

**Psalm 1:1-6**

1 Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; 2 but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. 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 watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

I don't do a lot of sermons on the Psalter. The word Psalter is the name for the book of Psalms. The rest of the Bible is God's word to humans but Psalms is the word of humans to God. It is more like a devotional than a lesson, a form of spiritual poetry that awakens the individual spirit. Psalms is Israel's response to God from a variety of occasions. They can be categorized in many different ways; some are thanks for blessings, some complain of the dissonance, and some ask for future blessing. The Psalms are a collection of poetic prayers that were sung. They were associated with worship as word recited to stringed instrument. Word and music in temple worship goes way back to antiquity. Today the main function of the Psalter is inspirational.

The Psalm begins with beatitude; blessed is the man, and happy are those. The Psalm exalts God's instructions as blessings associated with the law. Those that observe the law are the righteous and they are happy and blessed.

There are two types of people: the obedient righteous and the disobedient wayward. There are two ways of doing things; God's way and the other way. God's way leads to internal peace and satisfaction. The way of selfish human desire requires external satisfaction. Righteous people do not just meditate on the law; they follow the instructions of God. The unrighteous cater to worldly temptations and lead others astray. The imagery portrayed is that of winnowing corn. The wind blows away the lighter parts and the heavier grain falls to the ground. The good is productive and the bad is useless.

The first Psalm is a prologue to the whole Psalter. It portrays two ways of life. A particular type of person that is different from rest of world. People that embrace God have a joyous in relationship. So much so that they sing praises. They are happy to be obedient. They know they are blessed. When you know you have it good, you don't want to mess it up. They are so glad that God is with us. They embrace Gods law and sing the statues. It is a joyous response to God and becomes part of the worship experience. By wholehearted embracing the law they demonstrate loyalty to God through loyalty to the law. It is loyalty to God's way. The righteous meditates and observes God's law. Like tress that are firm, deep rooted, and fruitful. The wicked are like the chaff, they are of no value.

I was watching a TV show recently and a woman was murdered by her husband. Her sister was a nun and she had never met the man. She requested to visit the man in jail but the detectives told her that was a bad. She wanted to offer forgiveness but the detectives tried to convince her that she did not want to meet this guy. But she insisted, and told them that it's not about whom he is or what he has done. It is about her and is something she had to do. It is about her living her life being right with God. By offering

God's righteousness delivered through the nun, she brought a blessing to the tragedy. She brought the love and peace of God to the evil world. It takes tremendous spiritual fortitude to be able to do that.

The psalmist has an understanding of happiness that differs from what is normally understood in the world. There is delight in the knowledge of God. There is enjoyment in the teaching of God. Prosperity is not about getting whatever you want. It is being connected to the source of life. It is knowledge that we owe your very lives to God and we owe all of our blessings to God. The prosperity of the righteous is not as the world thinks and gives, it is on God terms of judgment. The Psalter, like the rest of Bible, is always current within the realm of contemporary society. Happy are those that love the Lord. Blessed is the person that follows the path of righteousness. There are two ways; there always have been since the very beginning. God's way is the right way and is full of blessings and happiness, internally and for all eternity.