

Intro: The first thing that we need to do in order to understand this Psalm is to identify "the man" mentioned in verse 1, and described throughout the Psalm. Who is he?

There are two possibilities before us, it would seem:

1) That he is describing a certain kind of a child of God -- that is, one whose "delight is in the law of the Lord," as compared with another whose "delight is" not "in the law of the Lord."

The other choice is

2) That he is describing a child of God as compared with someone else who is not a child of God.

What does the Psalm itself indicate?

Well, in reading the Psalm we note that the blessed man is compared with "the ungodly" (mentioned 4 times), with "sinners" (mentioned twice), with "the scornful" (mentioned once).

So that we must be led to the conclusion that the blessed man is a child of God -- that this Psalm describes all believers! We have fallen into serious error by assuming that a person can be a Christian and not delight in the Word of God. The difference between Christians is the extent to which they delight in God's Word, but not that some will delight in it, and others will not.

There is no way that we could say that an unregenerate sinner would delight in the Word, but neither can we expect that a sinner would be saved and not delight in the Word!

"Blessed" is a plural, and should really be translated blessednesses. Some believers are more blessed than others because those some give themselves to the Word to a greater degree, but every true child of God is blessed to some degree.

So let us be clear that the blessed man is a believer, a child of God -- or, as we would say today, a Christian (in the true, Biblical meaning of the word).

But let us also be clear on the fact that a child of God can sin. We will not be free from the possibility of sinning until we are with the Lord. But verse 1 cannot possibly describe a child of God -- walking, standing, and sitting, with sinners! Neither is the Psalmist putting all believers into the same category. We are not all like majestic trees, BUT you can identify one who is delighting in the Word of God by the fact that he becomes like the person described in verses 2 and 3. Obviously the person who is the most blessed is the child of God

who delights the most in the Word of God.

But let me seek to clarify another point.

There might be some who would be inclined to say, "What right do you have to apply this Psalm to all the Word of God when the Psalmist specifically says, 'but his delight is in the law of the Lord'?"

My answer is this: There are times in Scripture when other parts of the Old Testament are referred to as the Law. For example, the Lord Jesus referred to Psalm 82:6 as being the law and His words are recorded to this effect in John 10:34. So there are sometimes when all of the Word is referred to as the law.

Thus, while it may have been that the Psalmist was referring primarily to the Law of Moses here in Psalm 1, because that was mainly what they had at that time, yet it has a larger application to all of Scripture. The blessed man will not neglect any part of the completed Word of God which we have today -- the Old Testament and the New Testament!

So we are talking about delighting in all of Scripture, all of the Word of God.

To delight in the Word of God means, by definition,
 to love it,
 to take pleasure in it,
 to prefer it above everything else,
 to accept it above all other authorities,
 to believe it,
 to spend time in it -- reading it, reading it over and over,
 meditating on it, talking about it, hearing it taught,
 and it also means that all of this is done so that the blessed man may live it! He will not be satisfied to be a hearer of the Word; he must be a doer -- to live in obedience to the Word.

Such an attitude toward the Word of God has to be evidence of a work of God in the heart because man will not, in his natural state, have such a love for Scripture. This is where we need Psalm 65:4 to learn how all of this comes about. The verse begins just like Psalm 1:1, only on a positive note:

"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

Lit., Oh, the blessednesses of the man whom Thou choosest, etc.

Could I sound a word of warning here?

Do you love the Word? Do you read the Word -- do you read it

as a daily habit? You may miss a day now and then, but do you find that your heart is being drawn back to the Scriptures? Do you accept the teaching of the Word just because it says what it says, or do you argue with it in your own mind? Can you set your Bible aside all week and not be bothered by such neglect? Are you concerned that your life be the kind of a life that is described in the Word of God, or are you more concerned about living like the world lives?

If you do not have the right answer to these questions, it may be that you are not truly saved! May the Lord show you your true condition before Him, and, if you are not saved, may you trust Christ today!

Perhaps it will help all of us to note three specific things from our text.

I. WHAT DELIGHTING IN THE LORD IS NOT!

This is stated very clearly in verse 1 of Psalm 1. (Read.)

Everybody usually wants to be happy. In fact, this is the main object that most people have for their lives -- to be happy! But the trouble is that the person without Christ is looking for it in the wrong way, and there is the danger that the child of God will be swept away by the world for a time!

This negation is stated three times to make it very emphatic, but also to show the progressiveness of sin -- even in deceiving the child of God.

You actually have three trilogies here:

- 1) Walking . . . standing . . . sitting.
 - 2) Counsel . . . way . . . seat.
 - 3) Ungodly . . . sinners . . . scornful.
- (Explain each of them.)

The path is downward, and leads to more and more bondage.

It begins with "counsel," thinking as an "ungodly" person would -- without God, and it begins to affect his life: he "walketh."

Next, he becomes more confirmed in "the way" of "sinners," those who have missed the mark, and so he stands where he is.

Finally, the effect of sin has run its course. He scorns sacred things, seems incapable of receiving instruction in the things of the Lord, and is content to sit where he is.

It all begins with the wrong kind of wisdom.

Cf. Ephesians 2:1-3, "And you hath he quickened who . . ."

This is NOT the way of happiness. Sin may give momentary pleasure, but the long-range result is just the opposite! The problem that the Psalmist was dealing with is the danger that, for a time, the child of God can be pulled in to such a life.

IF this verse should describe your life so that it is never anything but this, it can only mean that you are not a child of God.

But, let us go on to the second point:

II. WHAT DELIGHTING IN THE LORD IS.

This also is stated very clearly -- in verse 2 of Psalm 1. (Read.)

Happiness has to do with the Bible -- with all of it!

If you have a Bible, then remember that you do not have to go outside of the pages of that Book to have all that it will take to make you truly happy -- eternally happy! If someone gave you a copy of the Word of God for Christmas, ~~right~~ there you will find all you need to make you happy.

But, you will not be happy just because you have a Bible! You need to know what is in it. You need to read it. You need to read it over and over. You need to hear it taught. You need to go to a church where the people realize how important the Bible is.

And then, as our verse indicates, you need to "meditate" on what you read and what you hear from the Word of God, and you need to do it all of the time: "day and night."

Now, obviously, to "meditate" means to think about it, but it means more than that. It means to let the Word of God guide you in your thoughts. It means to start thinking about things the way God thinks about them. It means that you begin to evaluate things the way God does because sin has corrupted our way of thinking, our "counsel," and we need the Word of God to straighten us out. We need the Word of God to direct us in all that we do, and so we must give our constant attention to it.

Cf. Joshua 1:8 -- "This book of the law shall not . . ."

This is what the Psalmist had in mind in Psalm 119 when he said, "The entrance," or, the opening, "of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (v. 130). And

then he wrote also in verse 105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

You see, we read the Word, we think about the Word, we seek the counsel of the Word of God, so that instead of walking "in the counsel of the ungodly," we walk "in the counsel of the" **GODLY!** Instead of standing "in the way of sinners," we stand "in the way of" the saints. Instead of sitting "in the seat of the scornful," we sit "in the seat of the" righteous.

Have you noticed that the Psalmist calls "the man" of this Psalm, "the righteous"? See verses 5, 6.

Psalm 119:59 gives us the result of daily meditation on the Word of God: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."

But remember that it is not just something outward. It begins inwardly, in our hearts, and then works itself outwardly in our lives. Solomon said of the wicked man, ". . . as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7a). Sin has corrupted our minds so that we do not think the way we should about things. And this surely has to be the reason that, in practically all of Paul's recorded prayers, he is concerned about the knowledge of the Lord's people, knowledge that can only be gained from the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit! Listen to Colossians 1:9.

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it," that is, of their faith and love, "do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

His prayer does not end there, but that is where it began! We need to know the Word of God so our thinking can be changed, and so our lives will then be changed.

But how can you tell that a Christian is in the Word the way he should be, the way God wants him to be. Let us look now at

III. THE RESULTS OF DELIGHTING IN THE WORD.

Do you know what they are? Do you know what to expect when you let the Word of God be your guide and you think and act about things the way the Bible teaches you to do?

Well, you might say, it means that you will be in church every Sunday, or that you will even teach Sunday School, or that you would become an elder, or a deacon, or even a pastor!

It can mean all of this, but we cannot judge just by these

WHO WERE
SOME PEOPLE
IN THE BIBLE
WHO DELIGHTED
THEMSELVES
IN THE WORD
AND IN THE
LORD -- WHOSE
LIVES WERE
DIFFERENT
BECAUSE OF
THE WORD?

ABRAHAM
SARAH
JOSEPH
MOSES
DAVID
JEREMIAH
DANIEL

PAUL
JOHN --
JUST TO
MENTION A FEW
-- MEN AND
WOMEN
WHOSE
LIVES
WERE DIRECTED
BY THE WORD.

things. One great fear I have about my ministry is that people will come and sit and listen and speak of enjoying it, but never be changed! The measure of a man's ministry is not how many people come to hear him, but how holy the people are who do hear him.

Just as the Psalmist has been very clear on what delighting in the Word is, and what it is not, so in verse 3 he is very clear about what its results are. (Read.)

A child of God whose heart is saturated by the Word of God and whose life is directed by that Word, will be "like a tree planted."

This is God's picture for us of a stable, unmoveable child of God, who cannot, in the words of the Apostle Paul, be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . ." (Eph. 4:14). He is "planted."

But planted where? "By the rivers of water."

The Hebrew gives the idea here of abundance, of an inexhaustible supply -- "rivers"! Water is a familiar expression in Scripture for the Word.

Note the rest of the verse: ". . . that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

I do not have the time to go farther into detail on all of these points, but let me simply say that God is promising us here that the person who knows the Word, who delights in the Word, who lets his thinking be guided by the Word, so that his life is changed, is the person who will have the blessing of God and who will see the purposes of God accomplished in his life with great blessing and with great joy!

God does not make celebrities out of all of us. In fact, He does not make celebrities out of any of us -- that is man's doing! We are not here to see our own purposes accomplished, but to do His will and to glorify Him. That is our "fruit," and that is what it means to "prosper."

Concl: Verses 4 and 5 give us the contrast; verse 6, the conclusion.

Look at Jeremiah's version of the first Psalm in Jeremiah 17: 5-8. Also see Jer. 15:16, "Thy words were found . . ."

Where do you stand in all of this? When we wish each other a happy new year, this is what we should mean -- a year of meditating on the Word, a year of living in obedience to the Word.