

Psalm 1 // Choose Your Own Adventure

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Preacher: Earl Buchan

[0:00] Had the blessing of having a real cool dynamic happen where we brought Jerry in on this internship and then like four other people showed up.

He's a good man.

I'm going to be teaching Psalm 1 this morning. It is a bit of a dip out of Matthew. Next week we're going to go into the calling of Matthew, which is a really particularly cool story. But I felt for some reason that we should go through Psalms 1.

And I never quite know what the Lord is up to with that. So if this speaks to you in a certain way, just know that he's listening. He hears you. And this was laid in my heart for you.

I don't know if you're old enough to remember these, but there used to be kids' storybooks called Choose Your Own Adventure. Does anybody actually remember those?

[1:11] I'm the only one. No, one more. Okay, thank you. Choose Your Own Adventure. And what it was, I don't know how many were in this series. I owned about 123. My mom made the mistake of saying, if you read one, I'll buy you the next one.

So I thought, all right, game on. So I was already a big reader when I was a kid, but I read these. And they had the most delightful setup. You'd open the book, and you could read a bit.

And then it's like, if you want the character to go this way, then flip to page six. If you want the character to make this decision, go to page four. And it was great because you could reread the book and have a different adventure every time.

And there's usually about three of these plots in the books. It was just so much fun. And then I come to Psalm 1, and I realized this is a little bit of a Choose Your Own Adventure story. And it is that way because we have almost a compare and contrast essay of what the life of a righteous person should look like.

Fruitful, grounded, rooted, mature. And then the life of someone who chooses away from God, and that's easily uprooted. That's easily influenced by the world and blown away very quickly when the high winds come.

[2:23] The adventure today is ours. Choose your own adventure. Which way will you go today? Which way is your heart on right now? And that's the question we have to ask.

And I thank you, Christy, for reading that. Verse one. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

Sometimes the best way to understand what something is, is to try and figure out what it is not and work backwards. It's just a good analytical way of looking at things. Helps you see things from a different perspective.

So there's some things about here in the sense of, well, we can look at it and say, this is how not to do certain things. And you'll be happy as a result. Because blessed, the word literally means, oh, how happy.

Happy. There's a contentment involved in this. And so if you want, you can look at Psalm 1 as a recipe for happiness. It's not a magic formula. It's just simply, look, if you're feeling stuck, if you're feeling sad, if you're feeling frustrated, take a look at Psalm 1 and look at what it has for you to do in order to feel that contentment and happiness from the Lord.

[3:39] And then start working on it. The first one walks not in the counsel of the wicked. It doesn't take much to look around these days. Social media is pretty big on this.

Where you get a lot of information all the time, 24-7, bright, flashy, aliens are coming. This is horrible. Whatever's going on. The world's burning down. It's world's ending. This is the time of revelation.

The Antichrist is here. It goes on and on and on. Right? And we can get absorbed by this. And then all of a sudden we go out into our world and we're thinking, the world's over. It's just ending. You know, it's just terrible. Everything's going wrong. And then that's what we start to project towards other people. And we have this place where we ingest that negativity.

Right? It is exactly what we act out in our lives. But if you're walking around thinking that the world is ending and everything is horrible and evil is winning and all this kind of stuff and you're doing this while you're doom scrolling at 2 in the morning, good luck getting to sleep.

[4 : 39] Right? We have those moments where we have to check ourselves. Psalm 1 is a beautiful little litmus test to see exactly what color is on this strip. Right?

Where is our heart at? Which path are we on? Blessed is the person who does not stand in the way of sinners. You know, we were talking about it earlier.

It's not the sense of like, well, I mean, if people are sinning along their way, shouldn't we stand in front of them and say, hey, hey, hey, stop, stop. That's not what it means.

It means don't get in line and follow them. If you see people that are going in sin, don't join in and think, hey, sure, everybody's doing it, man.

Don't be one of those people. And you can kind of think some extreme things. Well, you know, I haven't killed anybody today. Good for you. Right? You might have thought it, which in Jesus' world is the same. Right?

[5 : 36] And then you might also think, well, you know, I haven't stolen anything today. Great. But have you hated with your heart? Have you gossiped? Have you enjoyed that gossip with someone else?

I heard this happen. Or whatever. That's standing in the way of sinners. Because that's stuff we need to repent from. It's stuff that will separate us from God.

Keep it at a distance from his blessing. Because that's the way of the world. And we're called and chosen to be different. Different. Set apart to be different.

And the other part of verse 1 here is, Nor sits in the seat of scoffers. I kind of liken it like this.

Because we can be really good at this. Social media can be very good at this.

I'm not saying social media is bad. Let me just put that out there. I'm going to call it a few names just simply because it deserves it sometimes. But if you're sitting in a room and someone comes up and says, Hey, what are you thinking?

[6 : 35] Oh, I was just thinking how much I hate this guy. Now, in our study earlier, I looked directly at Don Sangster and said that. And I realized, bad choice.

I'm sorry. I didn't, you know, it wasn't meant to be directed. Look at the carpet. I hate this guy.

Right? And then the other person's like, oh, I hate them too. And they sit down and they talk about how much they hate this other person.

And then someone walks by and says, hey, what's going on in here? We're talking about how much we hate that guy. Oh, let me get in on it. The rooted, righteous, maturing Christian will get up and say, I don't want to have anything to do with this.

Y'all are wrong. You see the difference between someone who is not rooted in the word of God and in a flourishing, loving relationship with him versus someone who is embittered and hateful and taking in worldly wisdom, advice and methodology.

Right? There's a huge difference between the two. And so we're told here, blessed, happy is the man or woman who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

[7 : 49] You will not be blessed, happy. If this is your life, is to be a hater, bringing other haters into hating other people. That is absolutely not a happy life.

That is a bitter and, dare I say, cursed life. Because it is not a maturing Christian's role to do this kind of thing. To be a tree planted by the river of the wonderful river and water of God's word.

To grow in time, to bear fruit in the right season, to give shelter to many. That is our call. That is our call as maturing Christians. I don't say to myself or to anyone else that I'm a mature Christian.

I am maturing. I won't get there until I see him face to face. And I'm transformed by him again. Right now, it's a work in progress. We all are.

Charles Spurgeon has this great quote. This blessedness is for all of us.

[9 : 02] For everyone. And it's a choose your own adventure. Is that will I wake up today and choose that blessing? Or I'm going to be a hater? Am I going to wake up today and choose to be

this blessing?

Or am I going to stand in the way of sinners and just walk along and do whatever feels right? Am I going to choose the blessing this day that will help me mature in my walk with the Lord?

This is for all of us. Verse 1 again. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

There is a way that we should not walk. There is a path we should not stand in. There is a seat we should not sit upon. We can say quite truthfully that walking, standing, and sitting means the way we think, the way we behave, and the way that we spend our time.

I'll say that again. The way we think, the way we behave, and the way we spend our time. Okay? Jesus is different from the world.

[10:14] He gives us a new way to think. He gives us a new way to behave. And if you're thinking and behaving in sin, in hatred, in resentment, that is the way of the world.

If you're thinking in love, and joy, and peace, and patience, and kindness, and gentleness, and self-control, that's the way of Jesus.

You can't do both. Because they war at one another. And it's the adventure that we have to choose in our own lives today. Are you turning to page four or page six?

Are you choosing life? Or are you choosing death? So be careful where you walk. Because with all of the advice that we get from reels, from TikTok, from Facebook, whatever social media you're into.

I like Substack myself, but I'm a nerd, so that tickles that. There are many voices that are telling us what to do. Who we should be.

[11:19] How we should act. There are many voices that are out there that says, feel the victimhood. Poor you. Right? There are many voices that say that.

There are also as many voices out there saying, seize the survivor. And be in Jesus. I actually came to this point recently where I was, because I'll doom scroll sometimes.

I'll spend some moments on Instagram. There's some funny stuff that comes up and makes me laugh. Right? And there's other stuff that's just like, oh, that's really dumb. And I flip by. And I started. I was like, Lord, can you show me some wholesome, really good stuff out there?

And this guy comes across my feed. And he's like, got this amazing fedora hat. It was just, that was the first thing I saw. And he's got this like deep Southern accent. And he's a pastor.

And he's just sharing while he's driving his truck, these thoughts about Christ. And I find myself listening and listening and listening, thinking, man, this stuff is gold. Right?

[12:16] We can choose our own adventure of what we listen to, what we take into our lives. All right? And if you're doom scrolling, if you're in social media, you can choose what your eyes lay upon.

I've chosen to follow this guy. And I'm going to keep following him. Because whatever is going on, I love what he's saying. And I love how he says it. And it makes me feel like getting up and taking on the world. Because it's the same Jesus.

So we have to watch and be careful how we walk in this world. Stay away from the counsel of the world. Stay away from it.

The person walking the blessed path will know how to discern what the counsel of the world is.

We'll be able to see it and say, gross, this is not Jesus.

And if you're ever in question, take it and line it up with the word of God. Is this saying the same thing? And if it isn't, unfollow, unsubscribe, get out of there.

[13:13] We have to be able to discern that. Does the counsel match up with what the Bible says? And we also need to accept that the counsel of the ungodly might just come from ourselves.

Because we have fearful, anxious thoughts. We have doubtful thoughts. Sometimes that create actions. Because we're not trusting in God. We're anxious.

We're not trusting in him. We worry. And that causes our action, our things to do. And we're just, well, we've got to fix this. It has to be me. Lord, I have to do this. You're being too slow. Whatever we've told ourselves, sometimes we can be the worst advice to ourselves.

And that is, again, where we need his word. We need to know how to reject those thoughts. And we should know where to find good counsel. Psalm 119:24.

Your testimonies are my delight. They are my counselors. So you know where I'm going with this.

What a wonderful counselor that we have right here. What a wonderful counsel we have in the word

of God.

[14:20] I will say it to the day I die, a thousand times a day if I need. Read this. Live this. Do this. It will change our relationships.

It will change our church. It will change our town. It will change everything. Because what we see, what we read, what we take into our heart dictates how we walk, how we reach out, what we think and what we say.

Let it be from this. Let this be our inspiration. I'll read this again. Your testimonies are my delight. They are my counselors. Let us be our, let the word of God be our counsel and delight.

So be careful where we walk. The next thing is we should not stand in the path of sin. A path speaks of a direction. A way.

A way, not a way. It speaks of a direction. A place to go. A road. The person of God is not afraid to take the less traveled road. The person of God does not fear taking the narrow road.

[15:24] When all others say, take the broad road, it's easier. Don't stand up for that person. Let's be a group of haters. No. Stand and do what's right.

And say what's right. And believe what's right. And live what is right in the truth of the gospel. Do that. It's scary at times. But it is the way of the righteous versus the way of the ungodly.

That's a sobering question to ask yourself. Which way am I standing in today? Matthew chapter 7 verse 13. Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide.

And the way is easy that leads to destruction. And those who enter by it are many. There's a danger in the path of the people walking away from God. Following the word.

We all suffer from the world. Sorry. And down a road that puts barriers between ourselves and God. That is called sin. Because we have sin.

[16:23] We are sinners. We stumble into it. We fall down into it. And sometimes I think the best question is not. Well, let's just dissect the sin. Sometimes I think the best question is.

What are you going to do now that it's happened? And an even better secondary question. Is what are those around us going to do for the person who has sinned?

Do we shoot the hurting? No. We be the hospital. We be the hands and feet of Jesus. We nurture. We care. And we get them back up running into the race.

Because we're going to fall at some point. And we're going to need someone to come along. And nurture and care. And when we're in a busy little cadre. I'm like, oh, I hate this guy. I hate this guy. Right?

Or everybody's going to Broadway. Let's just take the easy road. Let's do that. That is the counsel of the ungodly. It leads to destruction. And it is not the hallmark of a maturing Christian. The maturing Christian will take the person who is battered and bruised.

[17:24] And say, I love you. I've been there. I probably will be there. Now it's time to lean under my shade. To rest and have the fruit that God has given me in my life.

Let me take care of you to get you back on the road. You see the difference between the two. It is a stark contrast. And it's meant to be. Because one is the way of life.

One is the way of death. Psalm 16:11. You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

God has a path. And it is a good road to take. We should not sit in the seat of haters. Because they love to sit and criticize. They love to sit and criticize.

The scorners. The scoffers. The haters. It's like they breathe. And they take it in. You know what? Criticism and hating are two of the easiest things to do.

[18:23] Super easy. You know what's even. What's actually more difficult though? And it gets easier. It's blessing and encouragement. Blessing and encouragement.

What if we. Instead of being the hater crowd. Or what I call the torch. Pitchfork and torch crowd. Right? What if we were the encouragement and blessing crowd?

You know. I was having a particularly difficult couple of days. I'm going to call you out on this one. I came to my office and there was a card from Bredla. Well it was BB.

I'm assuming it's Bredla. Right? And it was wonderful. Thank you. You know. You had no idea what I was going through. None. But that gift of encouragement. That gift of blessing.

It has. It's in my office on the window right now. And it has gotten me through other days that were challenging. Okay? It doesn't take much. To encourage and bless.

[19:18] That is the way of life. Alright? Hate and criticize. All too easy. All too easy. And it's the road to death. The ungodly receive counsel to hate.

The godly and the righteous receive counsel to love. Verse 2. I will actually wrap this up sooner than later. But his delight is in the law of the Lord.

And on his law he meditates day and night. The law of the Lord means the entire word of God. It's not just talking about the first five books. It's the whole thing. Meditate day and night.

The blessed person is delighted with the word of God. You see the funny thing is. Is when I read in here. Can you imagine Jesus saying. Despise someone.

O thee. Of my people. I'm making this up as I go on. Of course. Hate them. With all circumstances. Reject them. Think little of them.

[20:19] Be little of them. And talk behind their back. And when they're not in a room. Make sure that you gossip. And you will be blessed all the days of your life. I can't find that one.

Can you? Well I don't know if you see the air. No. You see we can't find that stuff. That is the ungodly counsel. In the word of God.

We can't find the godly counsel. We can't find the life giving stuff. We can't find the road to heaven. We can't find the road to peace and happiness. That's what we can find in the Bible.

But we can't say. Make a record of someone's wrongs. So that they will always know how wrong and hateful they are. Make a list of people that you hate. So that every time you see them.

You can give them a snub. I don't see that in the word of God. Do you? Yet why do we do this?

Because sometimes the flesh wins. And sometimes our ungodly counsel from even in our heart will spill out.

[21:18] And we've got to take it captive. So how do we know if we delight in God's word? I kind of think that if we delight in something.

We don't have to convince ourselves. Or talk ourselves up to get to doing it. Right? Like I have this moment where I'm out in the yard. It's usually early in the morning or late at night.

And the dogs are out there doing whatever dogs do. You know. And I have this quiet moment of prayer. I delight in that. I race to that moment. You do not have to tell me or remind me. I don't have to have an alarm.

All right? There are other things like taking out the garbage. Where it's like. It's there. I take it out. I'll tie it up.

If I'm really lazy. I'll put it in the garage. I'll close the door. Okay good. I can forget about that for now. You know. And then two days later. I'm like. I've got to get the garbage out. I don't delight in taking out the garbage.

[22:15] But it's a chore. And you should do it. And by the way. I've gotten better. I'll just give you an example. Okay. When we delight in something. You don't have to set alarms. You don't have to do that. You just do it. Because you can't wait.

You can't help yourself. Get to it. Just a community cup. That I don't want to crack. But.

Let me make an important differentiation here on the word meditate. Because this is important.

Eastern meditation will teach you to empty your mind.

Okay. Let it all go. Empty your mind. Be in that stillness. Okay. Christian meditation is different. It fills your mind with the heart of God by using the word of God.

So when I'm out there and I'm meditating and I do. I think of things of Lord. Let my face look upon you.

[23:14] Make my face radiant. Because those who look to you are radiant and their faces shall never be ashamed. That's Psalm 34 5. Okay. So we can meditate on the word of God and fill our minds with those good things.

Now imagine this. Imagine if you did that and then you went out into the world. And then you saw people that were a group of haters. Right. We hate that guy. You know. And you have Psalm 34 5 on your mind.

Right. Those who look to him are radiant and their faces shall never be ashamed. You're going to go in that room and go I want to be radiant. I don't want to be darkened by you clowns. You see the difference?

Choose life. Choose your own adventure. Don't let other people choose it for you. Don't let the world choose it for you. Don't let negativity or hatred or anything else choose your path for you.

Choose life.

Choose the word of God. And let it soak into you. Chew on it. Think on it deeply. Now let's look at how the righteous person is blessed.

[24 : 18] He is like this verse 3. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season. And its leaf does not wither. In all he does he prospers.

Like a tree planted by a river. This big diverse world. I find it always funny that we have a very similar biome here to places I've been to in Israel.

It can be very dry. Very dry. And so you see trees that are planted by rivers and stuff right now. Very dry. They're dry. And we pray for rain. We do.

But it would have been like this in the area that this was written as well. Times of dryness. Times of just difficulty. Not a lot of water to be found. So this idea is important.

Because for a tree to flourish it needs to be planted by a river. Truly. It would have a continual source of all that it needs. If this is the river.

[25 : 18] If this is the river of life. If this is the word of God. Planting your life by it. Means you will grow strong. Your roots will grow deep. And you will bear fruit. Closing it.

And not using it. And going. Alright. Hater club today. This is great. We're going to get into this. You know. Let's get some juicy gossip going. So. Your life will wither.

Because it is not planted. By the river of life. If we are constantly in need.

Or lacking something. We have to ask ourselves. Are we planted by the river of life? If we always feel. Like we're under pressure. Always feel like we can't ever find peace.

If we always live under stress. If we always live in that place. Is are we planted by the river? I think it's a daily question. I really do. I don't think it's a one and done. There's moments where I have stress.

[26 : 18] And I feel like I'm not trusting God. And the only reason is because. My feet are not dipped in the water. You know. And I need to get back to that place. To remember who he is.

Who I am in him. And then I'm like. Right. Right. You are my strength. And my shield. You are my song. The blessed person has strength and stability.

And in season this person brings about fruit. So I thought it appropriate to bring up Galatians 5. 22 and 23. But the fruit of the spirit is love. Joy. Peace.

Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control. Against such things there is no law. So. If you want to take a bit of a read on yourself today.

If your feet are not dipped in the water. Or if you're being harmed by someone. Who is not. Have their feet dipped in the water. Ask yourself this. Is there an increasing measure.

[27 : 25] Of love. Of joy. Of peace. Of patience. Of self-control. Of kindness. Is there an increasing measure. These things. Blessing on the person's life.

Or. Is it hatred. Is it gossip. Is it resentment. Is it. The hater club. One way leads to life.

One way leads to death. Choose your own adventure today. Which path are you on? John 15. 5. I am the vine.

And you are the branches. And whoever abides in me. And I in him. He it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me. You can do nothing. Fruit has a season. We all know that. Some of us live it.

Some of us are lively. It is by it. We need to be planted. By that river. God brings something good.

And wonderful. Out of every part of our life. Even the tough times.

[28 : 23] God will bring something. Wonderful out of it. Just trust that he has. A way through it. And I'm going to skip down. And end here. Because it says.

For the Lord. And this is verse 6. For the Lord knows. The way of the righteous. But the way of the wicked. Will perish. The Lord knows the way. He knows. Our way.

As a church. He knows your way. As a believer. And it may feel right now. Like your life. There's a big honking. Log in the middle of the road. And you don't know. How you're going to get through it.

And it's causing you.

Stress and grief. And you feel stuck. The Lord knows. What's beyond. We can trust in him. Okay. There may be other things.

That are frustrating. Or causing you grief. The Lord knows your way. He knows the way of the righteous. But. This other group over here.

[29 : 19] It's the way of death. And they'll perish. So. I was saying earlier. That I have this friend. Who's a pastor. He's still a pastor. And. He said to me one day.

You know. I don't trust God. And part of me was like. Whoa. Hold on a second. What? And he says. No, no, no. He says. Let me explain. I'm learning to trust. Because God is trustworthy. It's just that he had trust issues. Himself. This guy. And I thought. I've never heard a more honest approach. So. Maybe what we need to do. Is in the way we walk. In the way we talk. In our attitudes that we carry. The places where we get our counsel. The places where we give our counsel. Maybe what we need to do. Is be in a place where we're learning to trust in God. And surrendering to him. Day by day. Watch what your eyes take in. Watch what your ears hear. Watch what your mouth speaks. Watch what your hands and feet get up to. [30:17] And may it be. In the path of righteousness. That leads towards life. And God. And his blessing. Let's pray.