

Choices

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 February 2025

Preacher: Paul Brown

- [0 : 00] Good morning. The reading of God's work of Psalms, and it's Psalm 1. That's the book of Psalms, reading from Psalm 1.
- Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.
- Not so the wicked, they are like chaff, that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. May God bless the reading of his word. Amen.
- Let's pray together.
- Our gracious and loving Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can come to you. Our Creator God, that we can open this book, that we can open scripture, and learn to love you more.
- [1 : 54] So I pray, Lord, that you will speak to us through the power of your word. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.
- Amen. Thank you, Ruth, for reading the psalm, and thank you to Karen as well for such excellent prayers this morning, and Pam too, for the kids' talk.
- So we're in the book of Psalms. I've been studying the Psalms quite heavily recently, and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's hard work. Some of them are hard work, but on the other hand, it's scripture.
- All scripture. All scripture is given by God. So the Psalms are probably the most quoted book of the whole Bible, certainly of the Old Testament. They are almost described as themselves a mini Bible.
- They're part of God's inspired word. The hymn book of the people of God. Themes of Old Testament theology are turned into poetry, into song, into prayer.
- [3 : 19] The Psalms are split into five books. There are 150 chapters, more than any book of the Bible.
- 150 chapters. That is 2,461 verses. You'll remember John Lowry recently taking us through the book of Ascents, which we all thoroughly enjoyed.
- The word Psalms comes from the Greek word psalmos. Time frame wise, you're talking about a thousand odd years.
- The Psalms is written by several people.
- The main contributor being David, King David. But the psalm that Ruth has read so well this morning, we don't know.
- [4 : 27] We simply do not know who wrote that one. Dietrich Bonhoeffer read the Psalms when he was imprisoned.

And quoted some when writing to his friends and family. Listen to these. These are good. I love this. He quoted the Psalms as incomparable treasures.

And the fact that the Psalms have unexpected power. The Psalms are full of pictures that show us a variety of places in a land of spiritual experience.

Hills, valleys, etc. They offer praise to God. All Psalms are centered around the one and only living true God.

Our creator, our God. Our saviour, our Lord, our master. And our king. It can be an invitation to sing.

[5 : 46] We've all sung Psalms. Or on the other hand, can speak to a troubled, mourning heart. So that's a wee bit of background with the Psalms.

So let's dive into Psalm 1. See, some people actually connect Psalm 1 and Psalm 2. But we're not going to do that this morning. We're going to do Psalm 1.

Now I've entitled this sermon, Choices. We all have choices to make in life.

It's part of life. Where to live. What to eat. Where to go. What woman or man to marry.

Hair. No hair. Color. Whether we follow Jesus or not.

[6 : 53] That's the biggest one. Even what television program we watch on the box. Box?

I don't think it's called a box anymore because everything's flat these days. But you know, Rosie and I are regularly evicted from our living room.

So Emily and Jack can watch their programs. But what choices we make. Or select.

Can. And does mold us. It does turn us into the people. That we are today. We make good choices.

But we also make bad choices. That's life. You may remember a while back.

[7 : 58] I spoke to you on happiness. Do you remember? Thank you, Ian. Oh, happy day. Don't worry.

Be happy. Remembering now. Well, this. This psalm. Starts with. Blessed.

Blessed. Blessed means happy or. Fortunate. It's the first word. That starts. 150 chapters.

Of scripture here. In the book of Psalms. Blessed. Itself. Stands out. What a great word.

To start. A psalm. Blessed is the man. Blessed is the man. The man.

[8 : 54] Including both man. And woman. Blessed is the man. Who walks. Not. In the counsel of the wicked.

The man here. In scripture. Is not a selected few. It's not an exclusive. Group of people. It's not exclusively.

For the wealthy. It's not exclusively. For the well respected. It's actually. For absolutely. Everyone. This blessing.

Is open to all. Rich or poor. The not so well respected. In society. We can all. Receive God's blessing. So what does.

A blessed man. Look like. Notice the. Importance. Of definition here. You may say. To your child. I certainly have.

[9 : 57] Do not do that. Do this. You said it. Yeah. So we see. The three negative terms here.

It seems to be. A weird way. To continue the psalm. After such a. Positive. Blessed. Start. And we go through. Verse one.

We see the wicked. The sinners. The scoffers. The mockers. In each of these. They become more powerful. And together.

All three. Are powerful. The blessed man. Does not walk. He does not stand. And he does not sit.

The blessed man. Does not think. Belong to. Or behave. Like the wicked. The blessed man.

[10 : 54] Does not think. Belong to. Or behave. Like the wicked. The wicked. The sinners. The scoffers. Do not live.

A life. Following God. In fact. They are in complete. Rebellion. Towards God. Because they are wicked. They are not.

Following. Torah. Which is. God's rules. God's laws. So the blessed man. Doesn't want to spend time.

With people. That rebel. Against God. He doesn't do. Evil things. The blessed man. Obeys. And follows. God's word.

And God's laws. If we spend. Too much time. With rebellious people. There is a chance.

[11 : 54] That we. Could turn. Rebellious. So we need to. Choose. Our friends. Carefully. We.

Sadly. Society. Today. Is going. Their own way. So we must. Stand. Against this. And live. By God's word.

But that's not easy. You and I. Both know that. God. So the blessed man. Does not just go. With the flow. He doesn't just go.

The way society. Seems to be going. He does not go. With the wicked. He goes. With God. He does. What is right. Now.

The scoffers. The scornful. The mockers. They're insulting. They're laughing. And criticizing. The followers. Of God.

[12 : 54] Again. That is what. Today's society. Is like. People. Laugh. At us. They mock us. For our faith. Now.

We as Christians. As followers. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. Read God's word. Or we should. Read God's word. We obey. God's laws. We don't.

Or. Shouldn't swear. We don't. Break the law. And we give. Thanks. For our food. Each and every time. We receive it. Even in a restaurant.

Without embarrassment. We want people. To see Jesus. In us. And direct. These people. To Jesus. Through the work.

Of the Holy Spirit. I should quote. Here that. For all. Have sinned. And fallen.

[13 : 55] Short. Of the glory. Of God. But the mockers. Think we are. The mockers. Think we. Are abnormal. We are not. The normal. So.

Are we keeping. Bad company. Right. Let's move on. To. Verse. To. Be more. Positive. But.

His delight. Is in the law. Of the Lord. Or. Torah. And. On his law. He meditates.

On it. Day and night. What. What do you delight in. What makes you happy. Family.

Friends. Movies. Food. Work. Work. Well. Well. The blessed man. Delights. In God's word.

[14 : 56] The law of the Lord. He delights. In scripture. There's no better book to read my friends. Do you believe that?

But. But. But not only that. He meditates on it. Day.

And. Night. He enjoys. Reading. God's word. The blessed man. Is better than a rebellious man. As he has God.

He has. The Bible. He wakes in the morning. Wanting to read God's word. And wants to live. By it. In obedience to it.

The Bible. And to God. And then. At night. He. Feasts. In scripture. He waits. In the Lord.

[15 : 53] To speak to him. And bless him. Pretty powerful stuff. Do I do that? Do I wait in the Lord?

Do we do that? Do you do that? Feast on scripture. Morning.

Evening. Big commitment. Kind of also makes me think. Do I read scripture enough?

The blessed man. Meditates. He ponders. Over. He studies. He focuses on. He thinks deeply.

About. I quoted Joshua 1.9 earlier. Here's Joshua 1.8. Do not.

[16 : 59] Do not. Do not. Let this book of the law. Depart from your mouth. Meditate on it. Day and night. So that you may be careful.

To do. Everything. Written in it. Then you will be prosperous. And successful. So we're not looking at a two minute quiet time.

In the morning. Or in the evening. Or both. And we're certainly not limiting it. To two minutes. Our quiet times.

Should be mold. Molding us in. And changing our lives. Each and every day. This is time with God.

You. And your heavenly father. The blessed man is changed more. And more blessing is then received.

[18 : 08] He wants to. The blessed man wants to live a better life. With God. Not a life. Of the mockers. Not a life.

Of the sinners. And not a life. Of the wicked. Let's move on. We're just coming into the season of spring.

Ish. You kind of get four seasons in one day. At this time of year. Hey. The Lord is providing sunshine. I see blue skies out these windows. So the leaves will start coming onto the trees again.

I love spring. It's my favorite part. So we all see trees regularly. Along the bypass. You see woods.

And all this sort of thing. The tea woods up the pentlands. Now I'm not a tree hugger. Or a tree surgeon. Or anything like that. But at primary school.

[19 : 10] Did you do this? Bark rubbing? Eh? A few. A few nodding heads. And here in verse three. The blessed man is like a tree.

Planted by streams of water. That yields its fruits. In its season. And its leaf. Does not wither. So it's a metaphor.

So we have a tree here. That is healthy. Because it has a constant source. Of water.

It never thirsts. Because the stream is continuous. The tree then. Bears fruit for the other people.

The fruit doesn't grow for itself. Now the fruit that a blessed man produces. Makes him more Christ-like.

[20 : 12] More like God. To be like Jesus. To be like Jesus. All I ask is to be like him.

I want to be a fruitful Christian. And I'm sure you do too. The fruitful man wants to bring benefit to other people.

He wants to show Jesus. To his family. His friends. Our neighbours. Our work colleague. And how they live.

How they act. And how they speak. And if we're not bearing fruit. If we're not being fruitful. Are we actually going backwards? Are we stale in our faith? Are we being more of the world?

[21 : 17] So do we want to be righteous? Or do we want to be sinful? Righteous. Sinful. Whatever the blessed man does.

Prosper. The end of verse 3. Prosperity here is not physical. He doesn't prosper in what he owns.

His house. His car. His job. It's the blessed man. That has his foundations. His roots. In God. And his laws.

So God tells us how we should live. In here. It's not just the 10 commandments.

It's in the whole of scripture. So should we look at ourselves in the first three verses? Jesus. You know who I see in the first three verses?

[22 : 22] I've studied this passage a million times this week. And it wasn't until Thursday. Who do I see in the first three verses?

See Jesus. Have a look. Have a look. Then verse 4 and 5.

The wicked are not so. But are like chaff. That the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand.

In the congregation. Of the righteous. So here we've gone from one man. To another man. Being wicked. Similar verse in Job.

Job 21.18. Are they like straw before the wind. Like chaff. Swept away by the gale. And the blessed man has.

[23 : 21] And does. The wicked do not. That I mentioned earlier. Now the chaff is the part of the wheat. That when you toss it in the air.

It blows away. Chaff's useless. It's a useless part. The chaff doesn't benefit anyone. So people that reject God.

And God's laws. Are the chaff. They're like the opposite.

Of the blessed man. The chaff is unattractive. Not loving God. Going it alone. Chaff is never going to stand up.

Against God. Only God. Can change. And then we go into verse 5.

[24 : 26] We kind of have a. Or I visited. A picture of a kind of courtroom. God's courtroom. Where the chaff. The wicked. The scornful. The mockers.

The sinners. Are in the dock. The courtroom is. Real. Solid. It is the law. And God.

Will judge. And announce. His judgment. Upon them. And. It kind of shows me. That bad people don't.

In the end. Get away with their wickedness. But I think it's really. Really important. To realize.

And remember. That it may be. That we. You and me. May be in. With the bad. People. For all have sinned.

[25 : 28] And fallen short. Of the glory. Of God. So. Let's move down again. Therefore. The word.

Therefore. Is used. Here. And. Indicates. The psalm. Is about to conclude. It's coming to an end. The wicked. Will not.

Stand. They will not. Be in the assembly. Or. Congregation. Of the righteous. So. They will miss out. When the judgment comes.

The wicked. Will be excluded. From God's. Kingdom. Some may look to be. Excluded.

- And. Are. In fact. Included. Because only God. Can judge. Not you or me.
- [26 : 24] Only God. So. We have two choices. The first.
- Being the way. Of the righteous. Where. God. Justifies them. The sin. Has been washed away. Justified. Through faith.
- The Lord. Will guard. His people. He loves you. And. He wants to take care of you.
- The righteous man. Prospers. So. That's the first. The second choice. Being of the wicked.
- They will perish. Says it. That path. Will lead to destruction. So.
- [27 : 23] We're righteous. Or we're wicked. One extreme. Or the other. You know. I have a close friend. Who's not a Christian.
- We are. He was my best man. At my wedding. And. And we meet up. Every so often. And we chat.
- About things like. Really. Unimportant things. Like. Football. He's as daft as me. Because he's a jambo.
- But no. We meet up. And we talk about. Different things. He's got a partner. He's not married. He's got two children.
- Like I do. And every so often. I discuss my faith. With Al.
- [28 : 25] He chooses not to follow Jesus. That makes him. The wicked. Seems quite brutal.
- Really. Doesn't it? Wicked. He's a lovely guy. It's good fun. Great morals.
- Friendly sort of guy. But he is of the wicked. Wicked. Now both you and I. Will have members of our family.
- Possibly very close. That. Are of the wicked. So we need to keep praying.
- We need to keep praying. That they change. We want them to follow Christ. We want the best.
- [29 : 36] For them. The best. Anyone can ever have. Is faith. And to follow Christ. So we all need to look at ourselves.
- I need. To look at myself. To be like Jesus. To be like Jesus.
- All I ask. Is to be like him. All through life's journey. From earth to glory. All I ask.
- Is to be like him. We are all sinners. But by God's grace. Through faith.
- And in accepting. Jesus into our lives. We can be part of the assembly. Of the righteous. Having Jesus.
- [30 : 40] In our lives. We can be. In the assembly. Of the righteous. We can put our trust.
- In Jesus. And become. The righteous. Man. So if you're here today. And you don't have faith in God.
- Then I'd ask you. To please seriously. Think about that. And if you're in Christ.
- You are. A new creation. 2 Corinthians 5. 17. Therefore. If anyone is in Christ.
- The new creation. The new creation has come. The old is gone. It's bolted. The new. Is here.
- [31 : 43] So are you happy? Are you blessed? Do you meditate? Do you meditate?
- On scripture. Day. And night. God's word. It's precious. Do you want to be part.
- Of the assembly. Of the righteous. What's the desire. Of your heart. This morning. Karen.
- Just mentioned it. In prayer. You heard. Karen pray. For God. So loved the world.

That he gave. One and only son. That whoever believes in him.

[32 : 44] Shall. Not. Perish. Not. Perish. But have eternal life.

So delight. In your loving. Heavenly father. Delight. In.

Jesus. We started this morning. With blessed. And we're going to end it.

With blessed. Let's sing together. Blessed assurance. Jesus is mine. Oh what a foretaste.
Of glory divine. Let's stand and sing.

Thank you everybody.

[33 : 37] To the singers. To Ian. To everybody. Had input this morning. Let's pray. May the Lord
bless you. And keep you. The Lord make his face.

To shine upon you. And be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance. Upon you.
And give you. His peace. Through Jesus Christ.

Our Lord. Our saviour. Our all in all. Amen.