

Are You Truly a Psalm 1 Man?

Tim Conway | illbehonest.com

Brethren, please turn in your Bibles to Psalm 1. Our brother Craig said he felt inclined to preach from this psalm last week, but he didn't, because the week before that Brother Nathan Rages brought us a message on stability or stay-bility. And Craig felt that he didn't just use this psalm as a launching point, but kind of stayed here for quite awhile, so Craig thought to move on, but I think it's interesting that three preachers in a row have been impressed as I have as well, even before Nathan brought that. I've been thinking much about the first psalm. And I am inclined to take us there again, even after Craig was done preaching last week, I told Craig, I believe I am going to deal with Psalm 1, and, God helping us, let's look at it.

Let's read it in its entirety. "Blessed is the man..." And I'll tell you, if we know Scripture, there are one in a thousand such men. "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. 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, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so..." In fact, in the Septuagint, this reads as a double negative: Not so the ungodly. Not so. "...but are like chaff, that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Churches here are mixed, but as we heard in the first hour, every church has at least one devil in it. They're mixed here. They won't be then. "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

This is a psalm. It's the first one. In it, you saw it, there's two men. There's one called (v. 1) blessed... is the man. And then when you look down in v. 6, "The Lord knows the way of the righteous." There's one man - the blessed man, the righteous man. And then there's another man. And you see him here. V. 4 - "The wicked are not so." V. 5 "The wicked will not stand..." V. 6 "The wicked will perish." We're all here. All mankind encapsulated in this one psalm.

But see, I see a problem right off. I mean, as I read this, and I think about preaching it. I recognize, you - as you process this, that man has a built-in disposition to deny and reject that he is wicked. Nobody takes that term upon themselves. I know you've got certain crazy people out there that delight in such things. But I'll tell you, when really pushed to it, as far as their eternal welfare, as far as their standing before God, men sarcastically will talk about being wicked, or in their pride, they will try to outdo one another in evil deeds, but when they're pressed to it, men say, well, in the depths of my heart, really at the deepest level, I'm a good person.

You see, I recognize there's a disposition. Why? Because the word just sounds too horrible. Wicked. It's too heinous. It's just too bad to describe me. And here's what happens: So, men think to themselves, Ok, I'm about to hear the righteous compared with the wicked. Well, I know I'm not wicked. So somehow or another, what's said of the righteous - it has to describe me. Maybe not perfectly, but I'm in there somewhere. Because I'm not wicked. I know I'm not that. So, somehow I've got to fit in over here. What's said of the wicked man can't possibly be true of me. You see, men, men... presuppositions - their ideas about themselves.

In fact, what's interesting is how often the Bible has to tell us who we are. It's amazing. It has to tell wicked people who they are, and it has to tell the righteous who they are. Why? Because we have a real hard time getting that straight ourselves, even as Christians. Think about how often the New Testament is simply telling Christians who they are. We don't get it right. As Christians, we tend to think less of ourselves than we ought to. And as lost people, we tend to think far more of ourselves than we ought to. We have a real hard time getting this straight. And so God comes along and over and over and over again, He is telling us who we are. What we are. This is why the Bible goes to all these lengths to define us over and over. And you know what? There's nothing that tells us who we are like this book tells us who we are. Nothing describes us like this book.

So, here's the thing, v. 4, the wicked are not so. You know what? If we could just tear that out - we don't want to do that, but if we did, if we just replaced it with "the man of the world..." intelligent, intellectual, wise, independent, fun-loving, free-spirited, free thinking, witty... you know what, we might get more people to be honest. Because the problem is, as soon as the word wicked comes up, oh, that's not me! But you know, if we redefined it a little bit, and put it in more acceptable terms, people would let their guard down. But that word wicked... what about that? It makes us think of wicked witches. The wicked - like the devil. But notice the simplicity of it all. Look at v. 4. "The wicked are not so."

Just think about that. Think about the simplicity of that. The wicked are not so. There's no horns. There's no pointed hat and black cats here. They don't torture people in their basement. What is it? What's true of the righteous... not so. That's the wicked. They're not pedophiles. Pedophiles are wicked, but you get my drift here? This is just: show me what the righteous man is; the wicked man is just not like that. He doesn't have to run around being an axe murderer. He's just not like the righteous. You see, there's only two categories here, folks. And if you're not in the righteous, the blessed man category, you're in the other. You're just not like the righteous. That's it. That's the wicked. We need to see this for what it is. The wicked are not so.

Brethren, this is God's teaching. That's what Psalm 1 is. What we come to right here - it was spoken by David in the beginning, but this is no invention of man. This is inspired language. This is God defining humanity. There are only two alternatives here. You see it. Men are so disposed to think in degrees. Right? It's not just black or white. We like to think in degrees. We like to think somewhere in the middle. That there's other alternatives. But we're not given that. There's no middle ground somewhere here.

See, we tend to think, well, come on, are you righteous all the time? Well, you know, I'm a sinner, but I'm not that bad. I'm not wicked. So, I'm somewhere in the middle. Scripture doesn't allow that. We tend to think that way, but Scripture doesn't allow this thinking in degrees. It's pretty radical. Boy, how often does Scripture do this? It's everywhere - in the Old Testament and in the New. Everywhere! That Scripture comes along and says Bang! Bang! Two camps. You're in one or the other. Radical. No in-between's. That is such the language of Scripture over and over and over. Only two men in this psalm. No middle ground. Either one or the other. We're looking at two men. Just two. You're like one. Or you're not so.

Plurality

So, let's consider this. Let's consider the first four words. "Blessed is the man..." I've got five "P's" that I want to use to describe just this: Blessed is the man. The first is this. The first "P": Plurality. There's a plurality of blessednesses. Martin Luther points out, and I needed somebody else to tell me this because I can make my way through Greek, but Hebrew is out there. Luther says in the Hebrew, the word "blessed" is plural. It's literally blessednesses. All blessednesses are the portion of this blessed man. All things are well with a man like this. Spurgeon calls it the multiplicity of blessings. You want to be this guy. This means everything is good. Everything is blessed. Blessednesses.

Propensity

The second "P" is the propensity towards blessedness. What do I mean by that? Propensity. The desire. We desire this. All men desire this. Brethren, as was mentioned by Craig last week, happy, blessed, blessed is the man. There are places such as Deuteronomy 33:29 - "Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you? A people saved by the Lord." Yes, this word can be translated directly: "happy." The happinesses - it's plural. All the happinesses of the man that's described here. And here's the thing. You think with me here. Of all that God could have done in starting out the book of Psalms, the very first one, the very first line, He hits us with the thing that all men have a propensity for; that all men long after: happiness. We are all anxious to be blessed. When we hear Esau, remember how he was? With his father Isaac? "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" Bless me! That's how we all are. We want it! We want it! See, he was faced with the fact that he was losing it. And he was desperate. Bless me! We all want that blessing. And you know what gives man even the ability to make it from one day to the next is hope that ultimately, he will receive that. Hell is such hopelessness because it's all gone. The blessednesses - all gone. But this is the longing of the soul of man. Right here at the beginning of the very first psalm.

Positivity

The third "P": The positivity of blessedness. What do I mean? "Blessed is the man." Is. I put stress on "is." It's not just that he will be. He is. The first psalm is God telling us that blessedness is not just for the future. You can be sitting here right in this room in this world at this time and be a man or woman of all blessednesses. I mean, you can sit here and be the absolute envy - if the truth were to be known - the absolute envy of all mankind. You have that which all men want. There's a positivity here. It's attainable. In this world, it's attainable. No matter if it's 106 degrees out. It's attainable. No matter if you're going through trials. It's attainable.

That's the thing. Go with David some time and visit the nursing home. Or, come with John Sytsma when he goes over to Nepal, and you look at one of these Hindi people in their seventies or eighties. You look at the old people there in the nursing home. Their faces - empty, hollow, and they're just sad. Why? They've lived their lives. So many promises of happiness. When we talk about "blessed is the man," they're one in a thousand. You know what the other 999 are doing all the time? The pleasures of sin for a season. And those little pleasures in sin, they're saying, "Try me! You'll be happy!" "Try me! You'll be happy!" And you're grasping at the

wind. You're grasping at mist. Because there's pleasure for a season and then it's gone. And you spend a whole life doing that and all these promises of happiness. And you get to the end and their religions haven't done it. Their false gods have not done it. And in all their old age, you look at them, they're miserable. They're out of their minds. They just cuss and they swear and they're mean. You go there. Isn't that how they are? Just nasty old people. Why? Just hopeless. They're getting to the end and everything has proven empty. It's just emptiness. Only fear looms before them. Happiness is one of the most elusive things in this world. You have a world out there chasing it, and few there be that find it. Few actually lay hold on it. But, the promise here is that there is a blessed man. It's attainable. That's the thing. And oh, brethren, don't we hear it in the very blood of Christ. If anything whispers "blessedness," it's that blood.

Place

The next "P" - the fourth: The place of blessedness. By "place," I mean, where is it to be found? Notice this: Look at v. 2. "His delight is in the law of the Lord and on His law he meditates day and night."

Now, brethren, hear me carefully. There is not a text, and you won't find it. Never found it in my Bible - not any of the Bibles I've ever owned. You will never find a beatitude that says, blessed is the man who hungers and thirsts for blessedness. You won't find it. It's not there. Where is blessedness to be found? Happiness is not to be found in just seeking to be happy. Think with me here. What does this man desire? The law of the Lord. He meditates on it day and night. Why? Because in that he finds his God. In that he finds life; he finds his Christ, his Messiah. (Incomplete thought) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. They will be satisfied. Brethren, think of this. Think of this truth. If you grab for happiness, you miss it. It just turns to mist. It slips away. It's only the man or the woman who actually seek for something else that find happiness. Do you notice that?

Or listen to Psalm 119:2. Don't turn there, but listen. "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with their whole heart." You see? We seek Him. We find blessing. We seek His Word. We find blessing. We seek His righteousness. We find blessing. We seek first the Kingdom. We find all things. Is that not how Scripture is? Oh, brethren, that's a principle you don't want to lose. Because men desire blessing. They desire happiness. And most miss it, because they look for it in the wrong place.

Person

Fifthly, the person of this blessedness. Blessings and happiness are not tied to the man's circumstances. You need to see that. See, the world tends to think, blessed is the man that gets a beautiful wife. Blessed is the man that comes into money. Blessed is the man that can afford to get that car, buy that house. Blessed is the man that (fill in the blank). ...gets the promotion at work. But do you notice nothing in this psalm has to do with circumstances? It's the person. It's who he is, not the circumstances in his life. That's critical. That's crucial. Blessings and happiness are tied to who you are, not what's happening in your life. To who you are. To what your relationship is with God. What your relationship is with the Word. That's the issue. Now, there's those five "P's" that have to do with "blessed."

Now, let's just broaden out and think about the whole psalm. Brethren, hear me carefully. This psalm is an entire indicative. There's no command here. Now, I recognize Hebrew doesn't necessarily have indicative verbs, but in the Greek, in the Septuagint, that's exactly what it is. What am I getting at? You don't want to know all about Greek and Hebrew. But what am I getting at?

My point is this: This psalm doesn't command you to do anything. Look. Should you go to this psalm and say, hey, I ought to be more disciplined in the Word. You know, when you get indicatives, they do imply, they suggest imperatives. When you're told a fact, they do sometimes imply a responsibility on our part. That's true. I don't deny that. And there's many other places where you find this to be a reality. But hear me carefully. I am not going to preach commandments to you here, because this psalm does not do that. This psalm basically lays down facts.

Notice, nothing in this psalm is telling you or seeking to encourage you directly to not walk in the counsel of the wicked or to stand in a certain place or to sit in a certain place. It's not commanding you. It's not encouraging you to be in the Word. It's not encouraging you to be a tree. It's not encouraging you to be fruitful. Not directly. You hear what I'm saying. It basically is a statement of fact. You say where are you going? I'll tell you where I'm going. You know the problem too often when you preach a text like this, is people go away - especially the wicked - they go away thinking, oh, I need to do better at that. That's not what this is. This is a statement of fact. It's a description. It is God coming along and He's saying you want to know what a righteous man looks like? Here's what he looks like. You want to know what a wicked man is? He's not that. That's basically what's happening. Make sure you see that. You say why? Because this isn't a pep rally to do better. This is a searching. This is a spotlight shining on all of us. It's not an encouragement to go out and strive, or to go out and run better. This is a spotlight shining on you that proves who you are. Make sure you see that. The issue is not so much that you need to strive harder, as much as it is the living God telling us what is true of all of us.

So, notice this. V. 1 is, "Blessed is the man who walks not..." The negative. Before you get the positive in v. 2. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." You get the negative. The negative is first. Isn't that similar to - I think of Isaiah 55 oftentimes. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord. So you get the negative first: forsake your way. The positive: return to the Lord. Or when Jesus came in the New Testament. What did He say? Repent! Repent is a change of mind. It is that change of mind about sin, about Christ. There's this turning from sin. There's a reversal in life. There's a forsaking and then believing. Calling upon the Lord in faith. We often get this negative before the positive. Why? You know what the danger is? You come along with just the positive and people think I need to tack that on my life. Nope, that's not it. That's never how it is. There's first turning. There's a forsaking. There's things we step back from. There's things that the blessed man no longer involves himself in before we get to the positive. That's the way God often does it in Scripture. Man in this world - evil, he's wrong; he's vile - and God's way is essentially different. And it's not just you staying on your own way, and your old way, and then tacking on God's way. There is a forsaking of your way. And a coming to God's way. That's the issue. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners." Not.

Brethren, this is desire being described here. God's not giving a commandment. There's a desire. And I know, someone says, exactly! Negative. Of course, that's how it starts out. That's what Christianity is in a lot of people's minds. Of course, that's exactly how Christianity is. You can't do this. You can't do that. But, brethren, listen to me. This is not a psalm of "thou shalt not's." This is a man who desires the Word of God, the law of the Lord. This is a man who has a heart that hungers after this. He delights in it. And because he delights in that, he disdains what's against it: the ways of the world, the ways of the devil, the ways that are wrong, the ways of the scornful, the ways of the sinner. They're repulsive to him because he delights in the law of God. That's the idea.

Brethren, we have to get this in our heads. Christianity is not just this set of external laws that tells us don't do this, don't do this... Christianity is a transformation of heart where our delights are now towards the Word and we don't want that. There's a distaste. We don't love what we used to love. Christianity is God changing us so that we don't desire the counsel of the ungodly. We delight in the Word of Christ. And brethren, we find His yoke easy. That's the reality.

Notice the progressiveness of this first verse. He doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked. And then it's "stand." You've got a man walking, and then it's like the man stops walking and he stands. And then the man sits. It's progressive what? (Incomplete thought) It is a digression. It's like there's motion and then he stops and then he sits. It's like this increasing grip of sin. (Incomplete thought) Lloyd-Jones called it paralysis of sin. The blessed man avoids it. And what is this? What does he avoid? You say, the wicked, the sinner, the scoffer... brethren, where are they? Think about your life. There's voices, We have these voices. Things are coming in the eyes and coming in the ears all the time. We see things. We hear things.

Where are these voices in this world? We have means of communication today like they never had in any other time. Think of the channels through which these things come. Brethren, you know what they are. Friends. How often does Scripture speak about companionship? You want to be a fool? Hang out with the fools. Plain and simple. Social media. You can hang out with people. You spend your time there. Brethren, what kind of voices are these? The wicked, the sinner, the scoffer... they're voices that take you off of running this race like you should. They're voices that turn us away from God and godliness. They scoff. They mock at the ways of the righteous. They scoff and they mock at the ways of Scripture. It's all that's adverse to and against and radically, essentially the opposite of what's in v. 2: Loving the law of the Lord. It's everything that's opposed to that. It's everything that shuns that. It's everything that smirks at that. It's everything that slights the ways of God.

That's what we're talking about. What we're talking about here is the blessed man; is the man who looks at the friends in his life and says, you know what? I am not going to spend time with those people anymore. Because you know what? I want to spend time in the Word. And there's something in their lives, there's something in their words that opposes this. And I'm not walking there. And I'm not standing there. I'm not going to stop and I'm not going to sit. You see, it's almost more of a progressive stagnation in sin. I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to go there. I'm going to evaluate social media. If that movie is going to take me somehow away from what pleases God, why am I going to go do that? Why? Entertainment? Oh you're going to

entertain yourself by going and standing in the way of the sinner. Is that it? You see, the righteous man doesn't do that.

Now, brethren, hear me again. I'm not saying, ok, you better size up what you're doing on Facebook and you better size up what you're doing with the TV and with movies and with all the technology. No commandments here. Listen, brethren, what you need to recognize is God is telling you what we are. See, if you're the guy that perpetually has to look at your life and say, well, I'm massively failing there. Brethren, it's not God telling you you need to get your act straight. It's God telling you who you are. Do you recognize that's what's happening in this psalm? He's saying look at your life. If you walk in the way of the ungodly; if you stand in this place of sinners; you sit there among those who slight the things that are godly - He's telling you what you are. Because if you say, no my delight is in the Word. Hey, this is all opposed to that.

And see, if you say, no, I'm a blessed man because I delight in the Word. Ok, there's going to be proof. And the proof on the negative side is what you no longer do. You see, there's evidence. That's the point. This is indicative. This is indicating what is true. I'm not here today to tell you to clean up your act. There are definitely texts that talk about purging that out of your life which ought not to be there, and cutting off and gouging out. No question about that. But brethren, what this is saying to us is not so much that that's what you need to do, it's saying to us, if you're the blessed man, that's what you already do. That's already true in your life. That's already a reality.

Brethren, this is not commandment. This is fact. God is not admonishing us specifically to be holier. He's telling us the truth about what holiness looks like. And that holy man is that blessed man. He's telling us that if you're that blessed man, you're not going to run with that same crowd you ran with. And you're not going to do the same things on the Internet you used to do. And you're not going to do the same things at the movie theater you used to do. And you're not going to do the same things in front of the television. Because these are all the avenues by which those voices come. You're not going to do the same thing with family. You're not going to do the same thing with friends. You're not going to do the same things with radio. You're not going to do the same thing with songs and music. Why? Because look, you've got to bring this home. The counsel of the wicked, the way of the sinner, the seat of the scoffer. This is real. You have to put familiar faces on this. This is not just this ambiguous thing out there. This is your life. This is my life.

And I'll tell you this, what He's saying is the blessed man is a man who suddenly is not doing all sorts of things that he used to do. And one of the primary rationales, one of the primary motivations, one of the primary movers in all of this is not external laws. It's what he delights in. He now delights in the Word of God. And so, naturally, if you delight in something, you don't delight in that which is opposed to the something that you delight in. That's the reality here, brethren. And notice this last one. Because, I think this is key. "Nor sits in the seat of scoffers." You know what a scoffer is? Or a scorner? They're somebody who mocks. And even in the church, we get those who scorn and they scoff and they mock and they make light of anyone they see who seems more radical.

You know what you get in the church? You get these people who they want to keep a clear conscience. And they come to Scripture, and they see something there, like they look at modesty and they think what that means is I need to wear a dress that's down to the floor. And

you know what? They're not being legalistic. They're not coming along and they're not pressing that on you and me. They look at Scripture and they say don't set anything that's vain or useless before my eyes. And they say, you know what? I think TV altogether is vain and useless. And so they're seeking to do it. And if you're the guy that's always out there saying legalism, legalism, legalism! You're likely in the seat of that scoffer. When you look at people who are trying to keep a clear conscience and they're eradicating things, and they say my eye offends, and so I'm getting rid of that. I'm tearing it out and I'm casting it from me. And they're people of conscience. And they're walking through their life and they're going to the Word and they delight in the Word and they're looking in the Word and they're saying my conscience says oh, look what I find here.

Now look, you may look at them and say, you know what? Their conscience has not been most accurately informed, because if you think about other places in Scripture... And you know what, that may be true, but don't mock and don't slight at such people who are trying to keep clear consciences before God. And they're meticulous and they're diligent.

I remember one time when I was down at Stockdale, and a woman came and she had been wearing a head covering before that, and then she wasn't wearing the head covering. I said where's your head covering? Did you study Scripture and you came to another conclusion? She said, no, just because the people here don't wear them. I said you better get that thing on your head. Why? Because she thought that's what the Lord wants her to do. And if that's what you think the Lord wants you to do, and whether it comes down to how you raise your children or how you love your wife or how you drive your car, or what you do at work - brethren, Spurgeon said it one time: better to live according to this Word - how you interpret it and be wrong, than to not do that. You understand what he's saying. He's not saying bad doctrine's good. He's saying you need to live up to the light of the lamp that is shining at your feet from this book. And how you look at it - it's not what everybody else is doing. You do what you believe that God wants you to do from that book. And you seek to live with a clear conscience.

And you know who the scoffer is? They're the people always shouting "legalism" in the church. Oh, that's legalistic. They're just legalists. You be careful. You just be careful. Because I tell you what, if you're that person who's always looking and you're looking down your nose at other people who are really trying to walk before the Lord, and they're trying to walk with a clear conscience, and they're trying to please Him and they're trying to be meticulous to God's Word - you look at them and you call them legalists - you have been sitting in the seat of the scoffer. Let me tell you. I'm not telling you don't do that. Repent of that. Of course, there's a place for that.

What I'm telling you is this: What God is doing is showing you who you are. Not what you ought to be. He's showing you who you are. So, notice his delight. His delight is in the law of the Lord. And on His law, he meditates day and night. Again, brethren, this is not a commandment for the Word of Christ to dwell in you richly. There is a commandment like that. There's instruction like that in Scripture. I'm not saying that there isn't. I'm just saying this psalm is basically - the gist of it is that God is telling us the truth about ourselves. Oh, brethren, the blessed man is that man who has come to this entirely new relationship with the Word of God. Look, again, I'm telling you. Brethren, I am not here to tell you if you've not been in the Word, you need to get in the Word. What I'm telling you is if you're not in the Word, it's because you don't delight in the Word and Scripture is telling you who and what you are.

That's the issue. That's what's happening here. The blessed man - he's the man that it's just not theory for him to say that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. He knows that. He believes that. His life reflects that. The exact same truth you heard from our brother in the first hour from John 8.

Listen, Jesus says it. Again, it's not a commandment. It's a fact. He says if you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples. He's not saying abide in My Word. Yes, there's places where you can find such statements, but there are these factual statements made all through Scripture, that if you are His disciple, His Word abides in you. Not just that it should. And if it doesn't, it shows who you are. That's what He was saying to these people. Listen, brethren, be honest. This is the truth about the blessed man. On the whole, if you were to drag this man into court, and accuse him of being a Bible lover, guess what? There's evidence to convict him. Where are you? Oh, isn't it amazing? The first psalm - blessings which everybody wants. And it's got to do with where the Word of God is in your life. The first first is the negative of that. It's the contrary. You avoid all those voices that are not like this.

But you delight in the Word. You say, I've never killed anybody. The wicked? They're not so. In other words, if you take them into the courtroom, and you say prove that you're a lover of the Word, the wicked are not so. And so if there isn't evidence, the wicked is not so. Well, I own a Bible. In fact, I have three. That's not what's being said here. Do you delight in it? You say, yeah, I delight in it. Are you meditating on it day and night? Can you go three days, four days, five days, seven days and you're not in it? You see, again, brethren, this is not telling you what you ought to be doing. This is telling you what you are. This is the delight of the man. Look, what you don't want to do is walk away from this message and say, well, you know what? My delight is really in video games; hanging out with my friends; listening to the new music. You know, what I find delight in is sex and money and fun... I guess I better start reading my Bible, even though it's not what you really delight to do. You see, it's not doing that. It's saying no, the truth is if you can leave that Bible on the shelf, there's not a panting in your soul after it.

Look, I recognize there are dry seasons. But do you hear what's being said? On the whole, I don't have to invent a bunch of exceptions here. And I don't have to define this in super amounts of detail. Because God doesn't think it's that necessary to do it. He simply says this, the blessed man delights in the law of the Lord and in that law, he meditates day and night. Period. That's what God says. I don't need to amend that. I don't need to add to that.

And brethren, what you need to ask is be honest. Does that reflect your life? Because if it doesn't, the wicked are not so. Like I said, the wicked isn't just wicked because he's torturing people in his basement. The wicked is just the guy that doesn't delight in the Word. He's not like the righteous person. That's what we have here. The righteous man - he hungers. There's something desirable. Why? Why? Because the Spirit has opened his eyes and this Word is now living. And when he looks into it, it's like... Wow! There's wisdom. It opens the window to the glory of God. And in these pages, he sees Christ. He's never seen anything like it before. He might have looked at it when he was lost, but now it's just altogether new.

Don't fool yourself. If you're able to be away from this Word; it's just a dry, dead letter, and basically being in it is a chore. It's like you know when you assess your Christian life, it's like, well yes, I read. Yeah, I've kind of got that in place these last few days. I've really forced myself. I disciplined myself. Although typically, I can go long seasons with watching a whole lot

more TV than I ever get in the Word; and be on the Internet a whole lot more than I'd ever be in the Word. Exposing myself to all sorts of voices. Brethren, let's just be honest. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law, he meditates day and night. And the wicked are not so.

So we have a picture here in v. 3. The righteous man - the blessed man, he is like a tree planted by the streams (plural) of water that yields its fruit in its season. And its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. We're given this picture. And again, brethren, I'm going to keep emphasizing this. This tells us the truth about ourselves. Nothing tells the truth about us like the Bible does. Spiritually speaking, all men are either (incomplete thought).

Have you ever been - I don't know up and down the San Antonio River - I don't think I've seen much of the river other than right here in San Antonio. But I've been to different places on the Guadalupe River. Have you ever seen those cypresses? Oh, there are some downtown along the Riverwalk. You know those cypresses? Great big, massive trees. And you know where they grow? They only grow right alongside the river. You can try to plant them other places, but if you don't give them steady water, they just don't make it. Great big trees, like a great big cypress tree planted along the Guadalupe River with roots that go down into soil that's moist and life-giving all the time. That's what the righteous is like. The unrighteous - a pile of chaff. You know what? When we look at each other like we can look at each other right here. I can't see that difference, but it's true.

Spiritually speaking, if we could pull back the veil, some are these massive cypress trees, planted along the rivers (plural). Rivers. Abundance. And some are just a pile of chaff. That's the comparison here. Tree. Chaff. You see the difference? Your life. My life. Tree or chaff. What's your life like? It's just radical difference. You see, there's no shades here. There's no degrees here. It's not like, well, you've got a chaff-y looking tree over there. No, none of that. You're one or the other. People don't tend to realize the radical difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. The roots of this tree go deep down. This man whose heart and mind and soul - the roots go down deep into the words of Christ. The law of the Lord. They go down into His commandments, His Word, and they're pulling the nutrients up. You see, didn't Christ say, "Sanctify them by Thy truth. Thy Word is truth." The sanctifying power of the Spirit of God comes through - his delight is in this law. And in this law, he looks in. He sees the character of God. He sees the beauties of Christ. And it's transformative. Those roots go down.

The chaff? The chaff has no roots. You look at your life. No real roots in here. You don't memorize this. You don't meditate on this. The Word is not controlling. Instead, you've subjected yourself to worldly opinions. Worldly counsels. Worldly mindsets. All the time, you're being bombarded. So it's very easy to put a little Christian title on music that's otherwise just ungodly. We can Christianize just about everything. But the truth is, the man who spends a lot of time in this Word - he can smell out the difference. He's not just looking at the name because you can be like Sardis. You can have a name, but you're dead. And the person whose heart and mind and soul are down in the depths of this moisture-rich soil of the Word of Christ, they can tell those things. Because it gives them discernment. They see.

Which are you? A tree versus chaff. They have nothing in common. The tree is fruitful. The fruits of the Spirit. You see, there's a person who spends a lot of time in this book. Their roots are planted here. And that Word abides in them. It stays. They're not hearers only. But

they're doers. And they go forth and as they do the Word, this fruit of the Spirit, they go up and it's rich. By this, our Father is well pleased, that we bring forth much fruit. There's an abundance of fruit. Love - the fruit of love. And there's joy. And there's the fruits of the Spirit. Chaff is not fruit. Chaff is the stuff on the outside of the kernel or the grain. It's the stuff that gets taken off and it's winnowed away. The wind blows it away. You don't want it. It's useless. There's no good use for it. Nothing like a tree at all. It's entirely different. There's no roots. There's no fruit. The fruit that it brings forth - the fruit in this person's life is really useless.

So, the question is this, will you be honest with yourself? Is the Word of God your light? Your sustenance? Your love? Your portal into the very mind of Christ? Is that not what we're told? We have the mind of Christ. I can go into the recesses of the mind of Christ in this book. And the Spirit reveals and teaches me. Brethren, is that what it is? The window into the very glories of God? The wicked are not so. Let's be honest. Be honest. You say, wow, if I'm going to be honest, I'm in the category of the wicked. It makes me very uncomfortable. I don't like that title. But I don't know much how I can put myself in this other camp. How do I get to where you're saying the blessed man is?

Notice v. 3. "He is like a tree planted by streams of water." Isn't that interesting that God moves David (incomplete thought); We know that some trees - a seed falls. It germinates. And you get a tree. But you know what's interesting? That's not the picture. The picture is of a tree that gets planted. I've planted a lot of trees. Trees just don't end up there, unless they get planted. And a tree doesn't plant itself. Someone puts it there. And there's only one way that you get planted. See, this is what I don't want to have happen. Don't say to yourself I'm not like that, so I better get my act together and get like that.

And so you know what I'm going to do? I am going to go home and even though I haven't been in the Word much and there's dust on the cover. And Spurgeon said one place many of you can write damnation in the dust on your Bibles. The way out of this is not to go home and clean the dust off and open it. Reading Scripture is not how you get planted. I'm not saying it's a bad thing. You can find the Christ in these words. Undoubtedly. But brethren, the ticket here... The path is not to say, well, I better start coming to church more. Better get in the Word more. I better start doing, doing, doing. Don't say that to yourself. Though I would really rather play video games and watch movies and spend endless hours on Facebook. And though I'd rather hang out with my friends and do a thousand other things. I better force myself into the Bible. Though I find it dull and lifeless, for me - life, vigor, living it up... it's watching the game. It's in sports. It's in freedom. That's where it is. Even though I really don't have a love for the brethren. I don't have a love for the breaking of bread and remembering Christ and what He did and singing those songs. I don't really have a love for all that. I don't have a love for the apostle's doctrine and for that preaching that goes on, and for the Word, and no love of prayer. But I better get my act together because I don't want to lose my soul.

Brethren, look, you don't need religion. That's not how you get planted. I think, "And can it be?" You remember Charles Wesley? John Wesley? George Whitefield? You remember where they were? The holy club. They gave their money. They visited people in prison. And you know what, in the end, the Spirit of God convicted them all - it was a hopeless path, and they were helpless. Religion is never the way. We talked about Luther. Blessednesses - Luther tried

it. Went to the monastery. Religion never works. That's not the ticket. That's not how you get planted.

You say, how? Tell me. Tell me. The answer is this: it's found in John 3:3. It's, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Yeah, but you didn't tell me anything to do. Again, you're just stating the fact. What does this look like? Brethren, here's what it looks like. Jesus said - same discourse - When the Spirit comes, He is going to convict men of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. And you know what happens? God plants us. And you know what happens? Sin. Something begins to happen, and the Spirit causes it to happen. You think about it. Conviction. Where does that happen? You might say the conscience. But it happens in the mind. The Spirit begins to cause us to think different. Suddenly, sin... sin!

And maybe at first, you're even agitated. That was what was true with me. Not that I'm the standard, but I remember in the very beginning, this emptiness; this hollowness. And I just wanted Him to leave me alone. God, leave me alone and let me go back and enjoy... and much like Pilgrim in Pilgrim's Progress, you get worldly wise men. Go try religion. And that's where he went. He went hiking up there. Sometimes we get upset. But brethren, I remember clearly the night the Spirit of God showed me my sin was wicked and I deserved hell, and if God didn't put me there - and you see, that's the conviction that comes. We start to feel this weight of sin. Salvation has to do with sin. And Jesus said that He did not come for the well. And it is not until we're unwell - and it's the Spirit of God who causes that to happen. Not just to freak out because we happen to hear a message and it says I must be one of the wicked. Brethren, it's when you want your sin dealt with. It's the Spirit of God causing something to happen; beginning to disturb us. Sin becomes disturbing. We can't just coddle with it anymore. Something is happening. Something begins to happen.

And maybe at first, you don't know that it's God that's doing it. But something begins to happen to you. And something that never happened before. Something that hasn't happened like this before. And then, righteousness... there's this desperate sense - this in itself isn't salvation, because I have a feeling the rich, young ruler felt this. But you begin to get this sense: something's missing. I need more than I have to get right with God. Do we know that religion isn't doing it? You see, that's what the Wesley's and Whitefield were trying. This holy club. They were trying to do all their stuff. But John Wesley looked at those Moravians, and he said, I'm missing something. Something isn't there.

You see, the Spirit convicts of sin, and righteousness - or a lack of our righteousness. The fact we need more than we have. The fact we need something. And then judgment. I'm not ready to stand before God. I'm not ready for this. I'm not ready. And then something is happening in the soul. Brethren, it doesn't always look identical in everybody, but that's what Christ said that the Spirit of God would do. And that's what happens. When people are being born again, the Spirit of God is doing something in the heart of men concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. And then you know what happens. He came to exalt Christ. And there, in our despair, is all the crutches, and all the counsels, and all the things we rested on, and all our hopes and all that we put our stock in. It's just crumbling away and we can't find... I need something else. And sometimes the Spirit of God lets people get to an amazing place of despair.

But look, it doesn't matter how much. That's not the issue. The issue is that then the Spirit causes the scales to fall off. That's what happened to Paul. The scales fell off. If you've got it in 2 Corinthians, it's like the veil is pulled back. And just like God said in the beginning, let there be light. He shows us this glorious light in the very face of Jesus Christ.

And you know what begins to happen? We hear this message of salvation and the Spirit speaks to us. It's for you. It's for you. It's relevant to you. This crucified Christ. And we see that. We see that this message is for us. We hear those life-giving words. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. And like that lady, we become convinced, if I can just touch the hem of His garment, I'll be healed. Brethren, that's what happens. We accept the truth. You accept the truth that Christ Jesus came into the world to die for sinners. And that is music to your ears. That there is a way; there is a remedy; there is a Doctor; there is a way to be healed. You believe that truth for you. And you will come to look up and recognize God has planted me beside these waters and I long after that book and for the truths and the promises in it and the Word of Christ. Brethren, it's not a psalm of commandments. It's a psalm that says it like it is. The Word of God shows us who we are.

Father, I pray this message would go deep into the hearts. Lord, if there are imperatives and responsibilities and instruction for us to take practically to apply to our lives. Then may it be taken and may it be practiced and may it be applied. But Lord, I pray that this Word would be what it seems like You intended it to be. A light to shine and expose and reveal the very character of every one of us in this room. And I pray that it would have that effect. I pray it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.