

The God Who Sees

Pastor Matthew Ude

June 16, 2024

Psalm 1:1-6 Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. ⁴ The ungodly *are* not so, But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

What does it mean to be blessed?

Abraham listened to his wife Sarah and lay with her maid Hagar. When Hagar had a son, she became haughty towards Sarah. Sarah in turn "treated her harshly." Hagar took her son and fled into the wilderness.

This is the result of sin. This is what sin does, it divides people and causes them to feel alone. But the Lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness and promised to be with her and the child. So, Hagar named the place "Beer-lahai-roi," because Yahweh is the God who sees.

Hagar was never wealthy. She was never successful in any way that this world would consider success. But she considered herself blessed, because she knew that the Lord saw her and was with her.

The Lord saw her sin. The Lord saw her pain and suffering. The Lord forgave her, had mercy on her and watch over her. This is what it means to be blessed.

I mentioned last Monday an online anonymous. In this post a woman confesses how she had cheated on her husband. She talked about how much she hated herself for what she had done, but that she would never tell her husband. As long as this woman keeps this secret she will always feel alone and isolated. That was how Hagar felt until the Lord talked to her, and she understood that the Lord saw her, forgave her and loved her.

It is tempting in the reading of Psalm 1 to think the one who does the commandments of the Lord will become wealthy, popular, successful. But the ultimate expression of the Psalm is found in the very last verse.

Psalm 1:6 "the LORD knows the way of the righteous"

It is the one who is seen by the Lord who is blessed.

It is not in the keeping of the commandments that we find the riches of life. It is in the presence of the Lord that we find the blessing of walking in his countenance. This blessing of living in his presence comes from the righteousness of his mercy, not the righteousness of our lives. That man is blessed who as

Hagar says the Lord sees. He is blessed upon whom as we hear in the benediction the face of the Lord shines. As Jesus told Martha, she has chosen the better thing who sits in the presences of the Lord.

Psalm 84:10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

The Lord knows the way of the righteous therefore they are not alone but walk in his presence.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

Walking, sitting, standing in the presence of sinners is not a blessing. Solomon reminds us in Proverbs:

Proverbs 9:12 "If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, And if you scoff, you will bear it alone."

The consequences of your choices are yours to bear alone.

We often fall into this trap of thinking, "everyone else is doing it," so it can't be that bad. There is huge pressure to join in the lifestyle of the people around us, partially because we don't want to be isolated and alone, but God warns when the consequences come you will bear them alone. If you chose to scoff at wisdom, you will bear the consequences. The fact that everyone else is doing it will not change the consequences for you.

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul who sins shall die.

Living in the presence of sinners is not a blessing.

Rather the Lord would have us live in his presence. In the presence of the one who was and is willing to bear our sin upon himself we are never alone.

Psalm 1:2 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

There are a couple different ways that people approach God's word. The way that you approach God's word is going to drastically change how you view this verse.

You can approach God's word as a source of earthly wisdom, a self-help book. Such people will see in this verse an encouragement to search scripture for principles to make their earthly life more successful.

You can approach God's word as a guide to create your own righteousness. Such people will see in this verse a command to keep God's law and be holy in themselves.

You can approach God's word to please God. If I do what he says he'll be happy with me. Such people see reading the bible as putting in your time, so you can get the prize. This reminds me of that one scene from Pirates of the Caribbean.

Ragetti is reading the bible in the rowboat.
Pintel says, "You know you can't read."
Ragetti responds, "It's the Bible; you get credit for trying."

Or you can approach the word of God to see the face of God. You can search it not for principles and laws but to know God and the wonderful things he has done for you. Like Mary you can sit at Jesus feet to see his face. Like the Emmaus disciples you can hear how all the scripture bears witness about the Christ.

The verses says he is blessed who "delights in the law of the Lord." Of all these approaches which person is going to delight in receiving God's word? Our delight comes not from a list of commandments but from seeing the grace and mercy and promises of our God. Our delight comes from beholding his wonderful works.

When I was a kid, I did those reading challenges over the summer and my prize was a free personal pan pizza. Sometimes we view this verse the same way. I'm going to put in my time reading scripture and God is going to give me a prize.

The blessing of the Lord is not a thing separate from scripture which the Lord gives you because you have put in enough time, the blessing is his word. In his word we receive the forgiveness of sins, in which we learn to know God's face, and by which we walk with God.

Psalm 1:3 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

This verse does not promise us riches and earthly success and glory. A tree planted by a river also endures storms, blizzard, heat, tornados, earthquakes, fires etc. just as a tree which is not planted by a river. The difference is that the one by the river has a constant source of life and strength it endures when other trees might wither and die.

So too is the one who lives in the presence of God. They may suffer great hardship and loss, but they endure because they have a source of life and strength which is God's word.

Psalm 46:4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,

This is what we see in the life of Hagar. There is no reason to believe that Hagar's life instantly got better when she returned to Sarah, but she was strengthened by the God who saw her. She had drunk of that water of life which Jesus spoke about to the Samaritan woman.

They are blessed who live in God's word because they are always before his face.

Psalm 1:4-6 4 The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The Lord sees and knows the way of the righteous. That is, those whom he has called and gathered through his word to be his people and are righteous through Christ, they are always before his face.

Jesus reminds us that the Good Shepherd, "**calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.**" John 10:3

Psalm 1 offers us a choice, to live and walk among the sinners, or to live and walk before the face of the Lord. Amen.