

The Old Paths

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“Psalm One”

Jarrod Jacobs

The Psalms of David are often very encouraging to us. They provide us with comfort, with a source of strength, and provide much-needed lessons concerning God and our own faithfulness. In the first psalm, we see a great contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous. We also see their end contrasted in no uncertain terms. Let us read Psalm one, and then let us consider some lessons we can apply to our lives.

“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. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

Contrasting Two People

Please take note that when we read Psalm one, we are reading about two distinct people. One

person is considered “blessed” by God while the other is not. What made one person “blessed” and the other not “blessed” (“cursed”)? The reason for this contrast is seen in what the men did. The blessed man avoided sin and evil, as well as spent time in God’s word, and acted on it (i.e., was “fruitful”). The other man did not do this, but in fact, did the opposite.

In reality, the Bible makes it plain that people will either be “blessed” or “cursed.” There is no middle ground with God! This is made clear when Christ gave men the option of walking only one of two ways (Matt. 7:13-14). It is taught again by Christ when he said, “*He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad*” (Matt. 12:30). Are you “with” or “against” the Lord?

The Progressiveness Of Sin

There is a progressive nature of sin which men often take for granted. Yet, David makes it clear that it is a reality! We see a progression here as one goes from “walking” to “standing,” and then finally “sitting” with those he ought not! Psalm one makes it clear that sin is not static!

Sadly, this is not the first time such descriptions have been made. Remember, Lot went from pitching his tent “toward” Sodom, to living in Sodom, and finally sitting in the gate of Sodom (Gen. 13:12, 14:12, 19:1). Another example of the pro-

gressiveness of sin is seen in Achan, who sinned against God because he “saw,” “coveted,” and then “took” the spoils of Jericho (Josh. 7:21). No friends, sin is not static! It takes you farther than you want to go; keeps you longer than you want to stay; and makes you pay more than you want to pay!

The Tree and The Chaff

An interesting contrast found in Psalm one is the contrast between the tree and the chaff. The godly/“blessed” man is described as a tree (“*planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper*”), while the ungodly are likened to the chaff (“*which the wind driveth away*”). Note the differences between the tree and the chaff:

1) The Tree:

- Receives nourishment
- Is fruitful, and therefore nourishes others.
- Is alive
- Grows
- Prospers

2) The Chaff:

- “Not so” (i.e., is dead; is the opposite of the living tree)
- Receives no nourishment
- Is not fruitful, therefore does not nourish others.
- Does not grow
- Will not prosper

What a contrast! When the differences between the godly and ungodly are explained so clearly, why would we have anything to do with ungodly living? I am convinced that much of man’s problem today lies in the fact that he is not truly considering what he is doing!

The Godly And The Ungodly

Continuing our study of Psalm 1, we find in verses 5-6: *"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."*

To "not stand in the judgment" means these folks will not be acquitted by God. Ungodly folks may come among the righteous like tares among the wheat (Matt. 13:25), or wolves among the sheep (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29-30), but they will not "stand"! *"The Lord knoweth them that are his"* (II Tim. 2:19)

In Psalm 1:6, we read of the end of the righteous and the ungodly. This passage takes its place with such passages as Matthew 25:46; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 1:6-9; and John 5:28-29! In all of these passages, we see that God knows the righteous and the unrighteous, and reserves a place for both in eternity!

Conclusion

After reading Psalm 1, consider our spiritual life carefully. In which group would God place us? Would God consider us "blessed" or "cursed"? Are we "godly" or "ungodly"? Does God look upon us and see that fruitful, growing tree, or the worthless chaff?

Let us be honest and answer this question, because we only have two options! We only have the choice of two roads to travel as Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14! Which will it be?

Friends and brethren, the time for change is today (II Cor.

6:2). The time to make your life right with God is now (Heb. 3:14-15). Do so before it is too late!

"Brotherhood Watchdogs"

Dick Blackford

Some don't like it when brethren speak out against error that is being practiced among churches of Christ. One of their favorite putdowns is to refer to them as "brotherhood watchdogs." There are several implications and observations that can be made concerning this.

1) It implies that the brotherhood does not need watching (Acts 20:30, 31).

2) It implies that some don't want to be watched (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

3) It implies that everything that goes on in the brotherhood is okay (1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4).

4) I have never known anyone who hurled this charge who wasn't doing something that needed watching!

5) Most people who don't like name calling will not hesitate to call someone a name like "brotherhood

watchdog." They, of course, are exempt.

To be sure, no one should neglect his local work. We should be involved in it with diligence. But part of having care for the local church will necessitate watching and protecting the flock against grievous wolves (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29).

There is a vast difference in planning things for the brotherhood and in watching the planners! Since our Lord gave no one brotherhood oversight then there is no scriptural way anyone can make plans for the brotherhood.

It is usually the wolves who are complaining about the watchdogs! God designated the prophets to be watchmen in the Old Testament. Part of their job was to warn of danger (Ezek. 3:17; Jer. 6:17). In the New Testament we are told that elders are to be watchmen (Acts 20:31). Preachers are to be watchmen (2 Tim. 4:5). All Christians are to be watchful (1 Pet. 5:8). This is even more significant in an age of rapid communication. Fret not if others ridicule you for being alert and watchful. *"Blessed is he that watcheth..."* (Rev. 16:15).

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