

**May 30 2021**

**Psalm 1**

**Children's message:**

This morning we start a series on the Psalms. Trust me I am very grateful for this. I pray the Psalms every day. Almost all of them every day. Psalms are just prayers that are set to music. David who wrote the Psalms set them to the music of the harp or lute. If he lived in India, it may have been the sitar or in West Africa, the banjo.

Let's think outside the box for a moment. I have no reason to believe that the Psalms could not be set today to reggae, country, blues, jazz or rock. That is my challenge to you this morning. To think of what genre of music these Psalms could be set to and make it happen. If we did this then these Psalm could speak to a new generation in an entirely different way. Would they be more alive as they change with the music of the time? They would certainly be evolving. I do remember listening and watching a Heavy Metal Lutheran Liturgy from Finland. There did not seem to be a sense of reverence. Keep your audience in mind when you start this challenge.

Prayer is still prayer regardless of the music it is set to. We are still talking to God. Try to give thanks first to God. David always tried to keep this in mind. He said in Psalm 146 to begin the song to the Lord with thanksgiving. That is very good advice to keep in mind.

The Psalms were the first prayerbook in the early church. It was being used long before the Gospels were written down and agreed upon. Early Christians who could read used the Psalms to pray and meditate upon God and His works. I didn't realize how Irish I was being by praying the Psalms on a daily basis. That is exactly what the Irish monks did for centuries. The Psalms are a beautiful way to speak with God. When your own words seem to escape you use the Psalms.

**Adult's message:**

Psalm one sets the tone for the other 149 psalms that will follow. This Psalm talks about being happy and the blessed life. This Psalm depicts the two ways that we can go in life. There is the way of the righteous who are happy because they are blessed. Then there is the way of the ungodly and the trials and troubles that follow them.

Some scholars have said that David dedicates the beginning of this prophesy to Christ Our Lord. They say we can find it in verses two and six. For this reason, he pronounces those that have trusted in Christ are happy and blessed as in verse one. David goes on to speak of three acts that we must avoid if we want the happy and blessed life. 1. Walking in the council of the ungodly or taking the advice of unbelievers. 2. Standing in the path of sinners or associating with those who refuse to do God's will. 3. Sitting on the seat of the scornful, or adopting the attitude of those who blaspheme God. All three groups are probably good to keep a distance from. David assumes that their bad attitudes will rub off on us. Or that we will be guilty by association. If you sleep with dogs, you get fleas. These three groups do make it harder to draw closer to God. David tells us that if we avoid these three groups, we will be happy and blessed.

David feels that being on the righteous path will bring structure to our lives and a sense of comfort will follow. So, in this way I can see how they would be happy. Some would say a charmed life. This brings up the question of why do bad things happen to good people? We may loop back to this later.

It is interesting that the first word of this Psalm is sometimes translated as happy. There is a difference between happy and blessed. When one is blessed, it comes from above and is a grace from God. Very similar to how the beatitudes start each line. Have you noticed that some of those who are blessed in the beatitudes are in ruff shape? The persecuted, those seeking justice, are all blessed. It reminds us that bad things do happen to blessed people, but God is close to them to through their trials. Our Lord's beatitudes are a great expansion on this Psalm. The ungodly do not have the comfort of God as they go through their trials.

Happiness is different from blessed. Happiness is something we create within ourselves. Remember that only you can make yourself happy. This depends on you and your approach and attitude in life. The people around you can add to your happiness or try to take it away. We call them emotional vampires. They cannot make you happy.

So back to Psalms being songs. Hank Williams wrote a song called the Lost Highway. He said it was the most beautiful song he ever wrote. Ironically, he didn't take his own advice. He lived out his twenty-nine years just as the song tells. I often thought, The Lost Highway, was the anti-song to Psalm one. The song tells of the sorrow and regrets of choosing the wrong road to travel down in this life.

I have been blessed to have good parents who tried to guide me onto the correct road in life. They had foresight to see where some choices in life would lead. When I did not take their advice, I was told that I had to learn the hard way. It only takes a few bad decisions to realize that the hard way of learning wasn't for me. You could learn from your mistakes or be doomed to repeating them.

Reading the Psalms, I often think this is how God is with us. We have free will to make choices in life. Hopefully we will learn from our mistakes. Jesus only gave us two rules to set us on the right road. To love God with your whole being and to love those around us as we want to be loved. If we take David's advice and follow the rule given to us by Jesus, our lives will be easier, happy and blessed. This does not exempt us from trials and difficult times. God is with us at every turn in our journey. We need to be mindful of that. We have thanksgiving to remind us of His presence. Something we should do everyday.

God bless you all and with His grace we will gather soon, Pastor D