It's going right down into that river and gathering what it needs so it can bear fruit and it doesn't wither when the dry spell comes when the drought when the drought comes.

And so if we are living by Christ's counsel, that's because we're living by Christ's life. For he's not just a blessed man for us the one who's worthiness is kind of for us and the blessed man to us are constant companion and counselor but he has also the blessed man in us.

It's true that our worthiness in ourselves cannot get us any blessedness. But part of the blessedness that Christ gets for us is our being made like him who is worthy. So, We when we have been conformed to his image and he is the firstborn among many brethren we will have come into that holiness that is requisite for seeing the Lord.

It is not legalism to see what the blessed man is like here and knowing that Christ is the perfect blessed man to say these are things that we should pursue. This salmon struck us for how to think and how to live. That's not legalism. That's just pursuing the blessedness that Jesus has earned for us.

That's what our being blessed is going to look like. And if we do not come into this holiness, we will not see the Lord. Delighting in his law is something to pursue continually meditating opponent is something to pursue and bringing forth fruit to something to pursue. Best of all for us, it's a sure pursuit.

It is guaranteed by Jesus' finished work and it is being carried out by the Holy Spirit applying Christ. Himself to us. He is the river of living water that flows up into us. And he is the one who gives us life and makes us to bear fruit. Therefore since we must depend upon him for this blessedness, then you carry out that pursuit by the means that he is appointed.

Word sacrament prayer. And then the other things that he has instructed as well. So there is much happiness in this Psalm for us. In fact, the word blessed is actually a form of the word for happy. But we ought to conclude on a cybernote because the psalm concludes on a sober note.

Here it is the opening Psalm in the Salter it describes. Jesus and his blessedness. It describes what we will be made like if we are those from the end of Psalm 2 which also talks about the blessed ones blessed are they who trust in him? And if we trust in him we will become like the man of Psalm 1, we'll become like Jesus.

And yet this psalm of great happiness and blessedness ends. But the way of the ungodly shall perish. The ungodly will not stand in the judgment. They will not be in the congregation of the righteous. They will not be the many brethren among whom Jesus is the firstborn at the last.

So we can't just come to Psalm 1 and assume without any reference to what our lives look like that we are going to enjoy this happiness and blessedness. This comes only by way of Christ and Christ has all of this blessedness in him. And you can have none of this blessedness without him.

So if you are not being made like him by his working in you then you can be sure that you do not have him at all. And what and we can see in Christ's cross just how terrible a thing it is not to have him. For when the wind has driven away the life the person of such a one as chaff and they find that they cannot stand in the judgment and they are not welcomed into the congregation of the righteous and that their way as ungodly ones is a way that ends in perishing.

Then we see in the cross of Jesus Christ how terrible that perishables. Jesus Christ. God, the Son suffered the wrath of God. That's what was necessary. For the punishment the right punishment of sin. So let us take care that we not be among the self-deceived to think themselves blessed but will find that the wind blows their fake blessedness away like so much chaff instead.

Let us be those who as frustrated as we often are in our pursuit of righteousness and holiness yet our pursuing righteousness and holiness by his spirit. And let us heed the warning of Romans 8 verses 9 through 13 which say but you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.

But if Christ is in you the body is dead because of sin but the Spirit is life because of righteousness but if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh, or if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body. You will live. Amen.