

“Two Paths – Part 2”  
Psalm 1  
(Preached at Trinity, September 13, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last week we began our study into the inspired collection of worship songs known as the Psalms. 150 psalms are divided into five books and make up what is known as the Psalter. The collection of psalms has been a continual source of comfort and strength for God’s people for centuries. The Psalms bring us to the heart of God and carry us to the depth of our own soul. Calvin called the psalms:  
“An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul.”
2. I pray that our journey through the Psalms will be most productive and edifying for the Body of Christ at Trinity.  
Last week I began by unfolding the first Psalm before you.  
In this psalm David describes the two possible paths of life. One leads to blessing the other to curse; one leads to salvation, the other to damnation. These are the only two possible paths of life.
3. David first described the life of the righteous man – First in the negative  
**Psalm 1:1** – “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”
  - A. The godly person refuses the secular philosophies and values of this world . He denies the prevailing worldview held by the ungodly – the worldview that places man at the center of the universe.
  - B. Nor does he stand in the way of sinners – His behavior is not controlled by the behavior of the masses.
  - C. Nor does he sit in the seat of the scornful. He doesn’t associate with those who scoff at God. He avoids close relationships with the lost
  - D. His life is best described as *separation*.  
**2 Corinthians 6:17** – “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,”
4. As I stated last week, Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism. There are seven different categories, but the two most prominent are synonymous and antithetical. David gives us a parallel statement – **Verse 2** is antithetical to **Verse 1**.  
Instead of walking in the way of lawlessness he delights in God’s Law of God. **Verse 2**
  - A. By Law here it refers to all of God’s precepts – the Word of God  
The Godly person delights in God’s Word. He reads it, meditates upon it, memorizes it, studies it. He seizes every opportunity to increase his intake of it.
  - B. A hunger for the Word of God is an indication of the new birth. He has a new appetite. Notice God’s Word has become his continual meditation.  
**Psalm 1:2** – “and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”

I. The blessings of such a life – **Verse 3**

- A. Every man wants to be happy
1. This is the essence of the human life – it controls everything we do
  2. We naturally flee from that which brings pain and run towards that which brings pleasure
  3. In this psalm David is describing the blessed man – the truly blessed man. Remember, “blessed” in **Verse 1** is intensified – truly, surely blessed  
Beginning in **Verse 3** he describes the nature of true blessings
- B. He is like a tree planted by rivers of water
1. This is one of the many different figures of speech in the Psalms
    - a. This is a *simile* – a simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two realities by using the word *like* or *as*.  
In contrast, a *metaphor* makes a comparison without the use of the words *like* or *as*
    - b. He is *like* a tree
  2. A tree describes strength, sureness, firmness, permanence
    - a. Flowers are beautiful but they are not lasting. They burst forth and then they are gone. This isn’t the description of Christianity. We are not sudden bursts that soon fade but we patiently endure.
    - b. After hurricane Katrina swept in near Bay St. Louis few things were left standing. I noticed as we drove around Lakeshore during our rebuilding work that the large oaks were still standing. Their leaves were sparse and you could tell they’d been through a storm but they were standing firm.
    - c. The Christian is like a tree with deep roots – like the house build upon the rock  
**Matthew 7:24-25** – “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: <sup>25</sup> And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”
  3. This tree is planted by the river
    - a. Trees in the desert are normally scraggly. They do fine during the rainy season but wither terribly during the long droughts.
    - b. The righteous man is like a tree planted by the river – an unending supply of refreshing water.  
He hears the voice of His Lord  
**Psalms 37:3-4** – “Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. <sup>4</sup> Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

- c. The Christ-centered life continually draws fresh spiritual life and vitality from God's Word which can be described as a river of water  
**Ephesians 5:25-26** – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”
- d. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “living water” who continually brings refreshing life to the believer  
**John 7:38-39** – “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. <sup>39</sup> (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive:”
- 4. He bears fruit – **verse 3** “that bringeth forth his fruit in his season”
  - a. The righteous man bears fruit – this is a consistent mark of Christianity
  - b. This is true prosperity  
**Mark 4:20** – “And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”
- 5. His leaf does not wither
  - a. He is being continually refreshed and nurtured – he remains in good spiritual health.
  - b. The Word of God that has become his delight has become his source of vitality
- C. He prospers in all he does – this is referring to spiritual prosperity  
**Psalm 1:3** – “and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”
  - 1. Everyone today wants to be prosperous but they want the wrong kind of prosperity. They are most concerned about the economy and the state of their finances and far less concerned about their soul.
  - 2. This blessed man brings forth true prosperity, true success.  
**Joshua 1:8** – “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”
    - a. Biblical success is doing God's will God's way. True happiness can only come through obedience to God's will. God's will can only be known through His Word.
    - b. Biblical success and prosperity comes in knowing Christ more. There is no greater treasure.
    - c. This is only possible as we continually keep God's Word upon our mind  
**Psalm 119:11** – “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

II. The path of the ungodly

**Psalm 1:4** – “The ungodly *are* not so

- A. Their life is characterized by misery –
1. It is a life completely opposite to that of the righteous  
They are planted in shallow ground – no protection, no source of supply
  2. There is no peace to the wicked
  3. The life of the lost person is characterized by endless searching for something that satisfies but it can never be found
  4. They may look outward successful but it is only a façade – they are bankrupt – salvation demands seeing your poverty.  
**Matthew 5:3** – “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
- B. Unlike the righteous whose leaf does not wither they are as the chaff that blows away
1. Their life is characterized by fruitlessness  
**Hebrews 6:8** – “But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned.”
  2. The picture in **Psalm 1** is a picture of harvest time. The wheat is gathered into the barn while the chaff is burned  
**Matthew 3:12** – “Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
  3. Chaff has no value. The lost person’s life is empty, futile and worthless. In the end they will be burned with fire. It is the fire of judgment.  
**Romans 3:12** – “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”
  4. The worst part of the condemnation of the lost is their exclusion.  
**Psalm 1:4** – “but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”  
**Psalm 1:5** – “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”
    - a. They will not be able to stand in the judgment. The fires of judgment will burn away every excuse, every pretense.
    - b. They will be excluded from the joyous fellowship of the congregation of the saints. They know nothing of adoption.
- C. The final judgment will reveal their true identity of all  
**Psalm 1:6** – “For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”
1. God sees all, knows all. Most of all, He knows those who belong to Him  
**2 Timothy 2:19** – “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
    - a. He knows us in love
    - b. He knows us in powerful protection
  2. The path of the righteous leads to life.  
The path of the ungodly shall perish in hell.

Conclusion:

1. Which path are you on? This is a most important question.  
The Psalmist describes the two paths. One is a path of righteousness, the other of wickedness. The path of righteousness is a transformed life.
  - a. It hungers for righteousness.
  - b. It loves the Word of God.
  - c. It lives a separate life distinct from the beliefs and ways of this world. It bears the fruit of righteousness.
2. Jesus described the two paths and the entrance gates.  
**Matthew 7:13-14** – “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: <sup>14</sup> Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”
3. The only way to be on the right path is to enter by the narrow gate. Jesus Christ is that gate. It is narrow and precise.  
You must cast away your sin and cast yourself upon Christ.