

Psalm 1:1-6 (ESV) ¹ 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; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 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. ⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will 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 wicked will perish.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

“¹ 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.” This verse could be correctly paraphrased into something like this. “Oh the joys for the one who never sins.” Or it could be translated blessed is the person who never walks in the counsel of the wicked, who never stands in the way of sinners, who never sits in the seat of scoffers. There is only one person in the Bible who fits that category, who lived out verse one perfectly and of course that is Jesus. Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are and never fell, never sinned.

The Psalms often speak of Jesus. For example, “The Lord is my s_____. I shall not be in want.” Verse one of our passage speaks of the sinlessness of Jesus and the blessings that come from walking obediently unto God. None of us listening to this sermon are sinless especially the one giving the sermon.

When Jesus died on the cross, He took all your sins upon Himself, and imputed into your soul His perfect righteousness. On the cross Jesus paid in full for every single blessing that has come your way from God. So yes, verse one applies to everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ. It points out Jesus to us and it speaks of the life of Jesus in us.

Jesus is the giver and source of every blessing we experience. And they come our way every day as the life of Jesus is now lived through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the

righteousness of Jesus in us that makes us worthy recipients of God's blessing upon blessing upon blessing.

We use the word blessing all the time so much so that it can lose its proper meaning. I have a couple of definitions that have stood the test of time. **1. Enrichment beyond normal quality.** Something occurs in your life that is rather ordinary, but it touches you in such a way that you sense God's goodness in it. I do my best to always answer the phone when it is one of our children. I never want to put them off. I do this because I recognize it is a blessing from God that our children even want to speak with me. It is never a burden to take their call. It is a privilege given by God in my estimation. I sense God's goodness in this. **1. Enrichment beyond normal quality.** **2. Sensing the hand of God in what occurs in your life.**

From the Hebrew we learn the term blessed or blessing means supremely happy, fulfilled with a deep sense of wellbeing. I spoke to Olive Fleming Liefeld this past week. Monday was her 90th birthday. We spoke at great length. For those of us that know her, it is such an honor that we got to know such a famous person with a story that has been retold since 1956. Olive's first husband, Pete Fleming, and the group of men led by Jim Elliot were speared to death by the Waodani Indians in Ecuador; Jim Elliot, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming, and their pilot, Nate Saint. Many of you saw the movie "The End of the Spear" back in 2006. Olive and Walt made St. Mark their home church for several years. Olive told me something that was quite moving. For her Birthday, Olive received a zoom call from all the living children of the men who were speared. To put it bluntly, Olive felt so blessed by God to be able to interact with them after all these years. What a difference it makes to live your life in Christ. God brings good out of horrible events, blessings that come our way year after year after year. **3. Only Christians can experience true Christian joy, not based on circumstances but on God's goodness that can only be seen through the eyes of faith.** I felt so blessed to be able to speak to Olive who spends all her time now taking care of Walt, who is soon to be 95. If I did not know Jesus, why

would I ever want to spend my time talking to some 90-year-old lady. When we live in Christ these Christian friendships are priceless and a means by which we experience the grace of God.

4. Blessing, a deep sense of joy from God's grace in your life. I thought of some things that keep us from perceiving God's blessings that are right there in front of us. 1. Self-pity. When we are wallowing in self-pity, our eyes of faith become shut and we can't see the goodness of God. 2. Self-absorption. If our minds are only on ourselves, our own needs and wants, we can't see beyond our own noses. 3. Self-centered. We hear the story how God has blessed a person and we get mad at God because that blessing has never come our way. Friends, we are to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. When I hear of the blessing of God in another person's life it opens me up to sense and experience the goodness of God in their life. God's goodness can be perceived through another person's blessing.

In summary of this verse 1, all blessings come our way through Christ's obedience, even his death on the cross. The Holy Spirit working in our lives helps us to live obedient lives and this brings great happiness, joy, and enrichment beyond normal quality.

Verse 2. ²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. The blessed man or woman loves, delights in, greatly enjoys the Word of God. God blesses the one who constantly, intentionally, focuses on the Word. You absolutely love to receive it. In this verse the term law can refer to the Torah, the first 5 books of the Bible, but the term law literally means "instruction" and can refer to the entire Bible in general and the Psalms in particular. We are thrilled to be in the Word out of love for God. Life's greatest joys, the greatest enjoyment in life comes from your relationship with God. You will never find anything to satisfy the needs of your soul other than knowing God and living a life that pleases God. All hell

can break loose around you but as you live your life in God, God's word will provide wisdom, knowledge, and understanding on how to stay in the wake of God's blessing always.

The term meditate means to murmur to mutter, to say to yourself over and over and over a particular verse until the meaning becomes clearer. To meditate on the Word is an ongoing action. "The Word of God releases its flavor as we chew on it, ruminating on it over time" (James Johnston, R Kent Hughes Editor, The Psalms Vol 1, pg/. 27. I am indebted to the author for several of the insights in this sermon). I so like J. I. Packer's definition of meditating on the Word of God. "*Meditation is the activity of calling to mind and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is the activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, as a means of communion with God. Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let His truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart. [In Christian meditation] we reason oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief into a clear apprehension of God's power and grace*" (J I Packer, Knowing God, pgs 18-19).

Verse 3 "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." Friends, God plants you exactly where He wants you to flourish, bearing good fruit year-round, and your leaves do not wither. God plants you purposely so you show the beauty of Christ right where you are. God plants us firmly with plans for future growth. God plants you where He knows you will be fed from the rivers of living water that God provides, life giving water. There is an old saying, "bloom where you are planted." As a believer you could live in a desert and still bear much fruit as you grow deep roots into God Himself. God has specifically placed you where you are to be an effective Christian witness.

God promises to prosper you. This phrase is not referring to money, but God promises to accomplish through you what He asks of you to complete. You stay until God chooses to uproot

you and transplant you at the place of God's choosing. "The work God gives us to do in the place He plants us will prosper as we faithfully turn from sin, delight in God's Word and meditate on the Word" (pg 29).

Verse⁴ "The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away." Summarizing this, the life lived without God, the life lived apart from God, the life lived in rebellions against God is entirely futile and compared to chaff. Having harvested wheat since a child I know that chaff is absolutely worthless. It is an empty shell that blows wherever the wind blows it, the way of the world without God.

Verse⁵ "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;" On the day of judgment the wicked will not be able to stand. They will collapse. They will be driven away because they don't belong with God's people (ibid. pg.30).

Verse⁶ "for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." **5. The righteous flourish because God watches over them.** The righteous live their lives in God and are constantly fed by God. The wicked reject God and every blessing that God can give. We want to choose to live righteously with the perfect righteousness of Christ inside. In this we will be blessed in every way, seeing, and sensing the goodness of God, enrichment beyond the ordinary, and a deep sense of joy from God's grace in your life. Amen and Amen.