

Title

The Blessed & the Wicked (2 part sermon)

Introduction

I've chosen to preach Ps 1, which I think Tshepo has preached on as some time ago.

Why repeat it?

Because you and I must apply this Psalm

Because I believe this Psalm holds the keys to being blessed, to being happy, to being successful in God's sight

It is such an encouraging psalm that lays down the foundation for your and my life.

As I prayed, this psalm was really something I would like to apply in my own life and I would love each of you to apply in your lives.

Many of you would have received some kind of statement that would include the phrase **happy new year.**

What does this really mean?

Is it simply we wish you all the best?

Is it that we wish you to be prosperous and successful and what does that really mean?

Many of us at the end of one year beginning the new year make plans or think about plans to change something in our lives.

You call them new year resolutions.

- Maybe to exercise more and eat less
- To make more money
- To spend more time with your family, your girlfriend or what ever
- To be happier, and prosperous

Sadly, these decisions often don't last.

What happens next is normally a party, lots of drink, fireworks and then the next morning trouble

- You have a hangover
- You did not sleep well so you fight with your family
- Your neighbour has reported you because you disturbed their pets
- You're angry

This may be how the world enters the new year, but is this what God intended?

What does it mean to be the happy man, the blessed man from the biblical perspective?

Our passage this morning presents us with 2 kinds of people

We tend to see many kinds of people:

- The rich and poor,
- The educated and uneducated
- The different cultures with different languages and different skin colours

But God sees only **2 kinds**.

The Happy man/ the blessed man and the cursed man/the wicked

Even in church you will only find these two kinds of people

Another way to call them would be the believer and the unbeliever

The righteous and the wicked

Reading Ps 1

Historical background

The most likely author was David

- Ps 3-41 except Ps 10 are all introduced “a psalm of David” and Ps 10 was actually the 2nd half of psalm 9

Christian and Jewish tradition held that Ps 1&2 was considered a single literary unit introducing all the Psalms.

It is through the lenses of ps1&2 that all of life is to be seen.

Luke quotes in Acts 13:33 what he termed the second Psalm, but some of the oldest manuscripts of Acts stated it was the 1st psalm. (Word commentary) implying it use to be seen as a single literary unit introducing the psalms

The psalms were divided originally into 5 books, ps 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150

Each of these books end with a doxology(a shorth hymn of praise)

¹³ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!

Amen and Amen. Psalm 41:13 (ESV)

¹⁸ *Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.*

¹⁹ *Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! Psalm 72:18–19 (ESV)*

⁵² *Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen. Psalm 89:52 (ESV)*

⁴⁸ *Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the LORD! Psalm 106:48 (ESV)*

⁶ *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6 (ESV)*

The Heb term “Barak” (Muslims use the term Barraka) has a root meaning: to bless, to praise, to be filled with strength, to adore, to wish on oneself blessing

Essentially every book of the psalms culminates in praise and adoration to God.

Your life in the end is all about “blessed be the Lord”/ glorifying God/ praising God

But psalm 1 begins with a different term translated blessed

Blessed is the man

Happy the man

Fundamentally these psalm 1 & 2 are answering a question.

How do you prepare a righteous King?

How do you have a blessed/ happy king.

The answer in Ps 1 is he meditates on God’s Word (focus is on Gods’ word and the blessed man)

The answer in Ps 2 is he finds his refuge in God the Son (the focus is on Gods son and the blessed King)

You Ps 1st prepare the man and then the King

- A king is first a man and then a king
- You teach the man what kind of man should he be: that there are 2 kinds of man (the blessed and the cursed/wicked)
- You teach him what to avoid
- You teach the man what to think about
- You teach the man the results of thinking in this way
- You teach the man that he will be judged
- You teach the man about eternal destinations

Ps 2

- Then you teach the man as a king to be humble and not usurp God as the ultimate authority
- You teach the King that the Son of God is the ultimate King
- You teach the king to show discernment and pay homage to the Son
- You teach the King that The Son will in His anger either destroy you or that the Son can be your refuge.

To prepare the king, they were instructed to write out Gods word, so as to read it, that they may learn to fear God and obey God.

Deuteronomy 17:18–20 (ESV)

18 “And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, 20 that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

So our passage comes out of ps 1 to prepare the man

Here we find 2to kinds of men

The blessed or happy man and the cursed or wicked man

We will only have time today to spend time on the 1st 3 verses, the blessed man.

Propositional statement

I will give you 4 descriptions of the blessed man, that should encourage you to live in a state of joy.

1. Rejoicing/ satisfied in God
2. Rejecting/ separating from worldliness
3. Reflecting, saturated in God’s word
4. Renewed/ and sustained by God’s Word

Next week we will look at 4 descriptions of the wicked man

4 descriptions of the blessed man, that should encourage you to live in a state of joy.

1 Rejoicing/ Satisfied

¹ *Blessed is the man Psalm 1:1 (ESV)*

The Heb would read

Blessed the man

The Heb term used for blessed also means happy or envied by someone.

Such a person has a deep-seated joy despite any trials he/she faces in life

Such a person experiences something of heavenly bliss despite even going through a hellish life

Such a person is in a state of wellness, He/she can sing it is well with my soul

He is rejoicing in God and finds his satisfaction in God.

The psalms describe the blessed man by what He does

Such a person has discovered God's **right hand are pleasures** forever Ps 16:11

- Such a person has **taken refuge** in Christ and God Ps 2:12,34:8

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Such a person has made God his **object of trust**

⁴ *Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, Ps 40:4*

Such a one keeps the **law and practices righteousness**

³ *Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!
Psalm 106:3 (ESV)*

Such a man **fears** God

*Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly
delights in his commandments! Psalm 112:1 (ESV)*

And the Psalms also describes the Blessed man by what Has happened to him/her

- Such a person has found **forgiveness** from God.

¹ *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,...Ps 32:1*

Such a person has been **chosen** by God

⁴ *Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts Ps 65:4*

Such a persons **strength** is found in God

⁵ *Blessed are those whose strength is in you ps 84:5*

Such a persons **help and hope** is God

⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,
PS 146:5

Such a person is **disciplined and taught** by God

¹² Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out
of your law, Psalm 94:12 (ESV)

In essence, his **state of well** being is the result of what He does and what has been done to
Him.

He is **rejoicing and satisfied** in God, content in His grace.

He is the **truly happy man**

Application:

Are you **such a person**?

Do you experience **this kind of joy in** your soul?

Are you **rejoicing in God, satisfied** in Him?

Are you **satisfied in God**?

If not,

What makes him blessed

Is it by what he does?

This brings us to the 2nd question:

2 Rejecting/Separation

... who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of
sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; Psalm 1:1 (ESV)

The Great commission in the NT is all about making disciples of the nations.

One key element of a disciple is they are taught to obey all Christ commandments

They are taught to do.

But here we see the blessed man is characterized by what he **does not do**.

We see three actions which the blessed man **does not do**.

- Walking which **implies movement**
- Standing which **implies no movement**

- Sitting which implies no movement and comfort, a settled reality

We also see three objects of the movement

- The counsel of the wicked: refers to the way the world thinks, its philosophies, its worldviews, its systems of thought in opposition to God
 - The wicked counsel is earthly unspiritual demonic
 - It feeds the desires of the flesh, the eyes and the promotes pride
- The way of the sinners: refers to the path of sinners, the lifestyle of sinners, the broad road, the path of unbelief and disobedience, the habitual practice of the sinner, what the sinner does
- The seat of scoffers: Scoffer is a chatterer, he scorns and mock, he is proud and resistant to reproof, wisdom eludes him (Pr 14:9,21:4, 9:8)

IF you sit with dogs you will get fleas.

³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33 (ESV)

Commentators see a downward spiral of sin

Starting with being moved by the worlds wicked way of thinking, to standing or not moving from the lifestyle of habitual sinning to a settled reality in the company of the arrogant, mockers that mock God.

An example of this would be Satans counsel to Eve in the garden, cause her to doubt God, to believe the lie, to make the decision to sin, which lead to the lifestyle of sinning and man becoming hostile to God even to point of shaking their fist at God.

Your thinking affects your desires which in turn affects your decisions, which affect your actions which characterise your life, which may lead to you even mocking God.

Others see this as the complete picture of the wicked.

The point is that the blessed man, rejects that picture, he avoids or separates himself from worldly thinking, from practicing the sins, from joining the company of those that mock God. He is characterized by what He does not do.

Also notice that the Blessed man is singular whereas the wicked, sinners and scoffers are plural.

This indicates that the blessed man goes upstream to the majority of people

There are few on the narrow road, but many on the broad road leading to destruction. Mt 7:13,14

Principle

We see that the Blessed man is characterized by what he or she avoids, and does not do.

Application

Walks not in the counsel(thinking)

Are you moved by the wicked counsel, the worldly thinking?

- Bill boards marketing sex appeal, use this product and you will have this kind of body
 - Movies openly promoting sexual promiscuity, self-centred living, making money your master and violence as a means to get what you want, mocking God and his people.
 - Social media, banding together to confront biblical restrictions that are ladled hate speech.
1. Are you swayed in your thinking by what the world thinks about?
Self-esteem, Success, relationships, marriage, parenting, business, making money, psychology, religious belief systems, pretty much every aspect of life
 2. If you say no
 3. My next question is how much time do you spend listening to their counsel?
 - a. The answer will be = the time you spend on you Cell phone, listening looking at Facebook, twitter, internet, social media sights
 - b. The time you spend entertaining yourself through movies, or read the worlds news, literature
 4. Garbage in garbage out.

Lifestyle(way of sinners)

1. Does your life characterize by unbelief and disobedience?
2. Are you believing the lies and living the lie?
3. Choose not to act upon your sinful thoughts and desires?
 - a. Take the way of escape?
 - b. Don't click that key, and watch the porn sight
 - c. Don't look lustfully at that other women
 - d. Don't have sinful conflict with your family member

- e. Don't steel that thing, whatever it is: time, money, even as small as a paperclip
- f. Don't lash out with your tongue
- g. Don't go to that party with friends that you know you will sin?
- h. Don't stay up late alone with your computer on the internet of a Friday evening

This is the happy man/women, the blessed man

But fundamentally you cannot through your own efforts become the blessed man.

Something needs to change in your heart.

Brings us to the 3rd point.

3 Reflecting/Saturated

² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. Psalm 1:2 (ESV)

Heb His delight ...in the Law ("torah") of Yahweh and on his law he meditates day and night.

Vs 1 teaches what the blessed man avoids, what He/she does not do

Vs 2 reveals what characterises the blessed man and what he/she in fact does.

The Law of God refers to more than the 1st 5 books of the Bible, it also refers to the instructions of God to guide mans life, all the Scriptures

Notice that the Blessed mans delight is not a verb but the subject of the sentence

It's not what He does, but what characterizes the man.

Previously God's word was a drudgery, but now it's his delight

His heart has a sense of delight/Joy/ emotional delight and great favour towards God's word.

What is implied is that his hearth has been changed

HE has by implication a new heart.

Ezekiel writes

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the

*heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*²⁷ *And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.* Ezekiel 36:25–27 (ESV)

God has done divine surgery

- A new inner person with a new appetite
- He loves to hear God's instructions,
- He goes to church because God's word is like pudding to him
- He has a voracious appetite for it

Do you?

if not, have you been born again?

Has God change your heart?

Have you come to repentance and Faith in Christ death and resurrection?

It is only if your heart has changed, if your very nature has changed that your desires truly change and can you apply it in your life.

2ndly we notice that other than the characteristic of the blessed man(he is saved) that his delight is in Gods word, we see that He does something.

His delight, his joy in Gods' word implies a **desire for Gods word**, which drives him to decide to **meditate upon Gods** Word.

The grammar emphasises an **inner action**.

The phrase **day and night indicate its** an ongoing reality

Meditates = Heb means to express a low sound, to whisper, to express softly what your thinking to murmur it, to muse or think over.

Here the idea really is **to extend the time in God's word**.

It's like the cow that **chews its cud until** it has absorbed all its juices from it.

Until every last drop of sap has been extracted from it

The blessed man loves **to open God's word, reads it, stores it in his heart**, and ponders it.

He loves to chew through it, extracting as much truth from it about God, as much confrontation of the heart as possible.

God instructed Joshua

⁸ *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall*

meditate on it day and night, so that you may be *careful to do* according to all that is written in it. For then you will make *your way prosperous*, and then you will have good success. *Joshua 1:8 (ESV)*

The purpose to meditate upon it is to be careful to do it, to do all of it, not some of it.

The result we see is that your way will be made prosperous.

It is by the renewal of the mind that a person is not conformed to this world. Rom 12:2

It is as we were taught by God's word, we are rebuked by God's word, corrected by it and trained by it that we change (2 Tim 3:16-17)

But this starts where the mind is renewed, and for that to happen it must be soaked and saturated in God's word, God's way of thinking that infects what you do.

You will not grow 1 mm more than your delighting and meditating upon God's word

- If you ask me how much should you read God's word?
- How much should you store it in your heart?
- How much should *you meditate* upon it?

My question to you then is: how much do you want to grow.

Application

1. Slow down
2. Read God's word.
3. Observe and write down what you learn about God, about your sin, about what you should do.
4. Write down a specific verse on a card
5. Ponder upon it
6. Memorise it
7. Think through how you can apply it in different areas of your life.
8. Brothers and sisters, then do it. Do it over and over again until it's a habit.
9. Ask God the HS throughout this process to provide His grace, His strength and His enablement to apply this and form a new habit in your life.
10. But key: to this is ponder it, meditate upon it

4 Renewing/Sustained

³ *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. Psalm 1:3 (ESV)*

Vs 1 tells us who the blessed man is= He is the happy man, the man rejoicing and satisfied in God man

Vs 1 also states what the blessed man **does not do**

1. He is **not swayed by worldly thinking**
2. He is **not practicing the lifestyle** of the sinner
3. He is **not sitting in the company** of mockers.

Vs 2 tells us that the Blessed man is **characterized by a delight** in God and His word, implying **he is saved** and it **describes what he does**.

He ponders in an ongoing basis, day and night on God's word.

Vs 3 then reveals the results of the blessed man avoiding worldliness and pondering Gods word.

Vs 1&2 flow into and results in vs 3

This man is compared with a tree. ...like a tree

The tree is described in several ways

1. It was planted, which means it was **transplanted from one place** to another
 - a. It may have been moved from a place of no water, the desert and planted next to water.
 - b. It also implies that someone has done the planting.

Here is suggested the invisible handiwork of God.

John describes the spirits working in causing people to born again as follows

⁸ *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:8 (ESV)*

It implies that you cannot save yourself, in the same way as a tree does not transplant itself. Salvation is a work of God alone, by grace alone through faith alone.

God transplanted every believer from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Son,
God transplanted you into the invisible body of Christ
God placed His spirit within you and gave you his Word

2. Note the tree is planted by streams(plural) implying:
 - a. More **water than the tree needs** and can absorb

Streams representing Gods abundant supply of whatever we need for life and godliness through His word.- There is more than enough.

The fact that the blessed man is meditating on Gods word day and night , means He or she has an uninterrupted source of God's word.

Gods word is described in Ps 19

- revives the soul;
- provides wisdom for the simple
- Joy for the heart (the sources of joy for the blessed man)
- enlightens the eyes;
- provides eternal truth
- guidelines for righteous living
- is desired more than gold
- warning
- great reward.
- Wisdom to lead you to salvation

The tree is sustained by the water

The blessed man is sustained and renewed by God's Word

that yields its fruit in its season

Whatever season of the year, winter, summer, autumn, spring it bears fruit

Whatever happens in the blessed mans/women's life, he bears fruit

- Facing illness, responds godly
- Facing death, he responds in dependence upon God
- Facing conflict at home, he responds demonstrating the fruits of the spirit

The Blessed person life is characterizing by fruit which include good works.(Eph 2:8-10)

Good works: meaning they are motivated by the love of God, done according to the Word of God all for the glory of God

and its leaf does not wither

He is an ever-green tree

In good times and bad times,

His soul is not dried out

His soul does not experience the desert experience lacking the life-giving word as he feeds on it daily

In all that he does, he prospers

IN all situations the tree flourishes

In all situations the believer flourishes

This does not imply financial blessing

This is speaking of a spiritually enriched life, a full life, a whole life, a blessed life.

His soul prospers even in facing trials, suffering and persecution

His heart is at peace and rejoicing

We're speaking of eternal blessedness, and contentment that comes from being in the center of Gods will for your life, no matter what God in His providence allows your way.

Application

1. Have I been describing your life?
2. Have you been transplanted, moved from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Son?
3. Have you turned away and are you turning away from the worlds way of thinking, doing and mocking?
4. Have you come to that point of trusting totally upon Christ?
5. Has your heart been changed so as to delight in Gods word?
6. Are you now as a result of delighting in Gods word been pondering, and meditating upon it?
7. Do you see its fruit in your life?
8. Are you growing in greater degrees of looking like Christ?
9. Is God the center of your life and can you sing with the psalmist, it is well with my soul.

10. If not ask God to save you, if your not saved
11. Ask Him to make you aware of your sin in your heart
12. Make the decision to trust in Christ as Savior
13. For the believer, today, If your not seeing fruit, if your not successful maybe there are things you need to avoid, turn away from in your thinking, actions or company you keep.
14. Maybe you are not meditating enough upon Gods word and allowing it to change your affections, your thinking, your decisions, your actions and your manner of life.

Blessed is the man that avoids the world thinking and the sinful lifestyle, the seat of mocker , whose delight , whose inner joy is Gods word and in it He meditates ponders day and night.

I would like to just read one more phrase:

The wicked are not so,

- He is not like the blessed man
- He does not avoid the worlds' way of thinking
- He walks in its counsel
- He stands in the broad road of disobedience and unbelief
- He practices the sinful lifestyle
- He sits with the companion of scoffers mocking God
- He finds no delight in the law
- He does not meditate upon God's Word

We will unpack this more next week.

Conclusion

4 descriptions of the blessed man, that should encourage you to live in a state of joy.

1. Rejoicing/ satisfied in God
2. Rejecting/ separating from worldliness
3. Reflecting, saturated in God's word
4. Renewed/ and sustained by God's Word