

THE HAPPY MAN
Psalm 1

Intro: This Psalm is one which I have spoken on many times, but I never come back to it without finding fresh food for my own soul.

It has to do with a subject which is of primary importance to all people: happiness. And let us note that it is of primary importance to God. The Garden of Eden teaches us that God was interested in man's happiness. So do our Lord's words in John 15:11, "These words have I spoken to you . . ."

Heaven is going to be a place of continual happiness. So do not let anyone tell you that God does not want us to be happy. Cf. Gal. 5:22, 23.

The problem is that sin has made us feel that we know more about what will make us happy than God does. We will listen to men usually before we listen to God. But God will not deceive us, and the people of God of every age have found that God is right. The child of God may have even more trials than most people, but in the midst of it he can expect to find not only joy, but great joy!

What does Psalm 1 teach us?

First we learn . . .

I. WHERE WE WILL NOT FIND HAPPINESS (Psa. 1:1).

There is a certain progression in what the Psalmist, presumably David, said here.

"Counsel" has to do with goals, with purposes, and how to reach them. But in the case of the ungodly the goals that they talk about have nothing to do with God. And, instead of peace and happiness, they are taught by those who are in a constant state of turmoil themselves, and yet they try to tell others how to live.

"Way" has to do with the OT expression, walk. You take the counsel, and then put it into practice. But this, too, is given by those who have missed the mark. They do not know what our goals or objectives in life should be. They are concerned about people only, not God. And so they cannot be right.

"The seat of the scornful" -- one who scoffs at the ways of God, and the things of God. The Bible teaches us that man was created to glorify God, to do His will. But unregenerate men soon eliminate such purposes as having

nothing to do with happiness. But they are as wrong as it is possible to be!

How important it is for you young people to learn what the Psalmist has to say here! He is giving us the truth of God.

So making a success of yourself (if it is without God), or making a lot of money, or being able to do what you want to do, to go where you want to go, and to enjoy all of the pleasures you would like to enjoy--these are not the ways to happiness. Sin never brings real happiness.

What does, then?

Now this is where you are going to think that the Psalmist was just different kind of a person, that he did not like the kinds of things that most people enjoy. But listen to what he had to say. And you will find that his words are just as true today as they were approximately 3,000 years ago when this was written.

II. THE WAY OF HAPPINESS (Psa. 1:2, 3).

What does it mean to "delight" in something?

It means that you are more inclined toward it than anything else. It is that which gives you more pleasure than anything else.

Remember that the Psalmist, according to v. 6, was talking about "the righteous," those who are right with God. So, if we do not enjoy the Word, there may be some needs in our hearts that have never been met. We need to make sure that we know the Lord because the Psalmist is assuming that when he spoke of delighting in the Word of God.

Note in John 15:25 that David was not just talking about the Mosaic Law, but about all of the Word of God. A true child of God will be drawn in his heart toward the Word. If a hunger for the Word is not there, the need may be for salvation.

Our relationship to the Word begins with hearing, and then reading it for ourselves. But it does not stop there (although this is as far as many of the people of God get). Even with preachers, they may just spend their time gathering what others have said about the Word, without spending much time in the Word for themselves.

What did David indicate as the evidence that we delight ourselves in the Word? We will meditate in it. We will

think about it. We will dwell on the words. We may even memorize it. We will ask the Holy Spirit to teach us.

This word for "meditate" actually means, to talk to yourself, like you do when you are trying to understand something. And all of this for a child of God is for the purpose of following through the three steps in verse 1 -- only they will have to do with God's ways and His truth.

Meditation is something that very few people do.

But the promises connected with it are tremendous. Look at two other passages:

1) Joshua 1:8.

2) 1 Timothy 4:15. Cf. v. 13.

Both Joshua and Timothy were in similar position, following two of the greatest men of God in Scripture. And this surely must mean that Moses and Paul practiced meditation on the Word of God.

Listen to what Jeremiah said in Jer. 15:16: "Thy words were found . . ."

What are the blessings promises to the one who spends time in the Word meditating? There are four in Psalm 1:

1) Stability. Cf. Lk. 7:24.

2) Fruit.

3) Consistent outward profession.

4) Prosperity in service.

The Psalm concludes with . . .

III. THE CONTRAST WITH THE UNGODLY (Psa. 1:4-6).

A. Their present experience (v. 4).

B. The coming judgment (v. 5). The lives of the people of God when devoted to the Word bear eternal results.

C. The pleasure and displeasure of God (v. 6).

Knowing in Hebrew includes the exercise of the affections. So this means that God delights in those who delight in His Word.

Concl: The reason that most people choose the wrong things is because they are following the inclinations of their deceitful hearts. Cf. Jer. 17:9. But there is no need for us to be deceived when we have the Word of God. Ask the Lord to help you in your reading, to bless your thinking about the Word.

Illus: Ex. 3:4.