

Sermon - PSALM 1 **The Path to flourishing...**

Notes

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/psalm-1/>

- 2 Paths - One that leads to flourishing and one that leads to destruction
- Importance of getting to know God through the Bible. Delighting in reading and applying God's word, instead of doing it begrudgingly
- Narrow and Wide Path- Matthew 7:13-14
- Fruits of the Spirit
- Longevity chapter in Lead

Intro

Good Morning. My name is Tyler Kirkbride. I am one of the youth directors here at MRCC. It is a joy to be able to share from the word this morning. This morning we are going to look at Psalm 1, a beautiful scripture that gives us a glimpse into the paths of flourishing and issues us a challenge as followers of Jesus.

Would you pray with me as we begin this morning?

Hook

- Oak Trees- Strong and deep roots that produce fruit But it takes time to flourish

What comes to mind when I say the word “Strong”? You can shout it out.

When I think of something that is strong, I often think of a massive Oak Tree. With thick trunks, sprawling branches, tall with deep deep roots to keep it in place and producing acorns year after year.

The farm where my grandparents lived when I grew up, and my family eventually moved to was called “Oak Manor”. Due to the fact that it was littered with big strong oak trees. Oak Manor became the name of our family's organic flour mill.

Right in front of the house was this massive Oak, I was always impressed with it as a little guy. You could see how this tree planted deep roots and overtime and challenges this Oak was able to become this massive flourishing tree.

We are going to talk about how the Bible encourages us to put down deep roots in God's word so that are able to flourish and produce fruit for the growth of The Kingdom

Context

We are going to be looking at Psalm 1 It is one of the many places in the Bible where tree imagery is used. According to Bible Gateway there are over 4000 mentions of Trees in the Bible.

I just want to quickly set the context of this passage. Psalm 1 is the opening chapter to the Book of Psalms. Psalms is a book that is composed of individual songs, poems, hymns, with different themes but many focused around bringing praise and worship to God. There are also many psalms that have the psalmist crying out to God in times of need. Other psalms point to the coming messiah; Jesus.

Psalm 1 often ascribed to David, shows the importance of living a life that takes delightful obedience and meditation on God's word. This emphasis on seeking Godly wisdom similar to what is written in Proverbs sets the scene for what comes later in the book of psalms.

So with that in mind let's read the text.

Scripture

Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. ³ That person is like a

tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

Trouble In Text

- 2 roads - Acknowledging and Avoiding the path of destruction

Psalm 1 leaves us with this picture of two ways of being human. 2 paths to choose from. One path leads to being blessed and flourishing. While the other path leads to sin, wickedness, and destruction...

As we read in the passage in the opening verse. The psalmist uses 3 different actions to describe what the righteous blessed person does. They do not WALK in step with the wicked, they do not not STAND in the way that sinners take or SIT in the company of mockers.

There is an interesting progression here. The man goes from walking to standing to sitting. It seems to be a progression from movement to becoming stuck. Each of these movements is followed by ways of being human that we can get trapped in.

In step with the wicked means becoming someone who has good and bad twisted and is backwards from the things of God.

Sinners. Sin is something that is in each person. It is our default nature. It is missing the target of what God desires. Sinners focus on their own self interest and do not seek to serve and love God with their lives. They are willingly choosing separation of God through persisting in their sin.

The mocker is someone that can't even appreciate goodness or beauty. But are so jaded and disconnected from God's beauty that they are only focused on

themselves. In turn they openly speak words of divisiveness and destruction about the things of God.

This first verse is an invitation for the reader to stop and meditate on how our choices slowly shape us over time. If we choose to walk in step with the wicked and sit in the way that sinners take and sit in the company of mockers, we become stuck in a path that will not lead us the flourishing life that God desires for His people.

The following verses talk about the 2nd way of life that is the path to flourishing. One that's delight is in the Word and things of God. They become like a fruitful tree. We are going to look at that more in a minute.

But I want to skip down in the passage and look at the result of the one who chooses the 1st path of being human, trying to do things apart from God. This is a warning to the reader to avoid the path of destruction.

The psalmist is contrasting how different these lives are. The person who is focused on God is like a tree full of life where the wicked is like an empty chaff of what just blown away in the wind.

The psalmist continues and says “5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.”

We can look back and see how the one who is focused on God does not stand in the way of sinners and that contrasts now with the wicked who are unable to stand when God brings judgment and justice.

The passage ends with the warning that ultimately the way of the wicked leads to destruction. Giving the two options in life. The path to flourishing or withering ruins. Jesus similarly teaches on these two paths in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 7:13-14 **13** “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. **14** But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Trouble in Life

I have heard this story used before, and I think it ties in well to this passage. It is the story of the BioSphere 2 experiment that was done in the 1990's. Where this group sought to see if they could create a controlled environment to grow basically an ecosystem within a dome.

From what I have read along with the issue I want to talk about there were plenty of other things that caused problems.

But as they began the experiment they saw all the trees begin to grow quickly, way faster than they would have under natural conditions. But everytime they found that these trees were dying before they were able to hit maturity.

After examining the bark and the tree's root systems. They realized that the lack of wind and storms in the sphere caused these trees to not have to put down deep roots. Which meant that the roots were not strong enough to keep the tree thriving. Trees need some stress to be able to flourish long term.

Although this is with trees I think it can also speak to our human experience. We know that we live in a fallen world, full of sin, destruction, disappointment and stress. All these things shape us and are a part of life.

The psalm shows us that it is so easy to get stuck in the things of this world, like sin, wickedness and mockery.

The only way to get past these things is by getting to know God through His word.

The result of getting stuck in these things is having no roots, like the chaff that is blown away. Where we just become consumed with sin and worldly things.

As I was studying this passage I also thought to another teaching of Jesus also from the sermon on the mount in Matthew 7:24-27 where it says

“**24** “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. **26** But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. **27** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Jesus is speaking to the importance of getting to know Him through his teachings and actually putting them into practice. This is how to create a strong foundation.

Whereas the one who does not get to know God’s word and put it into practice when the storms of life come they fall.

I can think of a few events in my life that were really difficult and my roots and foundation was really tested. But by the grace of God and by spending time getting to know Him I was able to stand strong in my faith.

If we are not planting ourselves in God’s word we may look good and strong from the outside. But in reality we are weak, we fall into the sin, wickedness, and mockery Psalm 1 talks about and we end up weak and falling when the hard times of life come.

Grace in Text

After the 1st verse gave us a picture of what the blessed person does not do. Verse 2 of Psalm 1 continues to explain the path to the flourishing of a blessed person.

This person's delight is in the law of the Lord or in other translation the “instruction”. And Meditates on His instruction day and night. When it says the Law of the Lord, this means God’s teaching, the scriptures.

The Bible Project visual commentary for this verse, identifies some really cool symmetry within this verse.

That “He delights” in the “Instruction” and on the “instruction” he meditates. Meditating on what is delighted in, and the more He meditates the more He delights. These two lines create an infinity loop. The more that this person gets to know God’s word the more love and delight he has for God.

Bart has talked about the practice of Meditation on scripture in the spiritual discipline series. Meditation as talked about here in psalm is to quietly recite the words of scripture in your head or out loud as a way of focusing your attention so that these words become internalized and ultimately a part of you.

This mediation seems to lead to the path of flourishing and blessing.

The result of this delight and mediation of God’s word “. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.”

As we remember the first verse there is planting yourself in ways that lead to destruction. But through meditating and delighting in God’s word you become planted in a way that brings life.

This verse is full of the garden of Eden language. Being a tree planted by water, bearing fruit and not withering. Comparing this person to a “tree of life”. When humans mediate and fall in love with and live by God’s word. We begin to experience flourishing. God by his Spirit begins transforming us, making us more like Him. We are then able to bear fruit and serve and love God and others the way God desires.

(Maybe add something here)

Grace In Life

I want each of us to take a moment to think of someone in our life, who is like this flourishing tree.

I have had a couple people in my life who I think lived this way. One of those was my grandfather. The one who founded Oak Manor, our family farm. So these strong Oak trees have always been a theme in my family.

He has passed away and that was a really tough loss. But my grandpa gave me an example of strong faith, He was a solid tree devoted to the things of God. He always encouraged me to keep pursuing my faith.

Psalm 1 was the chapter that was preached on at His funeral. His pastor shared about how my grandpa was one of the ones who chose this path to flourishing and serving God. So it has always had special meaning to me to stay close to God and to be in the word.

I want to identify a few characteristics of a life that is walking the path of flourishing. That will hopefully encourage all of us to seek this path for our own lives.

1. **Repentance.** As we read through scripture especially in the teachings of Jesus. We see God calling us to repentance. To be consistently turning away from our sin and seeking after Jesus. Because of grace when we confess our sin and brokenness God forgives us and continually makes us more whole through the work of sanctification. Sin separates us from getting closer to God so to grow in our relationship with him, we should be seeking to turn away from our sin and fix our eyes on Jesus.
2. **Meditating and Reading God's word out of delight.** In all honesty this can be a tough one. I am sure for many of us there have been seasons where opening and spending time in the Word does not come easy. I can even

remember back to Bible college when everything was based in the Bible, so it starts to feel like a textbook and the love and delight for it sometimes withered.

But God continued to show himself to me through spending time meditating on His word. My delight has continued to grow! God wants us to experience the joy of getting to know Him, and we do that through reading His word and asking Him to reveal more of His character to us.

God shapes us through His word. As we get to know Him and turn away from our sin, He makes us like a tree planted by streams of water, with strong roots, producing fruit to serve Him.

So may we seek to read and meditate on scripture with delight and not begrudgingly.

3. Fruits of the Spirit

The third characteristic of a flourishing life is exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit.

The Apostle Paul lists the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22 it says “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness and self control”.

As we get to know God more and more the Spirit works in our lives and brings about change in us. We realize that instead of always being angry and impatient God has made us patient and full of peace.

Maybe you have struggled with an addiction and lacked self control and by the power of the Holy Spirit you now have self control over that.

God is in the business of making us new and transforming us into His likeness. When we walk the path of flourishing through mediating and Delighting on His word we become a strong tree that bears fruit and serves God with everything.

So this morning I want you to think about which path you are walking. Is it the path to destruction or is it the path to flourishing!

I pray that each one of us would find delight in God's word and that we would all seek to live the blessed way!

Join me in Prayer.