

“The Blessed Life” - Psalm 1

- Psalm 1 is a *wisdom* Psalm, acting (along with Psalm 2) as a sort of *preface* for the whole Psalter.
- In order to rightly seek God with human prayer/praise, we must first hear Him from His flawless word (Ps 36:9, Prov 30:5) to grasp what He says about the good life and the *way* to blessing.
- 1-2 – Just as Christ will later open the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), Psalm 1 opens with “blessed” as its first word. The two ways, two types of trees, two houses in Christ’s Sermon are likewise found here as the Psalmist paints two mutually exclusive paths: the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked, the way of life and the way of death (Prov 14:12, Jn 14:6, Acts 22:4). The word for “blessed” is plural, meaning *every* blessing is found in this way. The opening of “blessed” is contrasted via Hebrew parallelism with the final word of “perish” (v6). In between, there’s *several* parallels: “walk, stand, sit” / “counsel, way, seat” / “wicked, sinners, mockers” (some see progression, but likely a poetic way to refer to totality of circumstances as in Deut 6).
 - App: In order to utter a word in prayer or begin to praise God (as the Psalms intend to help us to do), we first *need wisdom*. The righteous man is quickly explained via stark *contrast* with the way we all know well: the broad path that leads to destruction (Ps 51:5, Jer 17:9, Rom 6:23). Wisdom means looking down the road with a better perspective...
- App: The world has many counselors...are they influencing us? Or are our minds being renewed to delight in truth rather than being conformed to the pattern of the world (Ps 34:8, Rom 12:1-2)? Meditate in the biblical sense on the truth by rolling it over and over in your mind, don’t listen to any other authority when it comes to ordering your life (Ps 111:10, Prov 1:7, 9:10).
- 3-4 – The tree with vibrant life is a picture of life connected to God (Jn 7:37-39, 15:1-4, Rev 21:6, 22:1). The wicked are like useless chaff in a grain harvest, blow away by the wind. Remember, the visible covenant community includes both wheat and tares (Mt 13:24-30). Christ *will* separate.
 - App: Will sin satisfy? Satan’s lie in the beginning is that “you will be like God” (Gen 3:5). All sin leads to the grave (Prov 9:13-18). But the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, leading to the fruit of blessedness (joy, peace – Rom 14:17, Gal 5:22-23).
- 5-6 – The *end* of the wicked stands as a warning to us all. There is judgment both in this life to some degree and *always* perfect judgment against sin in eternity (Ps 73:18-28, Eccl 12:14, Mt 25:31-46, 1 Pet 2:20-25, Rev 22:12-15). But the righteous will enjoy God’s presence as their portion forever (Ps 16:2, 5, 11, cf. w/Num 6:24-26, Ps 4:6, 31:16, 67:1, 1 Cor 13:12, Rev 22:1-5).
 - App: To be called by Jesus to be a member in the congregation of the righteous is a great blessing indeed (Ps 133, Heb 12:22-24, 1 Pet 2:9-10, Mt 11:28-30, Jn 3:5-8, 6:37).
- App: There is ultimately only one blessed man who fulfills this Psalm with perfect righteousness in meditating on and living out God’s law. This Psalm uses the *plural* for wicked/sinners but only the singular righteous man... While not having any less relevance to either gender, this Psalm is ultimately about Christ (Lk 24:27, Jn 5:46-47) – the only righteous man who ever lived (Mk 10:18, 2 Cor 5:21, Phil 3:9, 1 Pet 2:22). The way of blessedness is found not in any of our own deeds but only through faith in Him for the forgiveness of sins (Ps 32:1-2, cf. w/ Rom 4:5-8).
 - App: Through His own sacrament, Christ uses the communion table to point us to the blessedness of His person/work and every spiritual blessing found in Him (Eph 1:3-14).