

The Roads of Life

Text: Psalm 1:1-6

Intro: Book of Psalms is very familiar book

- Designed to show us God's pattern of praise and prayer
- Not written from the comforts of a desk or from the security of a classroom—but from the market place of life! {read quote }
- We all can identify with these men as they went through the experiences of life—just like we do!
- Who has not received comfort from the words of Ps 23—Lord is my shepherd I shall not want?
- Who has not been reassured by the words “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thing own understanding—in all thy ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.
- Who has not cried out for forgiveness as David—have mercy upon me O God according to thy loving kindness!

Of all Ps other than 23—Ps 1 is probably most familiar—stands as an introduction to the whole book!
It does 2 things:

1. Declares a single truth: there are two paths in life and everyone must decide which path he will take.
 2. Implied conclusion: Only those who choose the right path will be able to follow God's pattern for praise and worship—and receive blessing.
- Well—If only I knew which path was the right one—I would have no trouble! Psalm 1 describes both paths, shows the directions they go in, will show you the destination they will take you to! One leads to rejoicing and one leads to ruin!
 - You are on one path or the other—Which path are you on?

I. The Road to Rejoicing: Godly life (1-3)

- Verse 1 starts by describing the man who chooses this road as *blessed*.
- *Blessed*: the happinesses! The abundance of happiness—the extreme good fortune!
- This word used in I Kings 10:8 when the Queen of Sheba heard a report of the fabulous wealth and famed wisdom of Solomon and came to see with her own eyes. Overwhelmed by what she saw she exclaimed, *It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. Nevertheless, I did not believe the reports until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed in wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard!* Clearly she was overwhelmed—even the rumors as great as they were did not do the truth justice! Then she comments, *How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually and hear your wisdom!* (How privileged, how extremely fortunate—Oh, the happinesses of your servants...) That is the idea conveyed here—Oh, the extreme good fortune, the supreme happinesses of the man who chooses to walk this road in life!
- David goes on in the rest of verse 1 and up through verse 3 to describe the details of living your life on this road: What is it that causes a man to have such fortune and happiness in life? How does one get on this road?
- These verses teach us that this kind of happiness only comes to those who choose to live a pure and righteous life before God—and it starts with:

A. Starts by rejecting sin: vs 1 Rejects spiritual compromise with evil—separates himself from sin. This involves 3 key things:

1. Blessed Man rejects the advice of the world: It starts in your thinking! It involves a different mindset!

Does not walk in the council of the ungodly:

- Walk: here is a reference to the manner of living—the habits of life.

- Council: advice, the thinking pattern. Advice is given on the basis of a mindset or thinking pattern.
- Ungodly: this is a reference to those who live their life without God. It refers to those who are careless, lax in moral conduct—and even to those who may be outwardly moral but they have simply left God out of the picture of their life! (Called Ungodly because from a practical standpoint—they live their life as if there were no God. They may claim to believe in God with their lips—but their life is lived with absolutely no thought for him)
- The first step in rejecting sin involves rejecting the advice or mindset of those who have left God out of the picture of their lives!
- It involves a different way of thinking but it also involves a different lifestyle:

2. **Blessed Man rejects the actions of the world:**

nor stands in the way of sinners!

- Stands: to stop, to take one's place, to reside.
- Way: Path, marked and precise manner of living (similar to the idea behind walk—to live your life)
- Sinners: (missing mark—archers) two basic ideas in this word:
 - Those whose occupation is sin—missing God's mark
 - Those who habitually live in sin—miss God's mark
- Supreme happiness involves not just a different mindset but also a different lifestyle—He does not stop and engage in the activities and lifestyle of those who have missed the mark of God's righteousness—the sinners! His life/actions are different than the world!
- It involves a different mindset, and lifestyle, but it also involves a different value system!

3. **Blessed Man rejects the attitudes of the world:** a different value system

nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful!

- Sit: implies permanent association with something. To become a part of something.
- Seat: habitation, permanent position
- Scornful: those who are beyond hope—not just deniers of God—Defiers of God! Those who are actively engaged in promoting all forms of blasphemy against God and who have permanently positioned themselves against righteousness!
- Their lives and actions are directed by a permanent value system that defies the God of heaven—The Godly man will not associate himself with this type of individual or with his value system!
- In other words—Righteous living that produces supreme happiness starts with a firm commitment to avoid every form of evil! It involves living your life with a different mindset, lifestyle, and value system than those of the world around you!
- Some of you may say—well, I don't think I need to take it that far—I mean I don't want to get fanatical or anything!
 - Illustration of what happens to a man who refuses to change his mindset, lifestyle, and value system: LOT! Look at the story—Gen 13.
 - **Verse 11** *So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Lot walked away from the council of his Godly uncle Abraham and chose to listen to the mindset of those who had forgotten God! **He walked in the council of the ungodly** and look where it led him!*
 - **Verse 12-13** *Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord! Lot came*

and began to live among the Sodomites—**He stood in the way of sinners.** 2 chapters later we see where Lot ended up...

- **19:1** *Now the two angels of the Lord came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the Gate of Sodom.* He had come to associate himself with those who mocked and rebelled against the God of heaven! They were actively promoting wickedness and sin and even now the angels of the Lord were coming to judge the city and when they arrived—**they found Lot sitting in the seat of the scornful!** (how different from Joseph who ran from the advice of Potiphar's wife—who refused to live the lifestyle of the wicked and who lived his life according to the value system set forth by his God!

(Well, how can I keep up this type of life—It is so hard to live a Godly and pure life!!)

B. Maintained by responding to the scriptures: vs 2

His delight is in the law of the Lord and in this law does he meditate day and night!

- It involves a love for God's word: Delight—to take pleasure
- It involves a learning of God's word: Meditate—to muse, place one's mind upon! It is a study word! Intense concentration to the point of being oblivious to external things (Lion—moaning over prey)
- It involves a living out of God's word: day and night
Something that is to take place every day—all day long!
 - In other words if your desire to live differently from the world (different mindset, lifestyle, and value system) then you must be committed to an intense loving and learning of God's word so that it becomes second nature to you (Basketball player)
- When God's word becomes second nature to you it will be lived out.

C. Results in rejoicing: vs 3 *You shall be like a tree!*

- Note the results of avoiding sin and delighting in God's word—you will become stable and prosperous like a tree!
- Note that God promises that you will **BE** something rather than **doing** something! 4 treelike qualities that will come into the life of a man who chooses to walk through life on this road:

1. Planted: Fortified—stable, with deep roots!

- Unrighteous are unstable and are like brush!

2. Productive: Fruitful

- Productive life—will bring forth lasting fruit in God's kingdom

3. Permanent: Firm, Faithful

- When the trials and droughts of life come—this man's leaf will not wither! He will survive the storms and buffetings of life!
- (Have you ever seen someone go through a deep tragedy—disease or death and wonder how they were able to go on living? Answer: They are people whose leaf hasn't been withered by the storms of life!

4. Prosperous: Fulfilled

- Idea here is that of fulfillment—contentment. Fulfilling the goal that God has designed for your life!

But as attractive as this road is the psalmist points out that there is a second road that one can choose as he goes through life—the road to ruin!

II. The Road to Ruin: Godless life (4-6)

- Note the contrast that the Psalmist makes: NOT SO the wicked!

- He has just told us that the Godly man on the road to supreme rejoicing is a man who rejects sin (different mindset, lifestyle, value system), he is a man who responds to scripture, and he is described as a firm, fruitful, prosperous tree! Then in verse four he starts off by issuing a very strong declaration about the other road—NOT SO!
- The wicked are not blessed with supreme blessing like the righteous
- They do not avoid sin or respond to God’s word!
- Instead of being like a tree—they are like the chaff!
- In other words—this road is entirely opposite the road of the righteous—It goes in a completely different direction (away from God) and it arrives at a completely different destination (ruin!)

A. Starts by rebelling in sin:

- Verse 1 tells us that the Godly—Blessed man rejects the council, the way, and the seat of the world!
- Verse 4 tells us that the man who chooses this path does exactly the opposite—rather than reject sin—he revels in it!
- Note the word *wicked*: It is the same word ungodly in vs 1. It refers to someone who lives his life as if there were not God!
- A person who chooses to walk this road is described as Godless-without God! He has a different mindset, lifestyle, and value system than what God demands!
- Many claim to believe in God—even sti in church this AM but in their mindset, lifestyle, and value system—they are living as if there were no GOD!

B. Maintained by a rejection of scriptures:

Where the righteous man loves the word of God and learns its precepts so that he might live them out in his life—Those who choose to walk this road are described as those who reject God’s word and refuse to abide by its precepts and instructions.

C. Results in ruin:

- The Blessed man in vs 3 is described as a prosperous tree-verse 3 describes the wicked as worthless chaff!
- Chaff; the external husk that surrounded the grain. At harvest they would place the grain in large flat trays and toss it high up into the air—the wind would blow the chaff away from the grain and since the grain was heavier it would fall back on the tray.
- Chaff was absolutely worthless-could not even be used as fuel for fire!
- God described those who live their life without Him as chaff—absolutely worthless! We live in a world of people who are building lives constructed of chaff!
- Application: Some of you are trying to build your life without Christ—you are building things that in God’s eyes are as worthless as chaff!
- You will find yourself at the end of your life looking back on the emptiness of your soul as all you have labored to build will blow away like chaff! Some of you are living empty lives right now—you are desperately trying to find satisfaction in activities that from an eternal perspective are nothing more than chaff!
- Note the words of Solomon: *And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun? For what does a man get in all his labor and in his striving with which he labors under the sun? Because all his days his task is painful and grievous; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is vanity!*
- Solomon—wisest and richest man on earth sought for contentment with all of his resources! Did not deny himself any pleasure, sex, power, wealth, labor—but at the

end of his life—the wisest man on earth closes the pages of his life by saying all is vanity! Solomon chose the wrong road and instead of contentment—like Lot he found only vanity and ruin!

- How refreshing is the Psalmist's words are to those who seek contentment God's way—whatsoever he doeth shall prosper!

Conclusion: We have noted the two roads presented in this passage: The road to rejoicing and the road to ruin. This psalm has painted some deep contrasts between those who walk these different roads:

- Godly: Happy many times over-----Wicked: NOT SO!
- Godly :Avoids evil-----Wicked revel in sin!
- Godly are guided by God's word---Wicked are driven by the wind
- Godly like a firm and fruitful tree--Wicked like worthless chaff
- Godly destiny is secure and prosperous--Wicked shall perish in ruin

NOTE: These are two distinct roads going in two different directions (to/away from God) and ending up in two different destinations—Supreme Happiness/prosperity and utter ruin!

- Remember Lot and Joseph? Lot chose to walk the second path (easier and more pleasing to the eye) and Joseph chose to walk the first path (harder and more demanding). How did they end? Lot started out rich and ended up ruined, disgraced, fathering the children of his own daughters, and living in a cave! Joseph ended up sitting on a throne, in riches, honor, and great glory!
- This psalm is saying this: Before you can enjoy the blessing of praise and follow the pattern of prayer—you must choose which path you will walk!
- Everyone starts off at the same place—Lot, Joseph, and Solomon all started off at the same point—each made a personal decision and each ended up at a different destination!
- Some of you are facing that crossroad this morning—Which path will you choose?
- Life is like a coin---you can spend it any way you want but you can only spend it once! The road you choose will determine your destiny! Choose the path to righteousness today!