

Psalm 1: Two ways to live

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[0:00] In Paul's letter to the Ephesians about a really rather remarkable psalm that we've had read to us and we've sung about a man and I'm assuming equally true.

What would you say if I said I could show you the way that in your life nothing ever really went wrong?

And if I said I could show you the way that everything that ever happened to you was good? And if I said I can show you the way that you will live a life that you will not regret, that at the end of your life you would not say I wish I'd done it so much differently but a life which is fruitful all the way through. If I could describe to you a life in which you never dry up, get dry, dusty, flaky, that never happens and at the end you would not be forgotten but there would be something enduring about your life. A life in which you were never alone. You might be suspicious, you might think this is like one of these adverts that promises something and then when you follow it up you have to give your pin number and your, you know, it's too good to be true.

[1:49] But these statements are true of the person in Psalm 1. I'll try and enlarge on that but I'm going to say that's exactly what this Psalm describes.

And having said that I think each of us is going to say, tell me more. How could I have this way of life? How could I be the person that is described here?

How can I get this? You're thinking that, aren't you? Because that's what the Psalm invites you to think. Nothing in your life ever really goes wrong.

Everything that happens is really good. Your life is fruitful. You don't dry up. You won't be forgotten. You're never alone.

That's Psalm 1. So let's look at the text. I'm going to try and take the text to pieces and just make sure we've got it and then ask a few questions about it and try and look at it from a Christian point of view.

[3:03] So it says, now we'll just see what it says. Blessed is. Blessed is the man or woman. Who? Right. Right. Well, let's just see the description.

So there's some negatives first. Things that this person does not do. So here are the wicked. The Hebrew is Rashim.

I'm quite interested in that word. And here are the wicked. And the man or woman, the person described as blessed does not walk in the counsel of the wicked.

So there's the wicked. And they're giving counsel. And they're saying, this is how you deal with this. Counsel means advice.

This is how you deal with it. This is how you deal with life when things go wrong. This is how you deal with it when your employer is not very fair to you. This is how to deal with it when you get ill.

[4:04] This is how to deal with it when you find some money comes your way. These are the things that there is counsel given on all these things.

And this is the counsel of the Rashim, the wicked. The life advice of the wicked. And it says, blessed is the man who doesn't walk that way.

So let's say not. And then there's another not. Nor. It ought to say nor, shouldn't it? Who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked.

And does not stand in the path of sinners. So here's a path. And it's heading towards sin. And there are people on that path.

They're sinners. And that's their path. And there's a lot of people on that path. Jesus told something about a broad way, didn't he?

[5:04] Loads of people go that way. Broad is the way that leads to destruction. So here's a path that leads to sin. There's loads of people on that. If you're in university, probably most of your classmates are on that way.

If you're employed somewhere, probably most of your colleagues are on that way. If you're in a profession, probably a lot of your colleagues are on that broad way.

And it says, this person does not stand in the path of sinners. So not there. And there's a third not description.

This person does not sit in the seat of mockers. So let's put some seats. And there's some people mocking. There they are.

And they're saying things like, you don't want to believe that. That's a load of nonsense. They're mocking. You don't go to church, do you? You don't believe in God.

[6:05] Nobody sensible believes in God. You don't believe the Bible, do you? They're mocking. And they're taking the opportunity to mock. Far better to do it this way than the Bible's way.

That's ridiculous. It won't get anywhere if you follow the Bible. And the blessing is for those who do not sit in the seat of the scornful. So don't sit there.

So that's a description of what they're not. If you want that blessing, you don't want to be walking in the counsel of the Rashim, the wicked.

And you don't want to be along the path of sinners. And you don't want to be sitting in the seat of the people who make fun of God and the Bible.

Yeah? It's not rocket science, is it? This is just what the text says. And then there's a but. Now, what is the characteristic opposite of this blessed person?

[7:11] So all the things they don't do, they don't walk there, they don't stand there, they don't sit there. But, here's the but, verse 2. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

That's quite a striking but, isn't it? Quite a striking thing. What is it that characterises the blessed person in contrast with the people walking, sitting, standing, mocking?

This person is quite surprising. They delight in the law of the Lord. So there's a scroll.

I don't think we should be too hung up on law. Law, Torah is a very fairly general word. It doesn't mean just like the Ten Commandments. It means all the things that God has said to instruct us. And when the Psalm 1 was written, presumably, Psalm 2 hadn't been written. But now we've got Psalm 2 as well, and of course we've got the whole of the Bible.

[8:30] So let's be quite broad about what this means. His delight is in the law, the word of the Lord.

I think that's a really interesting statement. You notice that the word delight, let's see if I've done this. It says, on his law he meditates day and night.

So let's just take that to pieces. So the idea of delighting. So it's not quite the same thing as saying you've got a prayer book, and you know that every morning you have to read a prayer, which you sort of do with, you know, because you're supposed to do it.

Still less to have a religious book in a language you don't understand and just go through the sounds of it. It's actually saying there's an engagement of the...

So I've been on a conference about... which mentioned Jonathan Edwards, and the word he had was affections. I think that means emotions. There is an engagement of that part of us which says, I like this.

[9:42] There is an engagement of that part of us which says, rather than being repelled by that or indifferent to it, that's something I want to move towards.

And this person inwardly moves towards the law of the Lord. I like it. I enjoy it. This is something that my life is directed towards rather than away from.

His delight is in the law of the Lord. So there's a part which, let's say, is to do with the emotions.

So I put a like there. Okay, they like the word of the Lord. And in his law he meditates day and night.

So this is a word to do with the brain, isn't it? You meditate. You think about it. You say, this is what it says.

[10:45] Now what does that mean? Or this is what it says. Hmm. That connects with something else. And then you say, this is what it says. Actually, the way that affects me, now I come to think about it, is it's such and such a part of my life.

Such and such a way I think, or perhaps in such and such an action that I have, or such and such a pattern in my life, or such and such a situation. I've been thinking about it.

And this is how this word connects with that situation. So I'm going to put a pair of spectacles there, because in a sort of way, if you want to meditate on God's word, at some point you have to put your glasses on and actually read it.

But you understand what I'm... I'll just put a symbol there. You actually think about it. In his law, this person meditates.

Think about it. Take it in. Mull it over. Hmm. Something active about that. And it says this person meditates day and night.

[11:55] So day and night, I take to mean something like constantly, or something like at the beginning and end of each building block of life.

So God gives us time in chunks, doesn't he? He doesn't give us a whole bucket full of it all at once. He gives it to us a bit at a time, a day at a time, and a day at a time. He says you can think about God's word day and night, I don't know, morning and evening, all the way through.

Perhaps it's a way of saying 24-7. But there's something constant rather than intermittent. There's something regular rather than fits and starts.

This person is... their compass, perhaps that's one way of putting it, is the law of the Lord all the time. And you're probably thinking, hmm, I wonder where if I fit this description.

I suppose in some ways, it's probably more easy to see where you definitely don't fit this description. So if you haven't thought about what God says in his word for the past week at all, then you probably don't fit this description, do you?

[13:11] If you don't find the Bible something that you say, yeah, that's what I'm attracted towards, that's where I want to get closer into that.

If that's not you, then you're not this person. In his law, he meditates day and night. So let's look now at the blessings that are described.

And they're rather wonderful blessings. I think they're very attractive. On my... on the conference I went to, I was reminded of something I dimly remembered.

Augustine had said about preaching, you teach, persuade, and delight. That this would be something that we say, this is really good.

I heard something really good today. And there is something really good here in this about the tree. So this person, he or she, is like a tree. Something solid about a tree, isn't there?

[14:16] Something solid about a tree. I mean, you get big trees and small trees, but a tree. This person is like a tree. Planted by streams of water.

That's a good place to put a tree. There's a reason for putting a tree by a stream of water. There's a reason for saying that's a good place to have a tree. Because this tree yields its fruit in season.

So let's give it some fruit. It doesn't say quite that this fruit comes every single day, but it's saying as the rhythms of life go through, as the season comes along, there's fruit.

fruit. I suppose you could think of different seasons of life and different types of fruit that might come. You know, the sort of fruitfulness of a single person might be different to the fruitfulness of somebody with lots of little kids.

It might be different to the fruitfulness of somebody who's gained some track record in their profession or their work. It might be different from somebody who's stuck at home in bed through old age.

[15:33] Different sorts of fruitfulness, but the promise is that every season there is fruit. That's a brilliant promise. Wouldn't you like to be like that?

Wouldn't you like to say, yeah, I really love that. And he goes on to say, whose leaf does not wither. And that's a wonderful promise, isn't it? Because life takes it out of you.

If you haven't discovered that, you'll find out sooner or later life takes it out of you. You get battered, you get drained, you get, sometimes you don't know whether you're coming or going.

And there's a promise here that in that season where it's, you're under pressure, if you put it, as put it, of water, you don't actually dry up.

And wither and die. Their leaf does not wither. That's a brilliant promise, isn't it? That's a brilliant promise. I don't think you say it's not always fruitful, but there's always some greenness there.

[16:37] Your leaf does not wither. And then this promise, whatever he does prospers. Whatever he does prospers.

That one you need to think about a little bit because there's some things that you shouldn't take that to mean. But I think what it does say is, here's something in your life and when we bring it to the final analysis, we'll put a tick on that and say, actually, there was something good there.

And here's another bit of life and we'll say, actually, there's something good and rich there. You might not know it at the time. It might be a time of illness, but God will do something good in that.

And at the end of it, God will say, yeah, that was good. And one day we'll be able to say that too. Might be a time of difficulty. Might be a time of obvious prosperity, peace, enrichment.

Certainly put a tick over that. So we'll be careful about this one, but it does say it, whatever this person does prospers. God says, yeah, there's something in there, tick.

[17:56] This situation, it's not a cross, it's not, I wish that never happened. There's something in there, I'll put a tick on that. A little bit like the promise in Romans chapter eight, which says, God works all things together for good for those who love God and according to his, called according to his purpose.

All things together. And the Puritans would have said that all things means the good things, the wonderful things, the pleasant things, God works them for good, and the distressing things, the losses, the crosses, the discouragements, God takes all those, he works them all for good.

Sooner or later, one way or another, he works it for good. And if you're sitting this morning and thinking, do you know, there is nothing good about my life at all at the moment, it's all complete blackness, darkness, I've got nothing that I can be at all pleased about, then think again.

because if you are in this psalm, there is something that or some way that God will bring good out of any and every situation.

That's the promise of God. That's a very big promise because God is a very big God and it's a rather mysterious promise because God is a very wise God. we don't always see how he uses all the things going in different directions, but he does.

[19:39] So this will say all, whatever he does, prospers. And maybe just to say the same thing again, maybe that really difficult thing God is using because you wouldn't be sitting here if you hadn't had that difficult thing in your life.

Maybe something like that. And I say this is a very blessed place to be. It is, isn't it? You can't help but think, I'd love to be like that. Isn't that brilliant?

A tree planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, as leaf does not wither, all that he does prospers. Who wouldn't want that? Okay, let's carry on.

And this is contrasted. There's only really two groups of people here. There aren't lots of them.

There's two groups of people. Blessed is the man who meditates in the word of the Lord, but not so, so there's another negative in verse 4, not so the rashim, the wicked.

What are they like? Well, they're not like trees planted by streams of water. If you want a lightness, says the psalmist, they're like chaff. Now, you correct me if I'm wrong, but when you harvest wheat, there's the good bit on the inside, and there's a sort of crisp coating on the outside, and you want to separate them, and you use a method of treading or something like that to separate the outside bit.

[21:12] Please, somebody tell me if I'm getting this wrong, because you probably know more about it than I do. The outside bit from the good bit, and the outside bit is light, it's the sort of, I can't describe it, the outside, and when the wind blows, it blows the chaff away.

It's the bit that you don't want. It says the wicked are like chaff, but the wind blows away. So, I've got some chaff, there it is, and it's blown away the, shall we do that again?

Not too quickly. Ah, well, anyway, you get the idea. the opposite of a tree.

Sometimes trees get blown over, but usually they just stay there. But the wicked are like chaff. Gone. Sad, isn't it?

It's a very sad description. The wind blows them away. It doesn't stop to give such a large description as it does of the blessing.

[22:21] What is it a picture of? It's a picture of lightness. Nothing substantial there. It's a picture of uselessness. The good bit you keep, it's the useless bit you blow away.

It's a picture of something unwanted. Don't want that. You want the good bit. It's a picture of something impermanent. Gone.

Forgotten. who's who misses that chaff? We didn't want that anyway. It's a very sad picture.

It isn't put to us in a hugely intense and heart-rending way. It's just put to us in a matter-of-fact way. The wicked are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Light, impermanent, useless, unwanted. And it says something else about, it puts a therefore.

[23:23] And now it talks about the community. The Bible talks about communities. On the day of Pentecost, the people who were baptized, Peter said to them, save yourselves from this wicked generation.

They were baptized into Jesus Christ and those who were baptized were added to their number that day, however many thousand it was. So you leave one community and join another community when you become a Christian.

And here it talks about the assembly. Does it talk about the assembly? Yes, it does talk about the assembly. Verse 5, the assembly. So let's assemble community. Let's assemble some people.

There they are doing all sorts of things.

And this is an assembly. This is a community of people. Just incidentally, that's how Christian life is lived, in a community. Christian life isn't lived as lone rangers.

Mind you, you probably don't even know who the lone ranger was, do you? No, never mind. Lone ranger was a cowboy in a film a long, long time ago.

[24:27] He just went and sold off everything by himself. We're not lone rangers. We're part of a... Christians aren't lone rangers. We're part of a family. That's how the Christian life is lived.

So here's an assembly. And it's an assembly of the righteous. And in verse 5, the wicked will not stand in the judgment.

Now you don't have to listen to the next sentence, but if you remember from Isaiah, mishpat and tzedek, that's these two words here. The wicked will not stand in the mishpat, and it's at the assembly of the tzedek, tzedekah.

Okay, you can begin listening again now. That's just a little bit because I was interested in the words. The wicked will not stand in this assembly.

In terms of church, it's not saying that people aren't welcome to hear God's word. Definitely what it's not saying, but in terms of belonging, two different communities, chalk and cheese in a sense, and there is the assembly, the community, the people who belong in rightness and the justice of this community and the wicked, the rashy, won't stand there.

[26:03] They don't belong there. And there is this word for in verse 6, which I think is correctly translated. Why so?

And the answer for the Lord, if you've got an authorised version, it says watches over, does it? The Lord watches over the righteous?

Yep. NRV says that. Anybody got anything different? Yeah, watches over the way of the righteous. I did look it up.

It's actually the word knows. The Lord knows the way of the righteous. That's why he watches over, because he knows.

That says a little bit more than watches over, doesn't it? It says, hear the righteous, and the Lord knows that. He's watching, he's observing, I think he's understanding, I know what you're going through, I know the challenges you face, I know those things, and it's not just understanding, but there's something about supervising.

[27:22] I know, and if I need to intervene, I'll do that, if you need a nudge, I'll do that, if I need to just put my hand to stop something getting in your way, the next step I'll do that, but the Lord knows the

way of the righteous.

A bit like the seven churches where the Lord Jesus walks among the seven churches. So he's here, and he knows, he knows what we're thinking, he knows where we're at.

In some ways that's extremely scary, because we can't pretend to him, but in some ways extremely comforting, because he's put something in our heart, and he knows what he's put in our heart, the Lord knows those are to his.

So that's the way of the righteous, and the Lord knows this path, actually the word path is used several times, so I've drawn that path again.

But the way of the wicked shall perish. The Lord knows the path of the righteous, but the path of the wicked shall perish.

[28:38] So here the distinction lies in the way God knows and understands and by his grace approves and supervises and watches.

The Lord knows the way of the righteous. Okay, so we've been through the psalm, so let's stand back from it and just think about it a little bit because we're Christians and we have a standpoint in Jesus Christ and we want to read this in the right sort of way from there.

So let's think about the blessed and the unblessed. So I've put the blessed there because they're called blessed. They're called blessed. The others, well, they're called various things but we could say that they're the wicked, whatever this word means, Rashim.

They're the unblessed. They're the ones who don't prosper in this sense. You can't put a tick over everything in their life and say there's something good there.

These are the ones who are not rooted like the chaff. These are the ones whom God, you know, the chaff you say, well, it's not worth keeping and their path is perishing.

[30:11] It's a sad, sad description. I want to say please don't leave this building knowing that that's you. Please do something about it if that's you.

Let's think about this blessed. So I'm going to say how many people can claim for themselves this blessing? And maybe as we've been going through you've been pondering this and thinking I wonder which of these I can honestly say I belong to and you, well, you might think about it a bit. How many people can claim for themselves this blessing? So I ask the question in a particular way. How many people can just claim that blessing for themselves?

So the Pharisees would have read this in the days of Jesus. The Pharisees would have read it and they would have said, yeah, I can claim that for myself. I read the Psalms, I read the Torah, I read the whole thing, probably memorized it, probably know it better than many Christians do now, almost certainly.

and the Pharisees would say, you know, and more than just reading the Bible, I pray every day, I give my tithes and I'm very scrupulous and I do all this stuff.

[31:37] Yeah, the Pharisees would say this, wouldn't they? A pretty good person and the Pharisees would say, I can claim this blessing for myself for what I've done.

Hmm, see it makes you think, doesn't it? Jesus criticized the Pharisees who thought just by things like that that they could have eternal life.

You think that because you have the scriptures you have eternal life, but you don't realize that the scriptures are what testify of me, said Jesus. Do you remember that? And when he told the story about the Pharisee and the tax collector going up to pray and the Pharisee was saying I've read everything, I think about it, I tithe, I pray, look at me, and the poor old tax collector saying God have mercy on me a sinner, and Jesus saying let's put those into the category, shall we?

Blessed and Rashim. And you could see they're saying, yeah, Pharisee, blessed, obviously. And Jesus sort of says, actually not. The person who went home blessed was the tax collector.

God said, God makes you think, doesn't it? Makes you think. That's why I said in for themselves.

[32:59] You see, the Pharisee is a self thing. And just self plus word does not bring blessing. The word of God itself does not save, just as a set of words.

it is the person about whom the words speak that brings the blessing. Isn't it? The law and the prophets, that was Nathaniel who said, we found the one about whom the law and the prophets speak, Jesus of Nazareth.

If we divorce the words from him, we're left with something that doesn't save. So the Pharisee, if they tried to claim this blessing for themselves, Jesus would say, no, you can't have it.

Let's take normal human beings. So some just go down London Road, first person you met, you say, how do you fit with this? And they would say, well, you know, I try to do a bit of good if I can. They'd say, I'm not an unkind person. And if you do this in Brighton, you almost certainly find somebody who would say, I honestly want to save the planet, because that's a really important thing to do, and that's a very creditable thing to think about.

[34:22] Let's be fair to that, absolutely. But then we say, but hold on, the thing that is the crucial matter here is his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night.

Where's that in your life? And the person in the street would say, you know, I haven't got that faintest idea what you're talking about.

Bible? God saying stuff? God writing it down? God putting it in words? You know, it has no place in my life at all.

people. So, that person can't claim this blessing. And I'm going to tell you one person who I think can most definitely claim this blessing, and that's Jesus.

He can claim it of himself, for himself. Because you're not going to sit there and say, honestly, every day of my life I have meditated in the law of the Lord day and night.

[35:35] I know you're not going to say that, because people often say, you know, I found it really difficult to read my Bible in the past week, so I think nobody here is going to say, let's do this 100%, I've meditated in the law of the Lord day and night, but Jesus can say that.

Because he did. His whole life was governed by the word of God, even when it cost him. I mean, you could think of Jesus being tempted, can't you, in the wilderness, and under that pressure, what did he say?

It is written. So when he was tempted, he went back to God's word, he says, this is the thing we stand on. Well, this is the I stand on. And in the garden of Gethsemane, there's a very interesting bit there where the enemies came to arrest him.

Let me just see if I can find it and read it to you in Matthew 26, in verse 47. Yeah, Jesus is praying in the garden in Gethsemane, the night of his arrest, and a huge crowd come to arrest him, led by Judas, a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, come to arrest him, and he's betrayed by Judas, and they think about fighting back.

Verse 52, put your sword back in its place, those who draw the sword will die by the sword. And Jesus says, do you not think I can call on my father who will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels, says Jesus.

[37:21] But very interesting what he says next. But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way? That you think of all people Jesus could make up the rules as he went along, but he didn't.

He said, here is a crisis point, an unpleasant crisis point, one where I could clearly see a way out of it, but what does the Bible say?

And Jesus is governed by the scriptures. So I'm going to say there is one person who by himself can claim this blessing, who say, I have earned this blessing, I have fulfilled all the conditions of this, and that's Jesus.

And before I go on, I just want to think about who are the Rashim, who are the wicked? Let me find my place again. Who are the wicked?

So we've had this horrible murder in New Zealand in the past week, and everybody is going to say, that man was a wicked man. So we could call him Rashim, we say wicked, that's the translation, isn't it?

[38:48] Wicked, he's wicked. And yeah, I'm sure that's true. You might remember, or you might not remember, Jimmy Savile, who was a disc jockey.

Some of you remember Jimmy Savile, and after his death it was found that he had been a hideous sexual predator. What a wicked man to exploit his popularity like that.

I think everybody's going to say, that was wicked. He was wicked. He's definitely Rashim, that would be him. And then I'm going to say, it actually goes further than that.

Because the Rashim would be each one of us before we come to Jesus Christ. It's a hard thing to swallow, isn't it?

I have to be careful the way I say it, and please forgive me if I get it not quite right, but you'll see where I'm going to with this. Before we came to Jesus Christ, we needed God's forgiveness no less than the horrible mass murderer.

[39:59] Before we came to Jesus, we needed his forgiveness no less than the horrible sexual predator. Now, different sins and the sins have different magnitudes, that we needed his forgiveness.

Just the same. Just the same. That was us. Is that right? Are you prepared to say that? Are you prepared to say, amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me?

That's where we were. We listened to the counsel of the wicked, didn't we? this is how you deal with life, this is how you deal with it, this, we walked in the counsel of the wicked and sat in the seat of sinners, stood in the way of sinners and probably sat in the seat of mockers.

Probably some of us to our huge embarrassment can even remember some of the things that we said in past days to mock the cause of Jesus Christ. Christ. Maybe you didn't, maybe God presented you, maybe God protected you from that, but maybe not.

That was where we were. Paul says in Ephesians, we walked according to the prince of this world. That's where we were.

[41:32] And none of us can claim for ourselves that blessing because in and of ourselves we were on the other side of it.

But it's Jesus who makes the difference, isn't it? Because of what he has done, we can find ourselves in that place of blessing.

Not because of us, but because of him. God and he puts something in our, he forgives our sins and he puts something in our hearts that draws us to the word of God.

That draws us to think, I want to hear what my heavenly father is saying. I want to live that way. We do it imperfectly. Jesus did it perfectly. We do it imperfectly. But that is what he puts within us.

Because of him people come to that blessing. Because of his work for them and because of his work in them. And they through the word are fixed on him.

[42:42] Being a disciple of Jesus is simply living the way it says here, isn't it? Didn't Jesus say, the one who loves me will obey my word? Didn't Jesus, didn't Peter say, well, Jesus say, you're going to go off, you?

And didn't Peter say, to whom will we go, Lord? You have the words of eternal life. Didn't Jesus style himself Lord, and then say to people, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and don't do the things that I say?

Isn't that right? The things that he said. And didn't he tell a parable about people who listen to the things that he said? He said, one person is like a man who builds his house on sand, the other person like a man who builds both of them here, but one of them does it.

Isn't that right? Those who delight in the word of the Lord Jesus, those who meditate on it, think, how does this work out in my life?

How can I put this forward? How can I end up not sitting there or standing there or walking there, but there? Hearing and obeying the word of the Lord.

[44:01] Let me just ask you, you can be a lot ruder when you stand up in front of people than when you talk to them face to face. Is that how you live?

Do you take note of what God has said in his word and say each day, Lord, help me to do that, and then actually make some progress in doing that, accept that's the principle that you are going to live by, and it shows.

That's what's being described here. That's the person who's blessed. And if you're not, it is a very simple thing to say, from here on, Lord Jesus, by your help, that's how I want to live.

God, you're going to have to take some action as soon as you go home. Aren't you? You're going to have to ring somebody up and say, sorry, I'm going to let you down on this, or you're going to write an email and say, I can't do such and such, or you're going to look at your diary and put some things in and take some things out.

hearing and obeying the word of the Lord. Nobody, apart from Jesus, can claim this psalm for themselves, but through the Lord Jesus Christ, click, through the Lord Jesus Christ, this blessing can be ours.

[45:37] blessing, blessed. We started with the word blessed, let's just come back to it. What does it mean? It means how much you're to be congratulated.

How much you're to be congratulated when people persecute you and insult you. If people do that, you're blessed, says Peter. How are you to be congratulated?

We need to be told this sometimes because it doesn't always feel this way. All they do prospers. There's goodness there. It doesn't always mean, it doesn't actually mean financially, you'll be richer, it doesn't actually mean that.

It doesn't even mean emotionally you'll find everything, you'll just sail through it all. There'll be ups and downs, but God says, I will make that prosper.

God works all things together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Let me just conclude by saying, you agree with me, this psalm describes a blessing, doesn't it?

[46:43] It's really the blessing of life. And who would refuse that? Who would refuse what it's actually getting at to make Jesus Christ through his word the very center of our lives?

all I once held dear, built my life upon, all this world reveres and wars to own, all I once thought gain, I have counted loss, spent and worthless now compared to this, knowing you, Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater thing, and blessed is the person who does that.

Let's sing together. Thank you.