



Sermon, Sunday May 21, 2023

## “The Lord Knows the Way of the Righteous”

**SCRIPTURE: Psalms 1:1-6** <sup>1</sup> Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers, <sup>2</sup> but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. <sup>3</sup> They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. <sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, <sup>6</sup> for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

### **Introduction: The concept of blessing in the Bible**

Today's text is the beginning and introduction of the psalm, which consists of 150 chapters. Psalm 1 is divided into three parts. Verses 1-3 of today's text talks about who the blessed are and their prosperity, verses 4-5 are about the existence of the wicked and their end, and verse 6 is the conclusion of Psalm 1.

There are various Hebrew words in the Bible that mean blessing. The first is the word 'barak' (ברך). This word means the blessing of being called into an unconditional relationship of covenant with God. Second, there is the word 'esher' (אשר). This word is used in today's text as a word for blessing in Psalm 1. It is also used interchangeably with the Greek Makarios (μακάριος), which refers to blessing in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. This word means that those who follow the right path according to God's Word are blessed. And lastly, the word 'yâṭab' (טב) in Deuteronomy 4:40. This means the material blessings that humans enjoy through all things God has given them.

However, the most important thing in understanding the concept of blessing in the Bible is that the covenant relationship between humans and God must precede it so that we can live according to God's Word and thereby enjoy blessings in the worldly sense. The blessing of the Bible comes first in the covenant relationship between God and man. Nothing else can take precedence over this. Then, what is the blessing of Asher (אשר) spoken of in today's psalm text?

### **Body: The Lord knows the way of the righteous**

Verse 1 of today's text begins with the words, “Blessed is the one.” The original Hebrew word for this word, esher (אשר), means “blessed be you.”

Today's text describes the person to whom blessing will come in the form of negative and positive statements. First, it says that 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.**” In this verse, the wicked are those who did not keep the law and sinned, the sinners are those who do not follow God's will, and the mockers are those who mock and ignore others.



The psalmist's idea is to wish blessings to those who are not with these people. By the way, the worst in this verse are the mockers. Because the mockers elevate themselves to the position of judge (the position of the Creator).

The Bible says that the essence of sin is pride, and we are most wary of pride. The essence of pride is an attitude of life that puts oneself at the center of life instead of God. So the proud person ridicules and ignores others. The reason why such an arrogant life attitude is a big mistake is because it denies that everyone in the world is a precious child of God.

In today's text, the psalmist goes beyond what a blessed man should not do, and it also talks about what a blessed man should do. It is to enjoy reading the Word of God and meditating day and night. These behaviors are what we need to avoid becoming people who mock others. Because, if our lives are filled with God's love and power, which is the essence of the law, through the Word of God, we can stay in a position of humility.

Today, the psalmist tells such people that everything will be prosperous. So, today's text 1:3 says, **"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."**

However, the important thing in this verse is that the standard for prospering in all things in our life is different from the world. As for the standard, the psalmist says in verse 6, **"For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."**

This verse clearly shows that for our lives to prosper in all things, it is only possible when the Lord truly knows about our lives, takes responsibility for them, and protects them.

On Monday, May 15th, my son WooJin, a 7th grader at Indian Hills Junior High School in Clive, gave an orchestra performance at West Des Moines Valley High School. WooJin's violin solo was planned for this performance. In fact, WooJin was supposed to play the violin solo by himself, but some friends wanted to participate as soloists, so WooJin allowed his friends to play the solo part along with him. Of course, it was a great pleasure for my family to see WooJin's perform.

After the performance was over, I told Woojin I was disappointed about the violin solo. It was because Woojini's solo part was shared with a cello-playing friend, so Woojini's performance was not clearly heard. My words made WooJin feel a bit sad. He made concessions and played hard and did his best, but Dad talked about the parts he was disappointed in rather than recognizing the positive part. Perhaps, my son had a desire to be recognized by his parents, and I had a desire for WooJin to stand out more in the orchestra.

Like this, people may have different intentions, but they have a desire to be recognized by someone. By the way, the "recognition of the Lord" mentioned in Psalm 1:6 in today's text means recognition from the Lord, not recognition from people. The way the Lord acknowledges us is that He deeply knows, watches over, and takes responsibility for our lives. But how can we experience these things in our lives?

I believe this is experienced when we begin to appreciate the small parts of life and recognize that we are all vulnerable and face death. Therefore, even if we have many possessions, a life without gratitude is not happy, and if we do not recognize and live the existence of human life that inevitably dies, we will always live dissatisfied in comparison with others. And we will live in bondage and not free from this life.

In today's text, the psalmist says that unlike the righteous whom God acknowledges, the path of the wicked will perish. That the way of the wicked perishes means that they are not recognized by God. This is the essence of the 'destruction' that today's text speaks of.

The wicked do not want to go to the meeting of the righteous who enjoy the law because they cannot hear the word of God. And they are anxious before the judgment of death. That's why the psalmist tells us to go the path of the righteous recognized by the Lord. Because this is the way for humans to gain true life, that is, the way to true happiness.



**Romans 5:1** says, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In this verse, the fact that we are justified by faith means that the Lord acknowledges us, as the text says today.

However, some people do not agree with these words of the Bible. Why? It's because they don't have faith. These people say they believe in the Lord, but they don't really believe in the Lord. Those who are in this condition must earnestly seek the grace of the Lord.

**Conclusion: Please take to heart the words of Psalm 1.**

Now let's summarize today's message. Human life is not long. How we live that short life is up to us. Happiness based on money, fame and power is fleeting, and being unhappy without it is also fleeting.

We who believe in Jesus are people who have found the way to eternal happiness through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must be able to live a life of waiting for God's will to be fulfilled while walking the path of the righteous recognized by God. Today, the psalmist strongly recommends such a life to us. I hope that all of you and I can respond with Amen to the words of Psalm 1 today.

