

Psalm 1
The Path to True Happiness

I believe that choice is one of the great gifts from God to humanity. I also believe that choice is a huge responsibility. Many things, if not everything, in life boils down to choice. Every choice produces an outcome. Every choice has a consequence. If you are like me your life has been a mix of good and not so good choices. I believe there is no greater choice before the disciple of Jesus than the choice to cling to God's every word. Or, as the psalmist writes this morning to delight in God's word. To take great pleasure in it. What would be the outcome if we faithfully lived by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God? I'm convinced, true happiness; happiness that lasts. This Psalm is the true-life experience of persons that do so. By this psalm God reveals the path to true happiness and I want to share three things I see in the text about this path.

First, landing on this path is the result of intentional choices. V1-2

"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;
² But his delight *is* in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night." **The first choice this person faces is with whom he/she**

will associate. Here, we're cautioned against walking in the counsel of the ungodly. Avoiding their influence in our decision-making. Church, associating with those who disregard God's teachings can lead us down a path of discontent and regret. By avoiding ungodly counsel, we sidestep the temptation to stand with sinners and eventually sitting among the scornful. We must take seriously who we listen to, and who we spend our time with. Remember, the company we keep can shape our destinies. **The second choice this person makes is to**

rely totally on God's word. This isn't mere intellectual pursuit; it's an affirmation of belief in the truth and wisdom found in God's word. By immersing ourselves in Scripture, we equip ourselves to make decisions that honor and glorify God. And the prosperity that follows such decision making is not the primary goal but rather a natural outcome of aligning our lives with God's word. Like this person, do we truly find delight in God's word, recognizing its sweetness and enduring truth?

Deut 30:19-20 ¹⁹Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! ²⁰You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life. And if you love and obey the Lord, you will live long in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Isaiah 40:7-8 “The grass withers and the flowers fade beneath the breath of the Lord. And so it is with people. ⁸The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.”

1 Cor 15:32-34 ³²And what value was there in fighting wild beasts—those people of Ephesus—if there will be no resurrection from the dead? And if there is no resurrection, “Let’s feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!” ³³Don’t be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.” ³⁴Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don’t know God at all.”

Second, prosperity accompanies those on this path. V3 “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does

shall prosper.” This is what Godly prosperity is like, an evergreen fruit tree. And its prospering is directly related to its surroundings. And its surroundings are not inconsequential. You cannot plant a citrus tree of any sort in the desert and expect its leaf to not wither or the tree to produce fruit. If we truly want to experience lasting happiness, we must get out of dry places that only suck the life out of us. Some of us are spiritually dehydrated and the only remedy is to get into God’s word. Church, the word of God is the ‘rivers of waters’. Jesus the Christ, the Word incarnate, is our ‘rivers of waters’. And I assure you that when we learn to delight in his word, we too will be a like a tree planted by the rivers of water. That brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf does not wither. We will prosper and the prosperity we experience reaches far beyond the here and now.

1 Kings 2:1-3 “As the time of King David’s death approached, he gave this charge to his son Solomon: ² “I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. Take courage and be a man. ³ Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will prosper in all you do and wherever you go.

John 15:5-8 ⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!” ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.”

Finally, this path’s end is eternal life. V4-6 “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.” There are many places and things you can find happiness in this world. The only problem with the happiness the world offers is its temporary and its end is destruction. In placing emphasis on the final outcome for the ungodly, those who choose the way of the world, the psalmist is warning us, and he is making clear for us the final outcome for the godly; those who delight in God’s word. The path that is marked by God’s word is the only path that leads to eternal life and the only entrance on to this path is Jesus the Christ.

John 6:64-69 “⁶⁴ But some of you do not believe me.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn’t believe, and he knew who would betray him.)⁶⁵ Then he said, “That is why I said that people can’t come to me unless the Father gives them to me.” ⁶⁶ At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹ We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.”

John 14:3-6 “³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

Choice is indeed a wonderful gift from God and a huge responsibility. Use it wisely and you are sure find the path to true happiness. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen**