

I. The Life God Blesses

II. *Psalm 1* - NCBC, November 11, 2018

Main Point: **Those who love God are blessed while those who love sin will perish.**

- Those who love God (1-3)
 - Refuse the downward decline of sinful associations (1)
 - Rejoice in the life-giving words of God (2)
 - Realize the secure rootedness & fruitfulness of God's blessing (3)
- III.
- Those who love sin (4-6)
 - Are unrooted, empty, and easily carried away (4)
 - Are cursed to eternal condemnation & separation (5)
 - Are unknown by God and on the way to hell (6)

Application: **Love God and delight in His Word!**

Opening Announcements:

- Reminder to bring shoeboxes next Sunday

<<Great is Thy Faithfulness>>



It is good for our souls to sing lyrics like that. While the melody is beautiful and sweet to our ears, it is the lyrics – the words of every verse – that encourage our faith, and deepen our love for God as we worship Him together in song.

Today we begin our sermon series on the top 5 Favorite Psalms of New Castle Bible Church. I'm so excited to enter into this study of Jesus' hymnbook with you. Of course the melodies for these ancient hymns have not been preserved for us, but the lyrics are just as meaningful to us today as the people of God ~3,000 years ago.



So if you don't have a Bible today, simply raise your hand and we'd be delighted to give you one. You can find **Psalm 1** on page _____ in the giveaway Bibles today.

And while you are preparing for the public reading of **Psalm 1**, I get to make an exciting announcement for all of you.

Imagine for a moment that you could have immediate and personal access to one of our pastors or elders who would sit down and assist you with your Bible study at any hour of the day. Or for those of you with young children, imagine if you could just easily access New Castle's children's ministry and teachers in your home or in your mini-van at any time?

While those ideas are indeed too good to be true – we are excited to offer all of you the next-best thing!



New Castle Bible Church has now officially partnered with RightNow Media to give all of our church family free, unlimited access to an online library of discipleship training resources and Christ-centered children's programming.

The easiest way to describe RightNow Media is like a Christ-centered Netflix account. Our pastors are able to vet and approve all of the material – so if resources are available to you on your account, you know it has the spiritual endorsement of the elders of this church family.

This ministry requires each of you to create an account to access all of our training resources; however it is entirely free to each of you and you are all encouraged to share it broadly and widely with any of your friends and relatives – even if they do not attend New Castle Bible Church. Our family loves RightNow Media. If the kids are going to have unsupervised screen time, Jody and I feel comfortable to turn on RightNow Media and have confidence they will hear Christ-centered messages.

So today, anyone who has an active email on file with the church office should receive an invitation to join our RightNow Media account this morning at 10am. If you have any trouble accessing your account, or you do not receive the email invitation sometime today, please just contact the church office and we'll be delighted to help you access this library for you and your family's greater joy in Christ!



Now would you like to know the top 5 favorite psalms of New Castle Bible Church?

We received a wonderful response from all of you, and not surprisingly the answers were really spread out over all 150 of the Psalms!! However the 5 Psalms receiving the most votes were **Psalm 1, Psalm 23, Psalm 51, Psalm 91, and Psalm 139**. All fantastic and worthy of our study together.

Please stand now in honor of the public reading of God's Word, this morning I read **Psalm 1** from the **English Standard Translation**:

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

May God bless the reading of His Word. Please be seated.

Let's Pray.

Psalm 1 serves as a wonderful preamble to the entire Psalter. The author of this Psalm is unknown but it could have been Ezra who composed this song after the return of the exiles back to Jerusalem. **Psalm 1** is a stunning entry-way to the grand estate which we call the Psalms.

In fact the rest of the Psalms simply expand upon this helpful introduction showing the kind of life that God blesses and the kind of life that God curses. **Psalm 1** invites each of us to consider which person I am, as **Psalm 1** presents two different kinds of company you can keep, two different views of God's Word, two different relationships with God, and two different possible outcomes or results from life.

The Psalm neatly divides down the middle in two halves, and its main point is unmistakable:



Those who love God are blessed while those who love sin will perish.

There are two kinds of people in this world. Those who love sin, and those who love God. But here's where **Psalm 1** sings a radically counter-cultural tune that gives hope and assurance to all who are redeemed: permanent happiness only comes to those who love God and find their greatest joy and delight in God.

This world and its ungodliness whispers that you will be happy if you just do whatever you want to do – no matter what God says. Just shake off all restraint and do

whatever is most fun here and now. But this song stands as a triumphant warning. Whoever seeks to live without regard to God is the truly miserable soul. The God-loving person who avoids the way of the wicked is the one who experiences the fullest blessedness and eternal prosperity.

If you say that you just want to be happy while you are pursuing sin – then **Psalm 1** tells you that you really don't want lasting happiness. For treason against God only leads to ruin. Those who love God are the truly blessed ones, while those who love sin will only perish in the end.

So let's look first at **verses 1-3** to learn more about,



Those who love God (1-3)

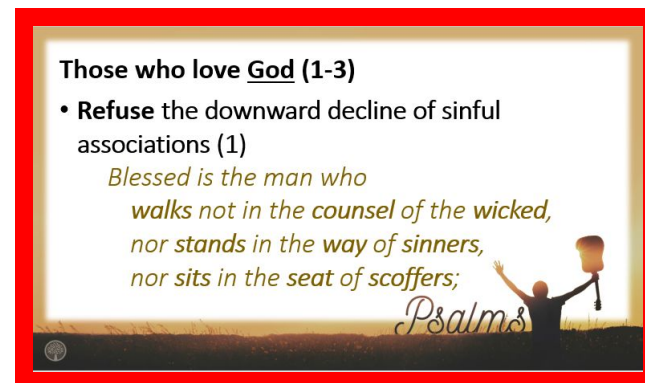
The psalm starts with the benediction – *Blessed is the man...* O how supremely happy is the man... All things are well with the person who... negatively refuses to join in with the company of **verse 1**, but positively rejoices in the delight of **verse 2**.

Verse 1 teaches us those who love God,



Refuse the downward decline of sinful associations (1)

Look at **verse 1**.



Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

Let's meditate upon the 3 groups of 3 – and observe the progression of thought here.

The word for *wicked* is found 4 times in this short Psalm, and is the generic Hebrew word for the ungodly. Those who do NOT love God or delight in God's Word are the ungodly. The wicked are those who see no need for God, and possess no attraction to Him.

Sinners are law-breakers. Transgressors. Doers of wrong. Thieves. Drunkards. Adulterers. Gossips. Etc.

And *scoffers* are those who brag and boast about their sin. The scoffer delights in mocking God and even tempting the righteous. Can you see then the movement of from generic unbelief, to doing wrong, to mocking those who do right?

Then consider the progression of, *counsel*, *way*, and *seat*. Counsel refers to the advice or words of the godless. Those who live as if there is no God are quick to tell you how to live, how to have fun, and how to get ahead in this life. The *way* of sinners refers to more than just advice – but now a path, a practice, a habit. A way of living. And the *seat* of the scoffers refers to the place of teaching or influencing others. Do you see the progression from talking, to doing, to teaching others?

This all helps to rightly understand the progression from walking, to standing, to sitting.

To *walk* is to fall in line with the advice that the ungodly are recommending to you. To *stand* means that you've become comfortable and self-justified and resolved to live contrary to God's will, and to *sit* means you've decided to finally take your seat at the table of those who are bragging about their evil. So once again, all 3 groups of

3 contain a movement from lesser to fuller agreement with sin.

So first observe that living in sin always goes from bad to worse. To flirt with sin or heed the counsel of the ungodly may seem wonderful. It might look like the fast track on how to get ahead in this life. But do not be deceived! Sin will always take you farther than you want to go and make you stay longer than you want to stay. If you walk with Satan you will soon be dining with him.¹

And this Psalm is very clear – how blessed and permanently satisfied is the person who refuses the downward decline of sinful associations. Not only is it a true blessing to have your sins forgiven,² it is a very happy condition to not get sucked into sin at all!

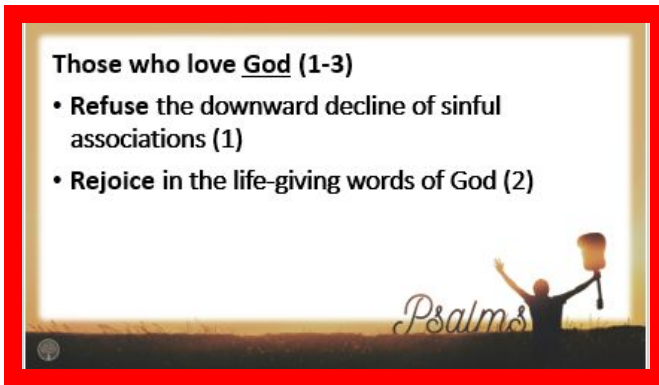
Church – the voices and influences of the godless are all around us. Are you listening to the world to find joy?

Those who love God refuse to become comfortable with the words, the ways, and the wooing of sin. Even just a single drop of the devil's poison will corrupt the soul's blessed satisfaction in God.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

¹ Quote from Pastor Ritch Boerckel's sermon on Psalm 1.

² Psalm 32:1-2



You see, those who love God **rejoice in the life-giving words of God**, not the words and ways of unbelievers.

Now please don't get tripped up by this word *law* in **verse 2**. When we hear the word law, we tend to think commandments and legal duty. But the Hebrew word for "law" is the word *Torah* and it just means, "teaching, or instruction, or counsel." The *Torah* or the law of the Lord is just a summary term for the entirety of God's written special revelation – the Scriptures!

So then notice the logic – the wonderful alternative to getting sucked into sin's swirly is delighting in God's Word! True joy is the cure for sin!

After all, the blessed man is not just one who *reads* God's Word. No. The Psalmist shifts from *activity* to *affections* in **verse 2**. Because it is the inner love of the human heart – whatever the heart delights in and treasures most – that will determine how he walks, stands, and sits in the company of others.³

³ Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:34

The word "delight" in **verse 2** is a strong word. To delight in something is to value it as precious. Therefore to delight in God's Word means your soul gets happy whenever God opens His mouth! You love to hear the words of God!

So then slow down and make sure you don't miss this thrilling truth from the first song in the biblical hymnbook:

Those who love God are blessed, because they overcome the company of sin with joy – joy in God and delight in His life-giving words!!

Again, this psalm doesn't teach we overcome sin by reading God's Word. Rather, we overcome sin when we *love* God and *delight* in His Word so much that we meditate on His law all the time – day and night.

Now some might object – how is it possible for sinners like us who are already walking in the counsel of the ungodly to control what we love and treasure? After all, if I don't delight in God's Word – how can I control my sincere emotion of delight?

And here's the stunning truth of Scripture. Only those who have been born again and received God's Spirit according to His New Covenant promise are able to truly delight in God's Word. The sinful mind is hostile to God – it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.⁴ It is a supernatural miracle for a sinful heart to truly love God and delight in His law. According to **Deuteronomy 30, verse 6** it is the miracle of a circumcised heart. **Ezekiel 36, verses 26-27** require a new heart and a new spirit. **1**

⁴ Romans 8:7-8; c.f. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1-3

Peter chapter 1 teach that only those whom God's mercy has caused to be born again will love a God they cannot see.⁵ But once you have been born again and receive the Spirit of the Living God, you will long for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word – and truly delight in the law of God – for you have personally tasted that the Lord is good!⁶

So listen carefully. **Psalm 1** is teaching us we must delight in God's Word...because if we don't we will perish! If you don't find God to be more worthy, more valuable, more precious, and more satisfying than other people or other things, then you will perish. For all who have been truly born again find that God's Words are more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey.⁷

And this inner love for God and delight in His words fuels meditating on Scripture. To meditate means to chew the cud. Process it, burp it back up, process it some more, burp it back up, etc. Literally the word can refer to murmuring or muttering under one's breath. Picture a person sitting by herself repeating the text to herself over and over in a soft whisper.

Meditation therefore is delight-driven thinking. Pondering God's Word out of sincere spiritual joy.⁸

Keep in mind that 3,000 years ago when this was written, there was no such thing as books. So to meditate on God's law day and night meant that you would memorize

⁵ 1 Peter 1:3, 8; c.f. 1 John 5:3-4

⁶ 1 Peter 1:23; 2:2-3

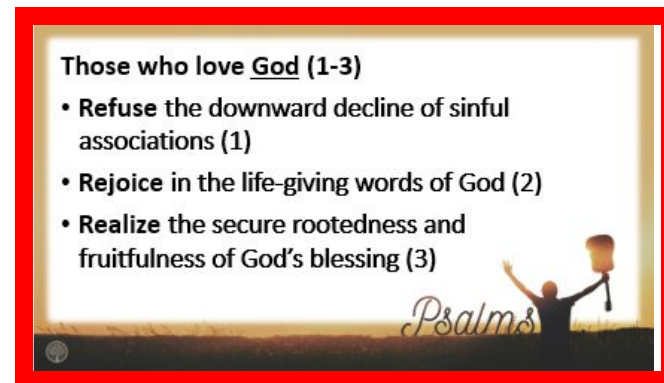
⁷ Psalm 19:10

⁸ Definitions from John Piper, *Look at the Book*, Psalm 1

God's Word.

Church - do you delight in God's Word? Do you memorize God's Word? Perhaps one helpful test of your delight for God's Word would be to simply ask yourself at the end of each day, what did I read from God's Word this morning? If you can't remember, it's unlikely that you delighted in God's Word, right? For a true delight will drive ongoing meditation upon God's Word that increases your joyful blessedness in Christ.

Now in **verse 3**, we see the result of such delightful meditation in God's Word. Those who have been born again by God's mercy and now love God,



Realize the secure rootedness and fruitfulness of God's blessing.

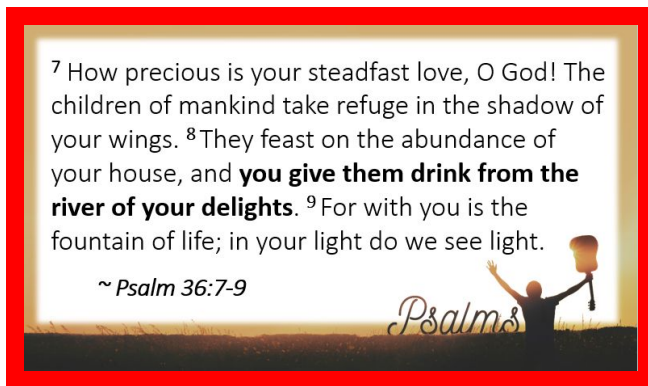
He is like a tree, planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

The person whose heart has been transformed by the Spirit of God through salvation is like a tree – a big, large,

sturdy, unshakable tree. What a picture of stability and fruitfulness.

A tree that has been planted – or we could say, transplanted – by God’s new birth⁹ by channels of life-giving water.

Picture a tree planted right beside an irrigation ditch here.

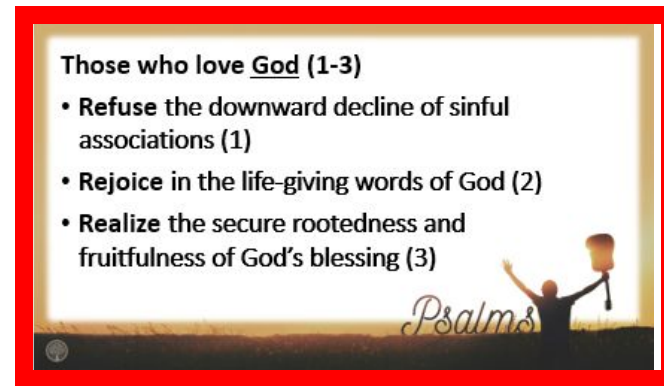


Psalm 36 teaches us that God gives His children *drink from the river of His delights*.¹⁰ In other words, the person who rejects sin’s company but delights in God’s Word is a person who has a never-ending supply of Gospel delights and promises. The streams of water are the riches of God’s abundant grace as communicated by the Word of God.

And notice the 3 effects which are mentioned at the end of **verse 3** -

⁹ Matthew 15:13

¹⁰ C.f. Psalm 46:4



Yields its fruit in its season – that’s the timely fruit of the God’s Spirit – the fruit of obedience which love for God produces.¹¹

And its leaf does not wither – every person who genuinely loves God is like an evergreen tree – for no drought or severe test of affliction¹² can threaten its fruitfulness.

Dear Christ-follower, may God purify our affections so that our joy and contentment is not rooted on the surface...but is rather rooted deep into the water table of God’s grace.

And then finally, *in all that he does, he prospers*.

What a promise of prosperity! What a blessed person this is!

Now please understand that God is not naïve, and His

¹¹ Romans 1:5; 16:26; 2 Corinthians 9:8

¹² 2 Corinthians 8:2ff

Scriptures are not unrealistic. **Psalm 37** teaches that the evil prosper in their way. **Malachi 3:15** says that evildoers not only prosper but put God to the test and escape. **Psalm 44** laments that the godly are killed all the day long and are like sheep to be slaughtered.

So then the prosperity of **Psalm 1:3** does not mean that your business will always grow, and your diseases will always be healed, and you or your loved ones will never be a victim of any violence in this life.

No. The blessed prosperity of **Psalm 1** means that even the most challenging suffering here on this earth is working out greater eternal good and glory of those who love God.¹³ Our death will reveal the victorious repayment that will far exceed any loss we experienced in this earth.¹⁴

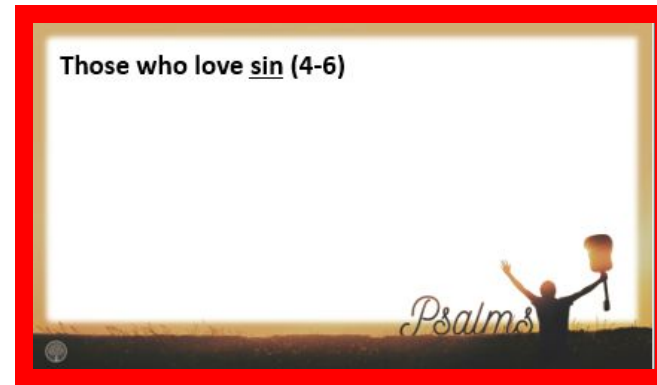
In all that he does, he prospers... because nothing he does out of delight and love for God will ever be in vain.

But now look at the strong contrast of **verse 4**.

The wicked are not so. The wicked are self-sufficient and living according to their own resources, hating God and rejecting His counsel. The wicked are not like a tree, but as **verse 4** says, *are like chaff that the wind drives away.* This is the contrast between those who love God and,

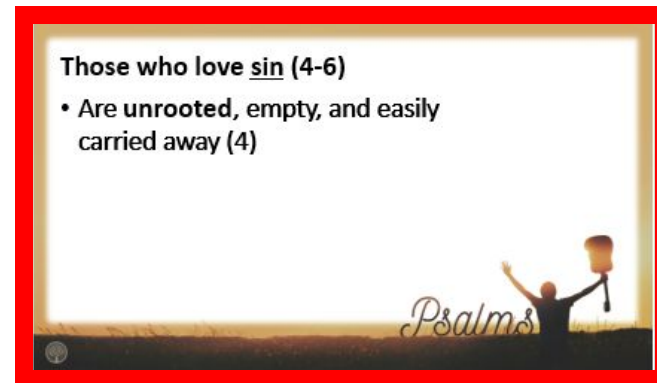
¹³ Psalm 119:67-75; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; *Romans 8:37-39 (quotes Psalm 44); c.f. Romans 8:28-29

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:55-58; Ephesians 6:8; Luke 14:13-14



Those who love sin (4-6)

In other words, the ungodly – the wicked – have delights other than God. They are like chaff,



unrooted, empty, and easily carried away.

Chaff of course is the dry useless husks around the grain. Chaff is worthless.

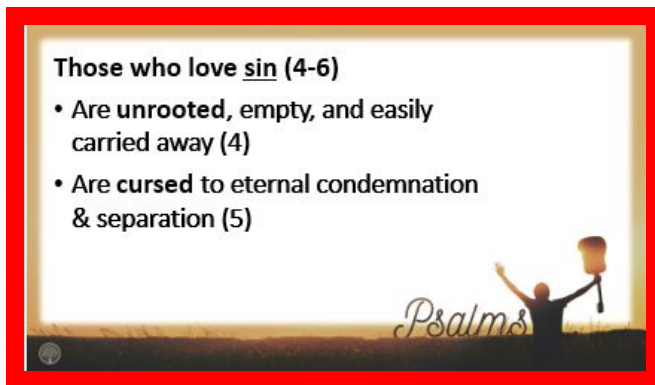
So listen up – when it seems like evil is winning in this world – and all the “big-shot” chaff people are making sport of our God – just remember that all this world’s

glory is just chaff.¹⁵ “Whatever exalts itself against God – no matter how massive it is politically, or militarily, or financially, or culturally – it is just chaff – and it will be blown away by God in the final judgment!”¹⁶

Verse 5 makes certain the final ruin of all those who love sin.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

All those who love sin,



Are cursed to eternal condemnation & separation (5)

Don't listen to the foolish lies of the ungodly who tempt you to reach out for whatever you want, and take it.

There is an eternal court of judgment – where the wicked won't have a leg to stand on. They will fall under the

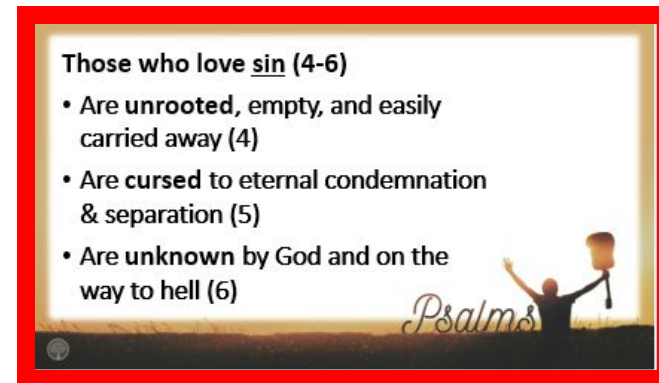
¹⁵ C.f. Psalm 49:10-12

¹⁶ Paraphrased from John Piper, *Look at the Book*, Psalm 1.

righteous curse of God's wrath against all ungodliness.¹⁷

Sinners will never again enjoy mixing with congregation of the righteous. Although the righteous will survive through the judgment, the chaff will be burned up with unquenchable fire.¹⁸

For God never knew the wicked, sinning, scoffers. Those who love sin,



Are unknown by God and on the way to hell (6)

Verse 6 is very clear – *for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

That word for “know” in **verse 6** is a very intimate word – often used for the oneness of sexual intimacy between a husband and a wife in Scripture.¹⁹ In **Amos 3:2** the knowledge of God refers to His saving election,²⁰ and the end of the sermon of the Mount testifies that the Lord will

¹⁷ Romans 1:18

¹⁸ Matthew 3:12

¹⁹ C.f. Genesis 4:1; Matthew 1:25

²⁰ C.f. Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2

declare to the wicked, “*I never knew you; depart from me you workers of lawlessness.*”²¹

So when the song says that the Lord knows the way of the righteous, it communicates salvation and deliverance.²² God knows the way that we take, and He’s committed to bringing us forth as gold.²³

But the path of the wicked will lead to hell.

The main point of **Psalm 1** is not difficult to understand:



Those who love God are blessed while those who love sin will perish.

So then, dear friends, we must,



Love God and delight in His Word!

Why would we perish for not delighting in God? Why would we rush headlong into condemnation for not being glad in God? Why would we ever treasure something or someone more than God Himself – knowing that it leads to our perishing forever?

Church – hell is real. And hell is eternal. We should grieve deeply that many of our neighbors and loved ones are headed there. May we be humble and courageous enough to invite others to come – delight in the law of the Lord with me! Repent and forsake the way of sinners. Come join me in drinking from the rivers of God’s grace.

For our God is supremely valuable. By definition, our God is infinitely precious and satisfying. After all – Jesus Christ is the ultimate blessed man in this passage, right? All of us are but chaff. However, through faith and repentance, God’s mercy causes us to be born again and we are united to the tree of life – transplanted by streams of grace to flourish and bear fruit in our union with Christ! Therefore if you don’t delight in God, then you do not love Him. And if you do not love Him, you will perish. So pray

²¹ Matthew 7:23

²² Psalm 37:12-17, 28:29

²³ Job 23:10

that God would grant you a new heart this morning – a heart alive with God’s Spirit – a heart circumcised from sin’s deceit.

All so that our joy can be full in knowing God, and delighting in His Word.²⁴

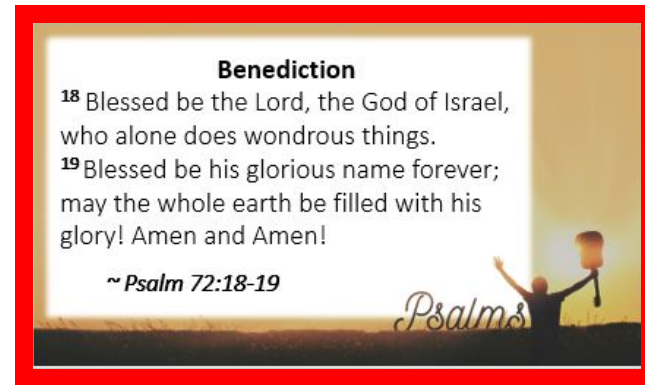


For this is the life God blesses.

Let’s Pray.

<<Come Thou Fount>>

Let’s pray our Benediction now as we are dismissed,



Benediction

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! Ps 72:18-19



²⁴ C.f. Psalm 73:25-26
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Recommended Resources on The Life God Blesses:

- Joshua 1:8
- Psalm 73:25-26
- Proverbs 14:12
- Jeremiah 17:7-8
- Matthew 3:12; 7:13-14; 13:44
- 1 Corinthians 16:22
- Hebrews 10:34
- Revelation 3:16

IV.

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/how-to-lose-your-happiness>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/some-pleasures-never-get-boring>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/do-you-delight-in-bible-reading>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/memorize-the-bible-to-maximize-your-joy>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/plant-yourself-in-gods-word>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/the-true-prosperity-gospel>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/the-way-of-the-wicked-will-perish>

V.

- *Reading the Bible Supernaturally*, Piper
- *Habits of Grace*, Mathis
- *Living by the Book*, Hendricks

VI.

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read Psalm 1:1. What does (and doesn't) it mean to be blessed? Consider how Jesus starts his sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 in your answer.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 16:22. What does it mean to love the Lord? Is it possible to delight in God's Word if you don't love God (Psalm 1:2)? How can you practically grow your love for God – even when you don't feel like it?
3. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:33 and Psalm 1:1. Are you flirting with wicked ways or keeping corrupt company? Read Matthew 7:13-27, and help each other determine how you could practically make changes that would lead you down the path which God blesses.
4. Read the entire Psalm 1. How would you summarize this psalm in one sentence?
5. How can you feast more intentionally on God's Word this week? In reading God's Word? Meditating on it? Memorizing it? Singing it? Sharing it with others?
6. Compare Psalm 1:6 with Matthew 7:23. What does it mean to be known by the Lord? What does it mean for the wicked to perish? Does the Lord know you? What is the end destination of the path you are currently on?