

MEDITATION AND DELIGHT

(Psalm 1)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Happy New Year!

B. At this time of year it's natural to look ahead in hope—and to make resolutions!

C. Question: We all hope for the renewal of IBC, but what is the key to that?

D. Answer: **Happiness**

E. BUT: *Happiness (and renewal) is an inside job.*

F. Today's OT text—understood in NT perspective—tells us how to experience both:

Blessed *is* the man who neither walks in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ²but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³He shall be like a tree *firmly* planted by the rivers of water, which brings forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he will prosper. ⁴The wicked *are* not so, but *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish. – Psalm 1

G. Opening Prayer

II. (1-2) FOUR KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RIGTHEOUS

A. Intro: This Psalm contrasts the way and destiny of the righteous vs. the wicked. Why did the Psalmist write it? Because the wicked often seem to prosper, while the righteous often seem to struggle. But the Psalmist knows that this will not always be so; that in the Day of Judgment the tables will be turned, once and for all. And he wants us to know it as well. He wants to help us live spiritually safe, healthy and prosperous lives *now*, so that in the Day of the Lord we will be found among the congregation of the righteous *with great joy!* Along the way, he gives us four characteristics of the righteous.

B. #1: He is blessed

Blessed *is* the man . . .

- Two ways to read this Psalm: This is what the righteous do IN ORDER TO BE blessed (law) / This is what the righteous do BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN blessed (with a new heart) (grace)

- MP: Sovereign Grace has changed the righteous man's delights!

C. #2: He does NOT delight in the company or the way of sinners

. . . who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful . . .

“How well God must like you! You don't hang out at Sin Saloon, you don't slink along Dead-End Road, you don't go to Smart-Mouth College.” – The MSG

- MP: The God of Blessing has changed our place of RESIDENCE:
- Now we are SEATED with Christ in the heavenlies
- Now we WALK in the Spirit, no longer fulfilling the lusts of the flesh
- Now we are clothed in the full armor of God: Therefore we STAND strong against all the flaming arrows of the evil one!
- MP: As a result, we no longer sit, walk, or stand with sinners (nor should we)
- Caveat: This does not mean we don't *keep company* with sinners, for Jesus did. It simply means we no longer run with them:

For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the will of the Gentiles, who walk through life in debaucheries, unbridled lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and illicit idolatries. ‘They are astonished that you do not run with *them* into the same flood of dissipation, and therefore speak evil *of you*;’ but they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. – 1 Peter

- By God's blessing and grace, our new gang is His gang! ·
- “We know that we have passed out of death *and* into life because we love the brotherhood.” – 1 John 3

D. #3: He DOES delight in the Law (or Instruction) of the Lord

²But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD

- Why does the righteous DELIGHT in the Law of the Lord?
- Certainly NOT because his standing before God depends upon obedience to the Ten Commandments (Heb. 12)
- No, it's because he realizes that his right standing with God is a gift of God's GRACE, and that the commandments are simply a pathway to fuller holiness, fellowship, and joy!

1. How this worked for David and the OT saints
2. How this works for us, the NT saints

- MP: The Law of the Lord = the Instruction of the Lord = the Gospel of the Lord = the Key to our Right Standing = the Key to our Delight and Joy! (For Our God is a Joyful God!)

- The testimony of Milton Vincent (Reading 1)

E. # 4: He meditates in the Law/Instruction/Gospel of the Lord day and night

- What meditation is NOT
- What meditation IS: *A deliberate, prayerful, lingering, and expectant gaze through the window of Holy Scripture in search of fresh sightings of Christ and the Gospel, in complete confidence that such sightings will result in daily renewal, power, and joy!* (HSL)
- Caveat: How do Gospel-delighters handle commandments, reproofs, warnings, and exhortations when they come to them? Answer: With Gospel Gloves and Gospel JOY! (HSL)
- Bible Reading Plan for 2017. Caveat: Good to read, BETTER to Meditate!

III. (3) FOUR GREAT BLESSINGS OF THE RIGHTEOUS (WHO DELIGHT AND MEDITATE IN THE LAW OF THE LORD DAY AND NIGHT)

³ He shall be like a tree *firmly* planted by the rivers of water, which brings forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither. And in whatever he does, he prospers.

A. Stability: He shall be like a tree *firmly* planted by the rivers of water . . .

- An image of Eden?

MP: Are we firmly planted in the Gospel? Then we shall be firmly planted in the waters of the Spirit!

B. Fruitfulness: . . . which brings forth its fruit in its season

- An image of Eden?
- Fruit Defined: Character, Wisdom, Gift-empowered ministry

We need only abide in the grace of Christ—the True Vine—and fruit will grow (John 15)

C. Vitality (Freshness):

. . . and whose leaf does not wither.

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

¹³Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

¹⁴They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, ¹⁵to declare that the LORD is upright: *He is* my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in Him! – Psalm 92

D. Prosperity: And in whatever he does, he prospers.

- MP: Our prosperity is spiritual, not physical

- Testimony: The physical prosperity of Joshua (Josh. 1)
- Testimony: The spiritual prosperity of Milton Vincent (Reading 2)

IV. (4-5) THE GLORIOUS HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

⁴The wicked *are* not so, but *are* like the chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

- By God’s grace we know what the future holds, and therefore know ourselves to be a people on pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world to the Parousia, the Resurrection, the Day of Judgment, and the (glorious new) World to Come
- We exult in (confident) hope of the glory of God!
- And as we make our pilgrimage, we lovingly warn sinners, invite them to join us, and welcome all who believe into our ranks!

V. (6) THE PRECIOUS WATCHCARE OF THE LORD OVER HIS OWN (RIGHTEOUS) CHILDREN

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

- View #1: Knows = sees, watches over
- View #2: Knows = approves of, has positive regard for
- BOTH are true . . .
- NOW! “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.”

⁵Let your way of life be free from the love of money; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” ⁶Therefore, we may boldly say: “The LORD *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

VI. CONCLUSION: 2017: A YEAR OF MEDITATION AND DELIGHT: A YEAR OF GLORYING IN THE GOSPEL OF GOD, AND THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL!

VII. COMMUNION: LET US NOW CELEBRATE THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE ONE WHO PURCHASED FOR US THIS PRECIOUS HOPE AND JOY!