

# Preaching the Psalms Series

(4)

## Psalm 1

### *How to Be Happy and Blessed in Life, Psalm 1:1-6*

#### Psalm 1:1-6 (NASB)

<sup>1</sup>“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

<sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

<sup>3</sup>He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

<sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup>For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.”

Only then can we be gloriously blessed in the presence of the Lord. This is, *How to Be Happy and Blessed in Life, Psalm 1:1-6*.

1. **Separate from the wicked (v. 1).**
  2. **Be devoted to God’s Word (vv. 2-3).**
  3. **Understand the unhappy and wicked (vv. 4-5).**
  4. **Trust the Lord and be righteous (v. 6).**
3. (Psalm 1:4-5) **Understand the unhappy and wicked.**

#### Psalm 1:4-5 (NASB)

<sup>4</sup>“The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”

In sharp contrast to the enduring blessedness of the righteous is the fleeting worthlessness of the ungodly. Nothing could create a better image of permanence than the flourishing tree planted by the river. Nothing could be more unstable and transitory than the chaff now cited in comparison.

#### **a. They are like chaff: Blown about by the winds of judgment (v. 4).**

##### Psalm 1:4 (NASB)

<sup>4</sup>“The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

Chaff is a common illustration in Scripture of those things that are worthless, temporary, and short-lived. (Matthew 3:12; Job 21:18; Psalm 35:5; Isaiah 29:5; Hosea 13:3).

**Matthew 3:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup>“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”**

**Job 21:18 (NASB)**

**<sup>18</sup>“Are they as straw before the wind, And like chaff which the storm carries away?”**

**Psalms 35:5 (NASB)**

**<sup>5</sup>“Let them be like chaff before the wind, With the angel of the LORD driving them on.”**

**Isaiah 29:5 (NASB)**

**<sup>5</sup>“But the multitude of your enemies will become like fine dust, And the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away; And it will happen instantly, suddenly.”**

**Hosea 13:3 (NASB)**

**<sup>3</sup>“Therefore they will be like the morning cloud And like dew which soon disappears, Like chaff which is blown away from the threshing floor And like smoke from a chimney.”**

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* explains its significance:

In the process of winnowing [wheat], as it has been carried on in the East for thousands of years, the grain is tossed into the air so that the wind may cause a separation of chaff and straw. The light husks from the wheat and fine particles of straw are dispersed by the wind in the form of a fine dust; the heavier straw which has been broken into short pieces by the threshing process falls near at hand on the edge of the threshing-floor, while the grain falls back upon the pile....

This straw is ordinarily saved and fed as ‘roughage’ to the animals. It could easily be gathered and burned...while the chaff is blown away beyond recovery, a strong figure to depict complete annihilation.

The towering tree is firmly established in fertile soil ([v. 3](#)).

**Psalms 1:3 (NASB)**

**<sup>3</sup>“He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.”**

Its deep, huge roots drink abundantly from the flowing river by which it is planted. Its leaves are lush and green, and its limbs hang heavy with sweet, juicy fruit. It stands undaunted when storm clouds gather on the horizon, for it is rooted ever so deeply and can withstand the strongest of winds. This image depicts the godly man or woman.

The chaff of the wheat, in contrast, is weightless and worthless, without substance and without value. When it is tested, it quickly and easily scatters. It cannot withstand the slightest of breezes, much less the violent gusts of the raging storm. Gone! Here one

second, then vanished, never to appear again. This is the ungodly person, the man or woman who does not know the Lord.

**b. They doom themselves (v. 5).**

**Psalm 1:5 (NASB)**

**<sup>5</sup>“Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”**

The *wind* is a symbol of God’s judgment upon every individual (v. 4).

**Psalm 1:4 (NASB)**

**<sup>4</sup>“The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.”**

As the feathery chaff cannot survive the stormy gales, the ungodly person will not be able to stand in the day of God’s coming judgment. John the Baptist preached this same message to the Pharisees and Sadducees:

**Matthew 3:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup>“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”**

Excellent commentator H.C. Leupold explains the judgment referred to in this verse:

*Though it may be true that throughout life those who have turned from God must experience many a setback and defeat in which they are not able to maintain themselves...this word seems to refer primarily to one outstanding judgment which is the climax of them all, and whose verdicts are ultimate, the final judgment.*

On that glorious yet dreadful day when the righteous are assembled together for eternal bliss with the Lord, the ungodly will be eternally banished from God’s presence.

Chaff closely resembles wheat and is difficult to distinguish from it. The picture is that of false believers who pretend to be a part of God’s righteous congregation. Hypocrisy was the heart of John’s scathing sermon to the Pharisees and Sadducees ([Matthew 3:7-12](#)).

**Matthew 3:7-12 (NASB)**

**<sup>7</sup>“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”**

**<sup>8</sup>Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;**

**<sup>9</sup>and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.**

**<sup>10</sup>“The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”**

**<sup>11</sup>“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will**

**baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”**

**<sup>12</sup>“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”**

Their fruits (**works, deeds**) were not those of a righteous *tree* or person. Scripture teaches that on the day of God’s final judgment all unbelievers will be unmasked and identified as chaff by their works:

**Revelation 20:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup>“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”**

Unbelievers will be eternally doomed on that dreadful day. They will be violently scattered by the fierce winds of God’s unrestrained wrath. They will be forever ejected from the presence of the righteous and hurled into the lake of fire:

**Revelation 20:15 (NASB)**

**<sup>15</sup>“And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”**

**Thought 1.** What does the future hold for the ungodly? Tragically, their prospects are both bleak and terrifying. Every person we meet is going to spend eternity in hell *unless* he or she receives the salvation and life that Christ offers.

As believers, Christ commissions us to spend our lives and resources reaching those who face the eternal doom of judgment. We must accept this responsibility—love people enough to overcome our fears and tell them about Christ. Our family members, neighbors, co-workers, and friends will perish eternally if they do not repent of their sins and believe in Christ. How can we claim to truly love them without trying to reach them with the gospel?

Part of the fruit we bear as believers is the souls we bring into the family of God. A special reward—the crown of rejoicing—awaits us if we faithfully obey the Savior’s command to win the lost (**1 Thessalonians 2:19**).

**1 Thessalonians 2:19 (NASB)**

**<sup>19</sup>“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?”**

**Matthew 13:49 (NASB)**

**<sup>49</sup>“So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous.”**

**Romans 1:13 (NASB)**

**<sup>13</sup>“I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.**

**Bible Study: THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE**

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**Revelation 6:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup>“For the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

**Proverbs 11:30 (NASB)**

<sup>30</sup>“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls.”