

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

Volume 3 – Number 34

September 7, 2014

Order of Services Sunday September 7, 2014

Song Leader	David Osinski
Prayer	Stan Thompson
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Tom Dolan
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Dan Wydro
Assisting at the Table	Bob Celentano Jr.
Morning Closing Prayer	Derald Sanchez
Evening Opening Prayer	Bob Celentano
Announcements	Ralph Ruggiero

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

Which Way Are You Going?

The Bible paints our lives as a journey offering two roads. Regardless of how offensive this idea may be to the modern mind, it is "either / or," rather than "both / and." There are two conflicting kingdoms ... the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. There are two entry points ... the wide gate leading to destruction and the narrow gate leading to life (Matthew 7:13-14).

In verse 1 the word "blessed" is a call to happiness, an invitation with a promise, like Jesus' Beatitudes. The negative part of the blessing is expounded first, in that the blessed person is not one who "walks not in the counsel of the ungodly." His

worldview, his ethical life, and his moral decisions are not dictated by the godless. Then, he no longer "stands in the path of sinners." His identity, his standing, his lifestyle are no longer determined by those in rebellion against God. Finally, he no longer "sits in the seat of the scornful." He neither learns nor judges from the perspective of those bearing the acid authority of cynicism and pride.

While these three clauses may simply be viewed as variations on the same theme, they may also form a mini-exposition of progressing depravity: Heeding the wisdom of the ungodly (walking) leads to identification with sinners (standing), which results in being settled, established in the authority of their judgments (seated). The warning is not to start the downward spiral ... to avoid the counsel of the ungodly.

By contrast, the blessed man has been redeemed from the whole structure of this fallen world with its egocentricity, its lies, its moral failure, and, its satanic seduction ... he indeed is on his way to happiness.

The negative expression in verse 1 prepares us for the positive in verse 2. Here the blessed person has an "attitude" of "delight" in "the law of the Lord," which leads him to an action as "in His law he meditates day and night." We really don't need to enter

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish. (Psalms 1:1-6 NKJV)

the contemporary debate as to whether attitudes determine actions or actions determine attitudes. The fact is, the right attitude, *delight*, will lead to the right action, *meditation*. If we delight in a person, we want to be with him or her. If we delight in a song, we want to sing it. If we delight in a book, we want to read it. If we delight in God's law, we will want to meditate upon it.

Biblical meditation, unlike many recent popular techniques, is not content-less but content-full. It is not accomplished by eliminating thought but by redirecting thought to the Word of God. The Hebrew word for "meditate" means "to utter sounds, to speak." It is often used synonymously with, "to remember, call to mind," and "to consider, ponder."

Meditation includes audible recitation, and it is to be done continually, "day and night." So God says to Joshua, *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it"* (Joshua_1:8). Jesus also calls us to the same lifestyle determined by the Word of God ... *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31-32). Walking in the counsel of God is the call to Bible study, to Scripture memorization, to a daily time of personal devotion in the Word of God.

Verse 3 uses a simile to describe the blessed person as a tree, "planted by the rivers of water." These rivers are like irrigation ditches ... as the believer meditates, he will be continually watered by the Word. The results of this nourishment are twofold. First, we will bear fruit in season. Second, we will be evergreen.

The fulfillment of our fruitfulness lies in Jesus' promise that we will bear fruit as we abide in Him (John 15:1). The further promise that we will be evergreen means that we will not wither ... even in barren times. And, since the Word of God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8), we too will stand forever in that Word.

This section of the psalm concludes with a promise: *"And whatever he does shall prosper."* The blessed person delights in God's Law, meditates upon God's Law, and prospers. Guided and guarded by God's word, we will live in fullness and blessing as a firm, fruitful tree, rooted deeply against the winds of change.

The ungodly, already identified with "sinners" and the "scornful" in verse 1, are the opposite of the righteous. Rather than being a sturdy oak, they are "like the chaff which the wind drives away." The metaphor here is that of threshing, in which kernels of wheat, having been thrown into the air, fall back to the ground as the wind blows away the worthless chaff. To be severed from the Word of God is to have no root, no nourishment, no fruit, no life, or as in Jesus' parable, it is to be like the house built upon the sand, demolished by the storms of life (Matthew 7:24-27).

The assurance of the righteous is that the Lord knows their way. The Hebrew verb used here means "to know, to have intimate relationship with." Here the psalmist uses a verb form that indicates that the Lord "keeps on knowing" the way of the righteous. His eye is upon them, His ear is open to them, and in Christ His Spirit abides within them forever (John 14:17). Contrasted with the ungodly who are captive to their sin, governed by this world, they have taken a way that leads to death. They will not stand

in the judgment but will perish. The root meaning of the Hebrew verb used here is "to wander off." Like an animal who has wandered far from the safety of the flock, those who stray from the watchful eye of the Lord will surely suffer the ultimate disaster.

Psalms 1, then, is a call to meditation upon the revelation of God. We are blessed and delivered from the vanity of this world as we delight in God's Word and respond with action according to His Way and Will in our lives.

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – All of our wayward members

For Physical Healing – Bill Duryea's Parents ... Bob James' Nephew (Michael) ... Ray Thompson ... Georgia DeLorenzo

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation ... the Evangelist and Teachers We Help Support

EVENTS AND NOTES

- ⤴ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS AFTERNOON STARTING AT 4:00PM.
- ⤴ OUR NEXT THURSDAY MORNING STUDY WILL BE ON SEPTEMBER 11THTH AT THE PERKIN'S RESTAURANT IN PHILLIPSBURG STARTING AT 10AM. ALL ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE WHENEVER YOU CAN ... MORE IMPORTANTLY INVITE THOSE WHO MAYBE SEEKING JESUS!
- ⤴ WE HAVE A "MEET-UP" SITE ON THE WEB ... [HTTP://WWW.MEETUP.COM/THURSDAY-MORNING-BIBLE-STUDY-AT-PERKINS-IN-PHILLIPSBURG-NJ](http://www.meetup.com/Thursday-Morning-Bible-Study-at-Perkins-in-Phillipsburg-NJ) ... CHECK IT OUT!
- ⤴ WE NEED A JUNIOR CLASS TEACHER FOR THE BIBLE SCHOOL TERM WHICH STARTS ON OCTOBER 5TH.
- ⤴ THERE IS A REVISED BUILDING CLEAN-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES SCHEDULE ON THE BULLETIN BOARD. PLEASE REVIEW IT SO THAT YOU KNOW WHEN YOUR FAMILY IS SCHEDULED.