

## Lesson 1: Psalm 1 and Psalm 19

### Reading:

1. Read "Introduction to the Psalms" (from the ESV Study Bible).
2. Read Psalm 1 and Psalm 19 through several times.
3. Read commentaries:
  - a. Psalm 1 and Psalm 19: Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary, by Derek Kidner; Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries.
  - b. Psalm 19: The Message of Psalms 1-72, Michael Wilcock, Bible Speaks Today.

### Observations

1. What can we learn from the prescript of these psalms? (who is the author. What is the occasion or purpose?)
  - a. Psalm 1: no prescript, author or occasion; introductory psalm for the entire Psalter.
  - b. Psalm 19: David is the author. "To the choirmaster" probably means it was sung congregationally.
2. What is the outline or structure of these psalms?

#### PSALM 1:

- I. Contrasting morals between the righteous and the wicked. (vv 1-2)
  - a. The righteous are blessed because they avoid:
    1. Walking the counsel of the wicked
    2. Standing in the way of sinners
    3. Sitting in the seat of scoffers
  - b. The righteous are blessed because they:
    1. Delight in God's word. They have affection and passion for God's word.
    2. They meditate on His word continually ("day and night"). The righteous give themselves to reading, studying, memorizing and applying God's word.
- II. Contrasting fruit between the righteous and the wicked. (vv 3-4)

- a. The righteous are fruitful
  1. Like a tree planted by a stream, he is constantly watered.
  2. Growth occurs and fruit is produced in season.
  3. His life doesn't wither, regardless the circumstances.
  4. He enjoys spiritual prosperity.
- b. The wicked are fruitless
  1. They are like chaff (the useless husks and straw) that the wind drives away.

### III. Contrasting destinies between the righteous and the wicked. (vv 5-6)

- a. The wicked face final judgment.
  1. They are excluded from God's people.
  2. Their lives will end in destruction.
- b. The righteous will receive life
  1. They will be included among God's people.
  2. The Lord knows "with affection and approval" the way of the righteous. By implication, they will not face God's judgment but instead enjoy eternal life.

### **PSALM 19:**

#### I. Creation declares God's glory. (vv 1-6)

- a. The heavens declare God's handiwork and glory.
  1. Their voice is unceasing; "day to day...night to night."
  2. Their voice is heard throughout the world, like the heat of the sun, "nothing is hidden from its heat."

#### II. God's Law speaks to the soul. (vv 7-11)

- a. Characteristics and benefits of God's Law (vv 7-9, 11)
  1. It is perfect and refreshes the soul.
  2. It is trustworthy and makes the simple wise.
  3. It is truthful, bringing joy to the heart.
  4. It is pure (without evil, holy), enlightening the eyes.
  5. It is true, reliable, and righteous, enduring forever. It can be counted on and trusted.
  6. It brings reward – assurance of faith and growth in character.
- b. Attitude toward God's Law (v. 10)

1. We are to delight in His word.
  - a. More than great riches
  - b. More than the sweetest or finest tasting foods.

III. God's Law elicits a humble response. (vv 12-14)

- a. Reflection on our sins and failures, known and unknown.
  - b. Reliance on His forgiveness.
  - c. Prayer for protection from sin and to walk pleasing to the Lord.
3. Grammar and Syntax: Any metaphors, similes, personification or other imagery? Is there parallelism? What are the key words?"

### **PSALM 1:**

Figures of Speech? Righteous are compared to a fruitful, ever-watered tree. The wicked are compared to useless chaff.

Parallelisms? In verse 1, the psalmist talks about the "wicked", the "sinner" and the "scoffers". In general, they all refer to those who are not willing to live by or follow God's law.

Key words? Wicked (4x), righteous/man/he (6x), delight, meditate, law of the Lord.

### **PSALM 19:**

Figures of Speech?

- Personification: verses 1-6 give speech to creation so it can declare God's glory.
- Imagery: the sun comes and goes from a tent.
- Simile: the sun is compared to a bridegroom leaving his tent and to a strong man that runs its course.

Parallelisms?

- Verses 1-6 seem to reinforce 1 idea – the heavens are proclaiming God's power, wisdom, and glory.
- Verses 7-9 use 5 words which all refer to God's word – law, testimony, precepts, commandments, roles.
- Verse 10 – the second line reinforces and elaborates on the 1<sup>st</sup> line.

Key words?

- Verses 1-6: speech language – declare, proclaims, speech, voice, words, reveals.

- Verse 7-9: the words for God's Law and the phrase "the \_\_\_\_ of the Lord is \_\_\_\_"
- Verse 10 – desired – it reflects the posture of our heart.
- Verses 12-13: Sin language – errors, hidden faults, presumptuous sins, great transgression.
- Verse 13-14: holiness of life language – blameless, acceptable in your sight.

## Interpretation and Application

1. How would you summarize the main point(s) and idea(s) of this psalm?

### **PSALM 1:**

This is a psalm that invites the reader to delight in and be devoted to God's word. By contrasting the morals, fruit and outcomes of the righteous and the wicked, the righteous are invited to enjoy the fruitful blessings (in this life and the life to come) of loving, reading, studying and meditating on God's word. The righteous, who love God's law, prosper and are fruitful. The wicked, who refuse to live by God's law, perish.

### **PSALM 19:**

This psalm celebrates God's revelation of Himself. With a loud, persistent and persuasive voice, creation, particularly the heavens, declare God's glory – His power, splendor and wisdom. But more importantly, God's Law (here the Mosaic Law but more generally, God's word) is celebrated as the supreme revelation that addresses and does good to our soul. In response to a reflection on God's disclosure in creation and His word, the psalmist reflects on his sins, God's forgiveness and prays his life would be blameless and acceptable to God.

2. From verse Psalm 1:2 and Psalm 19:10, what are the two distinguishing marks of the righteous?
  - The righteous delight in God's word. In other words, the righteous find rich pleasure and pure joy in Scripture. God's word is to be more desired than great riches and more pleasurable than the sweetest tastes.
  - Daily, the righteous are to read, ponder, contemplate and to think deeply about the truths of Scripture. Faithful and consistent intake and meditation on God's word produces delight and affection for God's word, and ultimately for God and His Son.
3. From Psalm 1, what good fruit of delighting and meditating on God's word would you point out to someone whose life lacks growth in godliness?

- Conviction concerning worldliness and ungodliness. (v 1) The righteous bring biblical thinking and discernment to the thinking, the behavior, the speech and the lifestyles of the wicked and ungodly. And the righteous avoids walking the same way.
  - Consistent growth in godliness. (v 3) This verse speaks of slow and consistent growth, which is the way most growth occurs. This verse also illustrates that the righteous, like "a tree planted by streams of water," is continually nourished by the life-giving water of God's word. Spiritual fruit and prosperity results from those who sink their roots into God's word.
  - Confidence in the Day of Judgment. (v 5-6) We can face that Final Day with confidence because we have trusted in the only one who is the perfect fulfillment of Psalm 1, Jesus Christ.
4. From Psalm 19:7-11, what benefits of Scripture could you share with someone whose intake of God's word is minimal?
- It reviews and brings refreshment to the soul. (v 7a)
  - It makes the simple wise. They are no longer swayed but apply God's truth with discernment and wisdom to daily life. (v 7b)
  - It brings joy to our hearts with fresh revelations of the goodness of God (v 8a)
  - It opens our blind eyes to be alert to and see the glorious truths of Scripture. (v. 8b)
  - Scripture is a reliable, faithful, true and eternal account of God and His will. Therefore we can stand firmly on the truth and reliability of its promises. (v 9-10)
  - God rewards us with assurance, with character growth and for obedience to His Word.
5. From these psalms, how can you encourage someone who doesn't "feel" like reading or meditation on God's word?

C.J. Mahaney once said, "What you give your attention to forms your desire." For example, if you give your attention to sports, entertainment, or hobbies, then you will love sports, enjoy spending time watching TV or movies or give your energy to your hobbies. The same is true for God's Word. If you give your attention, time and energy to reading, studying and meditating of God's word, then this devoted action will produce devoted affections of delight. (see Psalm 1:2)

6. What warnings do these psalms have for those who neglect or marginalize God's Word?

- Lack of conviction or discernment about ungodliness. Neglect could mean we walk, sit and stand in the way of the wicked, sinners and scoffers. (Psalm 1:1)
- Lack of growth and lack of good fruit (Psalm 1:3)
- Possibly unsaved without the assurance of eternal life (Psalm 1:4-6)
- Blindness to our disobedience and sinful ways (Psalm 19:12-13)