



minates in two clear statements regarding God's knowledge of all men:

1. "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous" (6a). The wicked may receive the spotlight while the righteous fade into the background, but God is not blind to the true nature of every soul. The

be unable to **"stand"** with divine approval at the final judgment, but they will be excluded from the gathering of God's people into eternity. The psalmist does not teach universal salvation. The fate of the wicked is eternal exclusion from fellowship with God.

The contrast between the blessed man and the fate of the ungodly cul-

Lord knows the quiet deeds performed by the godly in secret. He sees their trials and knows the good they do. Nothing His people do escapes His notice. He knows **"the way of the righteous."**

2. "But the way of the ungodly shall perish" (6b). When this world comes to an end—when human life expires, the deeds of the wicked will be brought to nothing. All popularity, beauty, wealth, and honor **"shall perish."** The reality of the final fate of the wicked stands as a concluding encouragement to the righteous. The godly man devoted to God's word will not find that his way perishes. The blessed condition of the one faithful to God will prosper into eternity.



Faithful Sayings Issue 22.45 November 22, 2020

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ISSUE

22.45

November 22, 2020

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
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CHURCH OF
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Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ryan Ferguson
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McNear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

"Blessed Is the Man" (Psalm 1)

By Kyle Pope

What characterizes the one considered **"blessed"** by God? Riches? Good health? A large family and friends? The first psalm in the Old Testament book of Psalms offers several characteristics that might surprise us:

1. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly" (1a). The man blessed by God does not look to the ungodly for advice. Having rejected the counsel of God's word, the ungodly should be the last source we consider. If their deeds are sinful, their insights will be equally poisoned by a wicked spirit.

2. "Nor stands in the path of sinners" (1b). The **"path"** of those in sin is their course of life. The choices they make, the places they frequent, the responses they take to different situations all make up a **"path"** the blessed man will choose to avoid. He will neither follow it, nor stand in it, because he has chartered a better course.

3. "Nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (1c). Those who reject the guidance of God's word seldom do so with a dispassionate indifference. To soothe the pains of a guilty conscience,

the rebel finds it easier to mock the truth than to simply ignore it. The man blessed by God does not approach serious things with scorn but recognizes the true source of good counsel.

Having begun with three things the man blessed by God does not do, the Holy Spirit now leads the psalmist to one supreme positive characteristic:

1. “But his delight is in the law of the LORD” (2a). What *delights* you? A lover? A hobby? A favorite food? A law code?—probably not! God’s law is different than the volumes of books that line the shelves in a law-

yer’s office. Yes, it offers mandates and prohibitions, but unlike human laws, every word revealed by the Holy Spirit gives to us the counsel of God regarding how best to live our lives.

2. “And in His law he meditates day and night” (2b). The blessed man doesn’t isolate his consideration of God’s word to a few brief hours on Sundays and Wednesdays. He reads it, reads it, and then reads it again. With every meditation he discovers some new jewel of wisdom from the mind of his Creator.

This devotion to God’s word bears great fruit. The Holy Spirit makes this clear in four graphic descriptions of the results of such focused delight:

1. “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water” (3a). The tree growing by the riverside has a constant and unceasing source of water. It is not subject to that uncertainty of rain. It does not rely upon irrigation or the melting snows of some far away mountain. Its source of life stays always near. The blessed man who delights in God’s law finds in it a constant source of life and sustenance.

2. “That brings forth its fruit in its season” (3b). Doing the right thing at the right time isn’t always easy. One

left to his own experience alone can miss opportunities, overlook serious dangers, and neglect important responsibilities. The blessed man, following the guidance of God’s word bears fruit at the right time and in the needed proportions.

3. “Whose leaf also shall not wither” (3c). Seasons of life wear upon all living things, but the soul who feeds upon the eternal nourishment of God’s word maintains a youthful spiritual vigor that defies the decay of the flesh. Whether he is a young man or an old man, the blessed man of God who feeds upon the rivers of God’s law maintains an undying vitality that does **“not wither.”**

4. “And whatever he does shall prosper” (3d). Most human efforts are a mix of failure and success. The athlete doesn’t always score the goal. The investor doesn’t always pick a winner. The farmer doesn’t harvest every seed planted. Unlike all other human endeavors, all efforts the blessed man makes in following the direction of God will **“prosper.”** No other activity carries such promise.

The Holy Spirit began this psalm by offering three things the man blessed of God does not do. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit ends the psalm by contrasting the hope set before the blessed man with the negative fate that awaits the ungodly:

1. “The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away” (4). It is commonly claimed that the Old Testament says nothing about life after death, the resurrection, or final judgment. The contrasting fates of the wicked and the blessed in this psalm refute these claims. While the

righteous will not **“wither”** but **“prosper,”** the wicked are driven away like chaff in the wind. Is this annihilation of the soul? No. Because the psalm goes on to say:

2. “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment” (5a). What judgment is under consideration here? Many wicked avoid temporal judgments in this life, but none can avoid ultimate judgment before God. To **“stand in the judgment”** here expresses divine approval. Rather than being humiliated and shamed in judgment, those approved of God—those **“blessed”** shall **“stand in the judgment.”** The wicked shall not. They will face disgrace and punishment.

3. “Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (5b). This foresees a future **“congregation”** of God’s people. Who will be included in this assembly of the righteous blessed? Not sinners! Not only will they