

04-02-2017

Message: Psalms of the Messiah - The Church for Which Christ Died

Text: Psalm 1

Introduction

- A. Lord willing, during the month of April we will hear from our God through several psalms His Spirit inspired for us that prophetically pointed to the death, resurrection, and exaltation of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we entitled this mini-series of messianic psalms, “The Psalms of the Messiah.”
- B. Today as we listen to God’s voice in Psalm 1, it is God’s kind providence that at the end of our worship service we will happily receive new members into our church body, which is a local expression of the universal body and church of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Psalm 1 is technically not regarded as a messianic psalm, but it is a psalm that describes the church, the assembly of the righteous, for which Messiah Jesus came to die. And so we are happy to welcome all those for whom Christ in love has died.

Ephesians 5:25 ... **Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,**

- C. Psalm 1 is intentionally placed, along with Psalm 2, at the beginning of the Psalms, as a faithful gatekeeper, both inviting and confronting all who would seek to join the congregation of the righteous, the church formed by God to serve as worshiping priests to God, declaring His praise among the nations.

Psalm 1:1 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!

Psalm 2:12 Kiss the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How **blessed** are all who take refuge in Him!

1. Beatitudes are statements describing those who are to be congratulated for receiving God’s blessing and favor.
2. Such descriptions serve as invitations to be numbered among those so blessed by the Lord.
3. These beatitudes also serve as gatekeepers, admitting only those described by them to join with the church’s worship of God contained in the remaining 148 psalms.

D. But who are these people and in what way are they blessed by the Lord?

I. A description of those whose status is a happy one, blessed by the Lord

- A. What we see of such individuals is that they are set apart from the rest of humanity in the realms of their thinking, behaving, and belonging.

B. Thinking - He/she rejects the counsel of the wicked in order to receive the law of Yahweh

Psalm 1:1 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 (hagah) day and night**.

1. The Hebrew word “hagah” we translate “meditate” is a word that means to moan, utter, muse, speak out loud. The Hebrews read out loud. And so rather than listening to the voices of the wicked, the righteous one speaks the law of God to his soul, listening to the Word rather than to the world.
2. While the wicked murmur against the Lord, rejecting God’s authority (2:1), the righteous preach to their souls a delight in submitting to God’s authority.

Psalm 2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples **devising (hagah)** a vain thing?² The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed (Messiah), saying,³ "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!"

3. What we think produces how we behave. Sow a thought, reap an action.

C. Behaving - He/she rejects the path of sinners and chooses the way of the righteous

Psalm 1:1 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.

Psalm 1:6 For the LORD knows **the way of the righteous**, but **the way of the wicked** will perish.

1. The Bible speaks in an absolute sense, all are sinners and none is righteous.

Romans 3:10 as it is written, "**THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS**, NOT EVEN ONE;

Romans 3:23 for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God,

2. The Bible also speaks in a descriptive sense or usage, that all are either sinners or righteous (characteristically). The righteous are those who practice righteousness, the sinner is the one who practices sin and wickedness (1:5). Sow and action and reap a behavior, a lifestyle.

Psalm 1:5 Therefore the **wicked** will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinners** in the assembly of the **righteous**.

1 John 3:7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; **the one who practices righteousness is righteous**, just as He is righteous; ⁸ **the one who practices sin is of the devil**; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ **No one who is born of God practices sin**, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God**.

D. Belonging - He/she rejects taking a seat with scoffers (litz) and identifies with the assembly of worshipers

Psalm 1:1 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!**

Psalm 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in **the assembly of the righteous**.

1. Scoffing as repetitive mocking, a proud discounting of the Lord and His ways, and His people.

Proverbs 21:24 "Proud," "Haughty," "**Scoffer (litz)**," are his names, who acts with insolent pride.

Psalm 119:51 **The arrogant utterly deride (litz) me**, yet I do not turn aside from Your law

2. But the righteous reject the folly of the scoffers and are not ashamed to defend, befriend, and identify with one another.

Proverbs 14:9 Fools **mock/scoff (litz)** at sin, but **among the upright there is good will**.

II. The Lord's blessings on His righteous ones, His church

A. Definition of "blessed"

1. "Happy" (esher) vs "blessed" (barak). This defines a happy state because of God's blessing.

a. Such a state of happiness is not always a state of emotion

Psalm 94:12 **Blessed (esher)** is the man whom **You chasten**, O LORD, and whom You teach out of Your law;

Matthew 5:10 "**Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "**Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against**

you because of Me. 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- b. But such happiness is a state fit for congratulations, and if we do not immediately feel the emotion of joy, we know it in our minds and hearts, and will eventually and certainly feel the emotion of happiness, because the righteous person is truly and forever blessed (barak) by God.

Psalms 112:1 Praise the LORD! How **blessed** (esher) is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments. 2 His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be **blessed** (barak).

- c. Such "beatitudes" call to mind the covenant blessings and curses Moses gave the Israelites to be recited on Mts. Gerazim and Ebal, and Jesus's beatitudes in His Sermon on the Mount. All beatitudes invite us to share in the life and blessings of God's people, His church.

Deuteronomy 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, **the blessing and the curse**. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- B. 1:3 God's church members are blessed to be like a tree by an irrigation channel (not a wadi) - drawing fruit-bearing vitality from the enduring Word of God like a tree draws vitality from an enduring stream. Christ continually nourishes and cherishes His church, His body and bride.

Psalms 1:3 **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**.

Psalms 92:12 **The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree**, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 **Planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God.** 14 **They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green,** 15 To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Ephesians 5:29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,**³⁰ because we are members of His body.

- C. Members of Christ's church are blessed to be permanently His by God's protection, and not like the wicked who wither and are discarded like chaff.

Psalms 1:3 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.

Jeremiah 17:5 Thus says the LORD, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD. 6 "For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant. 7 "**Blessed** is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD. 8 "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream **and will not fear when the heat comes**; But its leaves will be green, **and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.**

- D. Unlike the wicked, Christ's church will be blessed to stand in the judgment, for Christ died to forgive and transform her.

Psalms 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not **stand in the judgment**, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom also we have obtained our introduction **by faith into this grace in which we stand**; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 5:25 ... **Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her**,²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

- E. Members of Christ's church are blessed to be loved and adopted by God into His family, His household, to have a place where we belong to Him and to one another forever. The "assembly (edah) of the righteous = the qahal/ekklesia = the church.

Psalms 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in **the assembly (edah) of the righteous**.⁶ For **the LORD knows the way of the righteous**, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Proverbs 5:14 "I was almost in utter ruin In the midst of **the assembly (qahal, LXX - ekklesia) and congregation (edah, LXX - sunagoge)**."

1 Timothy 3:15 ... *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in **the household of God, which is the church (ekklesia) of the living God**, the pillar and support of the truth.

Psalms 68:6 **God makes a home for the lonely**;

Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, **and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

Conclusion

- A. The first and second psalms stand as gatekeepers to all who would enter God's church, confronting us with a choice of 2 ways to live our lives, two paths to travel. There are no other paths than these two.

Psalm 1:1 **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.

- B. The beatitudes or statements of happiness and blessing are given by God as an invitation, a call to wisdom, an offer of grace, to join with the true worshipers of God and share in their happy destiny. The way of the righteous is clearly a path less traveled.

Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and **the way is broad that leads to destruction**, and there are many who enter through it.¹⁴ "For the gate is small and **the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

- C. But how happy and blessed are those who walk by faith in the Lord, now revealed to us in the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 2:12 **Kiss the Son**, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. **How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!**