

THE BLESSED MAN

Psalm 1:1-6

Key Verse: 1:2

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Today we are going to study Psalm 1. There are 150 psalms. The book of Psalms is divided into five parts. Even if the book of Psalms is divided into five parts, all of these five parts are the praises of God the Almighty, and the psalmists' prayers and personal testimonies to God's love and grace. Psalm 119 is the longest psalm with 176 verses. Psalms 1 and 23 are the most loved. Psalm 1 is used for the deep meditation to receive God's counsel and realize man's final destiny based on the sovereign rule of God. On the other hand, Psalm 23 is used mostly at funeral services and all kinds of tragic events to comfort people's souls. Psalm 1 is deep and wide. Psalm 1 teaches us God's sovereign will toward all mankind. Also, it teaches us that the destiny of mankind is determined by how they walk in the sight of God.

First, the blessed man (1).

Look at verse 1. "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the

counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers." In this verse, the phrase "Blessed...man" simply means a happy man. There are two kinds of people. One is very happy. The other is unhappy. There is a story about the happy farmer who sang all the time working at the watermill. There is a song about him called, "The Happy Farmer." He was very happy because he loved God and he loved his kids, and especially he loved his wife and his mom. On the other hand, there was a king in his territory. The king was so unhappy because he was bored by his luxurious life. Human happiness does not depend on human conditions but on hard work and knowing the meaning of life.

Biblically speaking, here the blessed is one who is blessed by God. In the world, there are many more people who are unhappy. One of our woman missionaries was the eldest daughter in her family. Her father died a long time ago. So she could have received multi-millions of dollars from her mother. But simply because she believes in God and is happy to work for the glory of God, she could not get any of the inheritance from her mother. Her son was accepted to Northwestern University Medical School. He believed the humanity of his grandmother and wanted to ask her to pay his tuition. But he did not get any money from his grandmother. It is very strange. When the boy was an infant, whenever his grandmother came he began to cry, and he cried for 15 minutes, sometimes for over an hour, until his grandmother left. Maybe the boy felt strange because his grandmother was an ungodly woman. What is more, there was a dog in the boy's family named Mini-Mike. He was always very happy. But when the grandmother came, then Mini-Mike began to bark until she left. The

grandmother had a huge amount of money in the bank. But she was not welcomed by an infant boy and by Mini-Mike. It is indeed strange why the handsome little infant boy cried and Mini-Mike barked at the ungodly grandmother. Maybe she was most offended because of Mini-Mike's barking at her continuously whenever he saw her. She had a huge amount of money, but she was very unhappy.

In King David's time, there was a very rich man named Nabal (1Sa 25). His wife's name was Abigail. As a political criminal, David was wandering in the wilderness. But he took care of Nabal's shepherds and their flock of sheep quite a long time. After that, David sent some of his men in his name to Nabal to get some provisions. Then Nabal refused to give them anything. He drank all night, enjoying his wealth and many servants. The next morning he heard that David was coming to him. Suddenly, his heart failed him and he became like a stone (1Sa 25:37). Nabal tried to be happy with his money, but it didn't work as he expected. These are unhappy people, simply because they have no fear of God in their hearts.

But there are also many happy people even though life seems to be too difficult to bear. Among men, King David seems to be an outstanding character. In short, we can describe him as a really happy man and indeed a blessed man by God. In King David's time, the eldest son was honored. The second son was also honored properly. But the youngest son, David, was

not honored. He was an errand boy of his father and of his seven older brothers (1Sa 16:7). When the prophet Samuel came to anoint a king from among Jesse's sons, he saw first Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah. Jesse presented them to Samuel because they were the oldest, and their outer appearance was gorgeous. But Samuel said, "No." It was because God said to Samuel, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1Sa 16:7). Seven brothers were presented to Samuel. But they were all dropped from being anointed as king of Israel. Samuel said, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse said, "There is still the youngest, but he is tending the sheep in the field" (1 Sa 16:11). The youngest son, David, was brought to be anointed as King of Israel. These days, youngest daughters and youngest sons are loved until they are spoiled.

David was anointed as King of Israel. But his life was not smooth. God gave him divine training through King Saul. King Saul, out of his jealousy of the boy David, did his best to destroy him. But David was not unhappy. David was very happy. In Psalm 23:1 David said, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want." Again, in Psalm 23:4 he said, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me...." He confronted a critical moment of life many times because King Saul was searching to destroy him. But he had the fear of God and believed that God would protect him. So he was not afraid of any adverse situations. He was rather happy. David was a soldier. He fought to make the United Kingdom of Israel according to God's will. Every time, the

battle was so fierce that he confronted many critical moments by the enemies. Once, David was almost killed by the Philistine soldier Ishbi-Benob, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new sword and who was a mighty soldier in the Philistine army. But General Abishai swiftly came to rescue King David (2Sa 21:15-17). After this event, David wrote a psalm praising God that God rescued his life. He was not unhappy because of that terrible event. Rather, he praised God and thanked God. He was indeed a man blessed by God.

David was king of Israel and finally made Israel the United Kingdom of Israel. But he was not proud. He loved his people as himself. Once, he was in a battle in the course of establishing the United Kingdom of Israel. David said to himself, "Oh, that someone would get me a cup of water" (2Sa 23:15). Then the three mighty men broke through the defense line of the enemy and dipped water from the well in Bethlehem and brought it to him. But King David did not drink the water, thinking that it was the blood of his loyal subjects (2Sa 23:17). He again thanked God for giving him such loyal subjects. When we read the psalms, we learn that most of the psalms were written by David and they were also written in the midst of fierce war times. Even in the fierce war times, David did not forget God. He praised and thanked God that he could fight for the glory of God to establish the United Kingdom of Israel.

Once, David's son Absalom rebelled against him and took over his

kingdom (2Sa 15-18). David was running for his life with his subjects. It was the most sorrowful moment for David, because he was betrayed by his own son, Absalom. On the way, Shimei, the wicked man, reviled King David, pelting him with stones (2Sa 16:6). General Abishai said to King David, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head" (2Sa 16:9). David said, "Leave him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. It may be that the Lord will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today" (2Sa 16:11b,12). Here we see that David had his root in God. How great David was to spare such a man's life. It was because he loved God. He was indeed a man blessed by God. David acted as a true man of God. Many mighty men followed him from all corners of all countries and were ready to give their lives for King David. When David was right with God, God blessed him to establish the theocratic United Kingdom of Israel.

Second, to delight in the law of the Lord (2).

Look at verse 2. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." As children of God, the first thing we should do is to meditate on the word of God. In verse 2, the words, "the law of the Lord," refer to the word of God. The word of God, the Ten Commandments, was given to Israel through Moses (Ex 20). These Ten Commandments became the foundation of law for all nations, from the beginning until the last part of the 20th century. Otherwise, there is no law

in the world. The law of God is the word of God. The word of God gives life to men. The word of God opens men's spiritual insight to see the kingdom of God. The word of God enables us to know that Jesus is the Son of God.

Why is the word of God so important? It is because it is the word of God. The word of God is three-dimensional and all other things are two-dimensional. All the good things: literature, music, and all the principles, came from the word of God. For example, Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" is a very partial story of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment" is exactly the story of Cain in the Old Testament (Ge 4). Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" is an imitation of the story of how Jesus healed some sick women. Dante's "Divine Comedy" is an exact amplification of part of the Bible. Handel's "Messiah" and Mozart's "Gloria," and all good things came from the Bible. All other things change. But the word of God never changes. So we must meditate on the word of God day and night. Then we can take root in the love of God as well as in the sovereign rule of God and we become stable. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." In view of history, feudalism, communism, capitalism, imperialism, and mammonism damaged human life so much and all of them have either disappeared or are disappearing. Even man perishes. But the word of God stands forever (1Pe 1:24,25). How long do we have to meditate on the word of God? We must meditate on the word of God until our eyes fail. Psalm 119:123 says, "My eyes fail, looking for your salvation, looking for your righteous promise."

Here "promise" is the same as the word of God.

What is the result of meditating on the word of God? When we meditate on the word of God we come to know that God sent his one and only Son Jesus Christ to this world as the atoning sacrifice. Finally, God made him shed his blood on the cross for the sin of the world. When we meditate on the word of God we can realize the love of God. When we realize the love of God, we can love God. We can love ourselves. Each one can love his own wife. Many mothers-in-law can love their daughters-in-law. We acknowledge that we receive the forgiveness of sins; we also acknowledge that we have glorious eternal life through his Son Jesus. In addition, we have the kingdom of God as our inheritance. Look at verse 2. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." The first part of verse 2 says, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord...." True joy comes from meditating on the word of God. When we meditate on the word of God, we are indeed happy people.

Third, a tree planted by the streams (3).

Look at verse 3. "He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers." This verse teaches us that those who take root in the word of God will be very fruitful and successful in whatever they do, like a tree planted by the streams of water. Before conversion, Paul's name was Saul.

Saul means, "I am the greatest." He was a man like Muhammed Ali who would say, "I am the greatest." He was politically ambitious. But after conversion he came to know the word of God. Especially, he heard the word of God from the Risen Christ. God asked Ananias to help Saul. But he was afraid. Then God said to Ananias in Acts 9:15,16: "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Surely Saul heard the Risen Jesus' words from Ananias about his future mission. Surely he heard that the Risen Jesus forgave all his sins. Surely he believed that he received eternal life when he believed in Jesus. Surely he believed that Jesus is the Son of God and by his crucifixion and resurrection the Risen Christ would give him the kingdom of God as his inheritance.

The Risen Christ chose the right man. Such a proud man, Saul, became humble after conversion and called himself, "Paul," a little one. He also confessed in 1 Timothy 1:15 that "I am the worst." According to this verse, Paul was the worst sinner because he persecuted the church of God. But he praised the grace of God in 1 Corinthians 15:9,10a as follows: "For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am...." Because of his faith in Jesus that Jesus is the Son of God and Jesus saves men from their sins and brings them back to his kingdom, he established Christian theology which was used as a spiritual nuclear

weapon. In his Christian theology, the book of Romans is ubiquitously victorious wherever the gospel is preached. God conquered the world, beginning with one man Paul and his Christian theology, and next with his followers.

There is a professor who took Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well," as his key verse. But it was not from his heart. It was from his reason. So he wrote many things about God's blessing to those who truly take root and believe in the word of God. But his intellectual faith only made him fat and now he is suffering from diabetes. His wife also took Matthew 6:33 as her life key verse. But she worries too much about money. She has been suffering from stomach ulcers for the last 15 years. They have wealth and fame. But they are very unhappy because they cannot eat delicious food due to their physical condition. They sigh, saying, "Oh, I wish we could eat as ordinary people." On the other hand, there is a widow with seven children. During World War II, she lost her husband. She worked hard and raised their seven children because she believed Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Her six sons all became professors in America and her daughter a professor's wife. When she believed the promise of God from her heart, God blessed the widowed mother. When we review UBF history, we can learn that God's promise is true. Several Kwangju students, such as Dr. John Jun and Dr. Joseph Chung, believed they could conquer the world

with the gospel of Jesus after hearing the world mission command in Matthew 28:19-20a. It says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." At that time, poor students could not do anything for world mission. So they prayed and prayed for nine years. Nevertheless, nothing happened. But they never gave up praying for world mission. Now we see that over 1,500 UBF missionaries have gone out to 89 countries. Most of our UBF members are successful and God raised many professors at the universities and many kinds of presidents and high-ranking judges and medical doctors. We cannot tell of all the blessings God has given us when we believed in the word of God. God made UBF a very wide vineyard with many vines and fruits.

To believe in the word of God is to be like a tree planted by the streams of water. To live in the world is suffering itself. And the world situation changes day by day. There are many hardships and many sorrows. This is the reason there are many mental clinics, drug patients, alcoholics, and angry people. But those who have the word of God in their hearts are like a tree planted by the streams of water. Even though there is a drought for one or two months, the tree has no problem because it is planted by the streams of water. Likewise, those who have the word of God in their hearts are like trees planted by the streams of water, always green and fruitful and all the leaves of the trees smile day and night. How wonderful it

is to have the word of God in our hearts! They also bear much fruit, like a tree with abundant and beautiful leaves, full of vitality, and whose leaf does not wither, because it is planted by the streams of water. Those who have the word of God lose a lot and receive much persecution at first. But whatever they do, they prosper because those who have the word of God in their hearts, God cares for them. There are so many men who said, "Money, money, money!" Yet they disappeared because they died. But those who dedicated their lives to God are successful and abundantly happy. We have to be happy in Jesus. We don't have to be unhappy, not having the word of God.

What about the wicked people? Look at verses 4-5. "Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." The Psalmist describes wicked people so excellently. He compares wicked people to chaff. When the wind blows them away, they disappear and we can see there is no trace of the wicked. As we have seen, there was communism, capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism. But these things made human beings lawless. These days many just divorce with no fault in the court. It shows that there is no law. People in this generation have become lawless like the people of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai before receiving the Ten Commandments. Wicked people are those who do not recognize God as God or the servant of God as the servant of God. Wicked people are like chaff. Do you want to be chaff? I think you don't want to be. Do you want to be the wicked? I don't think you want to be the

wicked.

The crucial problem of the wicked is God's judgment. They thought death is the end of everything. While they were living they did everything they wanted to do. They ruined many innocent people's lives. They stole others' money. One girl's mother was sued even though she was innocent. She lost the case and has to pay \$4 million. One or two thousand dollars is fair because the case is so light. But \$4 million is too much. It reveals that the world is deceiving and being deceived. Those who got \$4 million from an innocent woman will think they earned \$4 million and that's it. But that's not true. Look at verse 5. "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." First, at the time of judgment they are accountable for their wickedness and they will receive eternal condemnation. Second, they cannot go to the kingdom of God and be a member of the kingdom of heaven. In other words, according to the Bible, sinners cannot participate in the assembly of the righteous. Look at verse 4 again. "Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away."

Look at verse 6. "For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." Verse 6 clearly tells us the destiny of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are blessed and happy people. The wicked are unhappy people. The righteous will inherit the kingdom of God. But the wicked will perish in eternal condemnation. May God bless us

to be happy people and blessed ones. Let's read verse 2 again. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."