

TEXT SERMONS – SERIES: PSALM SERMONS

PSALM 1 – PART 2

THE BLIGHTED PERSON

PSALM 1:4-6

⁴ *The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.*

⁵ *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

⁶ *For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

Psalm 1 gives us a clear-cut contrast between two different types of people - the godly person and the ungodly person. Or, the Blessed Person and the Blighted Person. Two types of persons are clearly seen, representing two different groups of individuals from God's perspective. We see here two totally distinct philosophies, two diverse lifestyles and two different destinations.

In today's world truth is not viewed as clear-cut, "black or white." If it is accepted that there is anything called truth, it is seen as "grey." It is becoming increasingly difficult for the average person to clearly see what is right and what is wrong. Yet, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and living life accordingly, has never been more important than it is today. The two types of persons in this Psalm represent all persons. Everyone is either a godly person or an ungodly person. There are degrees of godliness as there are degrees of ungodliness, however, there is no middle ground where persons are neither. There is no grey area with God; one is either godly or ungodly. That is plainly articulated in this Psalm. The contrasts are stark.

In our previous message we focused upon the Blessed Man. In this message we will concentrate upon his counterpart, the Blighted Man. The difference is glaringly apparent. Let us note them as follows:

I. THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE BLIGHTED PERSON. "*chaff*"

"..... chaff which the wind drives away." (v.4)

The writer uses two horticultural analogies to characterize the difference between the Blessed and the Blighted: "trees" and "chaff."

A. The Blighted Man.

The Blighted Man is characterized as "chaff." Chaff is not alive, it is blighted husk. It does not produce anything. It is the dead shell of the grain that has been harvested. Those who are so characterized are spiritually dead. Paul writes to the Ephesian believers saying, "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph.1:1) Those who never received life through faith in Christ Jesus are chaff.

Chaff is unstable, it is blown about by the wind wherever the wind blows. Those who are characterized as chaff are blown around like wheat chaff blown in the wind.

This is a terrible way to live. They have no foundation for the future upon which they build or stand. Political, social, and religious ideologies and changes keep them anxious about everything. What a picture of utter futility when one's life yields nothing more than that which is scattered by the four winds. Job says of such, "They grope in the dark without light, and He makes them stagger like a drunken man." (Job 12:25) The Psalm writer says, "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." (Psalm 107:27)

We are not to think that these verses imply that people are literally staggering physically who are characterized as "chaff," but in their minds and in their souls they are unstable, unsettled and unsure. They have rejected the Light of God's truth and therefore "grobe in the dark without light" and they are certainly "at their wits end" when asked about their hope for an eternity with God.

Wise Solomon wrote, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (Proverbs 14:12) The way that they consider to be right, is the wrong way for they have rejected the One Who is "the Way, the truth and the life," (John 14:6) By contrast there is the Blessed Man:

B. The Blessed Man

The Blessed Man is characterized by a "tree." He is said to be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth fruit and whose leaf does not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." (v.3) Just as God's standard of happiness differs from the world's standard, so does His standard of success. He is not here promising material prosperity. Material prosperity is no indication that one is godly and neither is poverty.

In God's eyes the successful person is the one whose soul prospers; like a fruitful tree, there is bounty, beauty and blessing. This is a picture of life. A growing tree lives, has stability, vitality and productivity. This type of person is blessed by God and is a blessing to mankind.

A non-withered leaf and chaff are at different ends of the spectrum. The difference between these two parties is clear-cut; there is nothing "grey" about the distinctions that are presented. The question now is: which person characterizes you? Are you a "tree" or "chaff"? Blessed or Blighted?

II. THE CHARACTER OF THE BLIGHTED PERSON. "ungodly" – "sinners" – "scoffers."

The character traits of the Blighted Man are in stark contrast to those of the Blessed Man. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the *ungodly*, nor stands in the path of *sinners*, nor sits in the seat of the *scornful*..." The Blighted Man is what the Blessed Man is not.

A. They Are Ungodly.

The Hebrew word translated "*ungodly*" means "*morally wrong; bad, guilty, ungodly, wicked.*" Other definitions are: "*Characterized by iniquity; lacking reverence for God; ungodliness.*" Consequently, they are "un-God like."

B. They Are Sinners.

The Hebrew word used here for “sinners” means “a criminal, or one accounted guilty; an offender, sinful.”

To sin is to “miss the mark.” The sinners have missed the mark, which mark is outlined in “the Law of the LORD.” (Ps.1:2) Romans 3:23 tells us that all have missed the mark: “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” That is, we have come short of the high mark of the holiness of God. Jesus came to provide forgiveness and to lift us up to the mark that otherwise we could not attain in our own efforts.

C. They Are Scoffers.

Again, citing the Hebrew, the word translated “scornful” means literally, “to make mouth at; to scoff; to hold in derision, to mock, a mocker.”

Those who are characterized as “scoffers” scorn, mock and deride that which is holy, godly and good. They have no respect for God; they mouth their profanities, blasphemies and unbelief, seemingly unabated. Scoffers seek to fortify themselves and their own thinking by openly deriding what they have rejected. Scorning or mocking is a defense mechanism. However, it will not always be so.

Here are three descriptions of the Blighted Person. We are not to think that all who are unbelievers are equally bold to identify themselves as such. However, as time passes and their hearts harden against truth, their character is more and more revealed. When a person once begins to live in the company of other persons who have declared themselves separated from God, they find themselves becoming involved in unbelief even more deeply. Those who do not “hate the evil and love the good” (Amos 5:15) will, as time goes by, being in the company of evil doers, love the evil and hate the good.

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BLIGHTED PERSON. “the ungodly are not so”

The phrase “the ungodly are not so” in the Hebrew is “the ungodly not.” That is, the ungodly are not as the godly – they are just the opposite of the godly. What are the characteristic activities of the Blighted Persons that set them apart from the Blessed Persons? Their nature is revealed in:

A. The Company He Keeps.

He Complies With Ungodly Advice – “the counsel of the ungodly.”

Ungodly counsel abounds. The counsel that is freely given by evil doers is worth exactly what it costs – nothing! Everyone, at one time or another, receives the same sort of advice today that Eve received from the serpent in the garden of Eden. You will either listen to the liars who say things like, ‘you can be a god,’ or “this path, other than the Jesus Way, leads to heaven, etc.” Or you can listen to godly counsel.

The wisdom of Solomon is: “Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.” (Prov.23:23) The counsel one seeks is only as good as its source. David said, “I will bless the Lord Who has given me counsel.” (Psalm 16:7)

He Comports With Sinful Associates – “stands in the path of sinners”

When a person takes his stand with those of like mind, he has moved beyond taking wicked counsel to taking a stand based upon those wicked principles which he has absorbed. He is no longer simply thinking about the ungodly counsel, he has now moved to act upon that about which he has been thinking. “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. 23:7)

He Companions With Scorning Activists – “sits in the seat of the scornful”

It is better to be alone than to be in bad company. Mockery and ridicule of that which is holy have often drawn persons together in a conspiracy against the truth. In the very next Psalm, Psalm 2, we read: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed....” (Psalm 2:2)

An example is Lot; he looked at the prosperity of Sodom, he moved to Sodom and we see him sitting at the city gate of Sodom with the ungodly. (Gen.19:10) The trend of the worldly minded is always downward.

He goes from walking to standing to now sitting in the presence of ungodliness. The man is, through slowly compromising choices, falling into a state of sinful living. James 1:14-15 shows the slow fade into a sinful life that ultimately leads to death. “Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”

B. The Choices He Makes.

The Blighted Person’s lifestyle of choice reveals the lifelessness within. These are some of their characteristics:

1. They do walk in the counsel of the ungodly;
2. They do stand in the way with sinners;
3. They do sit in the seat of the scornful;
4. They do not delight in the law of the Lord;
5. They do not meditate on God’s Word;
6. They are not like a tree planted by the water;
7. They do not produce good fruit.

This passage shows the characteristic lifestyle of the Blighted Man. What was before negative in regard to the Blessed Man, becomes positive in regard to the Blighted Man; what was positive to the Blessed Man, becomes negative to the Blighted Man.

The way or manner in which the ungodly live in the end leads to their ruin. In this, as in all other respects, they stand in strong contrast to the righteous in this world and the world to come.

IV. THE CULMINATION FOR THE BLIGHTED PERSON.

“Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” (v.5-6)

I am not referring to the culmination of the Psalm, but to the culmination *in* the Psalm of the Blighted Man - the culmination called *“the judgment.”* We are to *“Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.”* (I Cor.4:5) All is not gold that glitters; there is the counterfeit. Some who appear godly outwardly are not godly inwardly. Some, because of a temporary lapse into carnality, may appear ungodly outwardly but be godly inwardly. *“The LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”* (I Sam.16:7)

Both in character and in destiny the ungodly differ from the righteous. As in life so in the after life, the two classifications are separate. As the Psalm begins, so it ends with the analogy of the triple postures of: walking, standing and sitting. Notice what is said about the Blessed and the Blighted Persons as pertains to the judgment:

Their Walk

“the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

There is, at the end of every life, a destination at which one arrives. The way one takes determines that final destination. The Broad Way leads to destruction; the Narrow Way to eternal life.

There are two ways to walk in verse six. The way, that is the path, the walk, the conduct, the manner of life of each, is referred to here. There is the righteous way and there is the ungodly way. Each leads to a different culmination. It is said that *“the way of the ungodly shall perish.”* That is, that way, path, walk, conduct, manner of life that the ungodly chooses leads to eternal perishing.

Their end is destruction. John the Baptizer said of Jesus: “His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Matthew 3:12) Here again is the analogy of “chaff” which is the characterization of the Blighted Person.

The Blessed Person comes before the Judge as well. What is not said of him is enlightening. We are simply told that, *“the LORD knows the way of the righteous.”* Nothing else is added. Nothing need be added for righteousness brings its own well known reward. Elsewhere it is recorded:

- “The hope of the righteous will be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked will perish. The way of the LORD is strength for the upright, but destruction will come to the workers of iniquity.” (Prov. 10:28, 29)
- “The wicked are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous will stand.” (Prov. 12:7)
- “The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.” (Prov. 13:9)
- “These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matt. 25:46)

The way one begins to walk leads ultimately to eternal bliss or eternal burning. Thank God that it is possible to change course! Someone who is living a godless life, who is walking, standing, or sitting in the presence of ungodliness can experience a radical change, the result of salvation.

Their Stand

“the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment....”

Those who stand with sinners will not stand in the judgment. All will stand before the Judge of the universe, but not all will stand up under scrutiny. Since the godly are not mentioned in this phrase, it is understood that they will pass the Judge’s evaluation. The contrast is complete when the Blessed Person stands the inspection at the judgment and the Blighted Person fails the final inspection. You may pretend to be a musician in the Lord’s orchestra, but the truth will be revealed at the judgment when you come to your solo part!

Their Sitting

“nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”

It is obvious throughout the Psalm that there are two groupings, two congregations. Birds of a feather flock together. The Blessed will congregate with the Blessed and the Blighted with the Blighted. The Blighted crowd is not included in the Blessed congregation at the culmination of all things.

How we live here is indicative of where we will live hereafter! Likewise, those with whom we congregate here is indicative of where we will congregate hereafter!

SUMMATION

This Psalm drives home its truth by the use of contrasts:

- There is the way of the godly and their blessedness in contrast to the way of the ungodly and their blightedness;
- The way of the godly is set forth by way of a contrast negatively, what the godly do not do and positively, what the godly do;
- There is the contrast between the results of the two ways of life, a contrast between character and destiny: the godly are stable and fruitful, but the ungodly are unstable and perish.

CONCLUSION

In essence, God says there are two ways of life open to us: one means blessedness, happiness, and fruitfulness, but the other means cursedness, unhappiness, and judgment. The choice is ours. Blessedness is a choice but to be blessed, one must by faith obey the conditions; he must pursue the way of blessedness as described in this Psalm.

As we have seen, the Blessed Person has life, the Blighted Person does not have life. How do we receive the life of God? "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (I John 5:11-12) Having seen the incredible difference between the Blessed Person and the Blighted Person, I encourage you to receive the Lord Jesus Christ Who said, "I am the Life" (John 14:6) as your Savior and Life Source today!

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