

“CHOOSING PREDICAMENTS”

Psalm 1:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path/way of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers/mockers! **2** But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in/on His law he meditates day and night. **3** 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. **4** The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives/blows away. **5** Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly/congregation of the righteous. **6** For the Lord knows/watches-over the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish. – NASB/ESV/NIV-1984

PREDICAMENT: definition – “an unpleasantly difficult, perplexing, or unsettling situation”

v.1: Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path/way of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers/mockers!

Quote: “To the righteous, “the ways of piety are paths of peace and pleasantness. His footsteps are ordered by the Word of God, and not by the cunning and wicked devices of carnal men. It is a rich sign of inward grace when the outward walk is changed, and when ungodliness is put far from one’s actions.” - *The Treasury of David*

“**Blessed is the man...**” = **Beatitudes** commentary given by Jesus!

Blessed are the poor in spirit

Blessed are those who mourn

Blessed are the meek

Blessed are those who hunger & thirst after righteousness

Blessed are the merciful

Blessed are the pure in heart

Blessed are the peacemakers

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness (3X)

“**who does not**” = blessing is connected to the avoidance & rejection of sin

“walk” = Entertain & Evaluate... Don't go near or listen to the “biblical” wicked/ungodly!

“in the counsel” = who and what are you listening to, contemplating, & repeating?

“the wicked” = those who are either eternally or temporarily rejected God & His ways.

“The spotless purity of truth must always be at war with the blackness of heresy and lies.” - Spurgeon

“Nor” = a conjunction that connects what follows to the previous point...

“stand” = Embrace & Embolden... Don't “stop to consider” the ways/claims of the wicked

“in the path/way” = Don't be where the wicked are/go...

Simple principle, Hard practice... AVOID the “wicked” HANGOUTS!

Alcoholics should stay out of bars...

Gamblers stay out of casinos...

Porn addicts stay off the internet...

Over-eaters stay out of the cookie aisle...

Egomaniacs stay away from mirrors...

Materialistic “spenders” stop shopping...

“of sinners” = a synonym for “the wicked” in this case... those committed to living in sin

Note that there are two ways to be committed to sin:

Overt... Direct... Rejection of Christ = the “mouth” tells the story

Covert... Indirect... Rejection = Psalm 53:1... the “heart” tells the story

“Fan vs. Follower”

“Nor” = another conjunction... creating a triple-threat-warning....

“sit” = Emulate & Encourage... Don't leave the solution to join the problem!

“Go-to without joining-in!”

“in the seat” = To be in someone else's seat... = one of them or sharing with them

“of scoffers/mockers” =

Scoff is to doubt, deter, destabilize & attempt to destroy with intentionality

Mock is to discourage, devalue, derail, & even devastate if possible...

QUOTE: “Scoffers might sit in lofty seats but they are sitting next to the gates of hell...
When men are living in sin they go from bad to worse.” – The Treasury of David

*** This section calls for an understanding of Church discipline (Matthew 18) and

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 as direct biblical commands regarding the separation of worshiping believers from wicked enemies of God... not to mention the multitude of corresponding warnings replete throughout the Bible.

v.2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in/on His law he meditates day and night.

“But” = Huge contrast... note of distinction about to be made: different than the “wicked”

“his” = the person that might otherwise be tempted to walk, stand, or sit with the wicked

“delight” = his source of joy, meaning, purpose, etc.

Acts 2:42-47... “they DEVOTED themselves to the apostle’s teaching...”

“is in the law” = for those different from the wicked... God’s ways ignite worship!

Read Psalm 56:10 & Psalm 138

“law of the Lord” = 2 Timothy 3:16-17... THE Truth vs. tradition... God’s Word vs. man’s

Examples to exclude:

Catholic works (infant baptism)

The Mormon’s “Book of Mormon”

Lukewarm Baptists... “easy-believism”

Legalistic Baptists... “modern day Pharisees”

Any apostate church that rejects Scripture’s authority

“and” = another conjunction... similar to v.1 but here connecting good things vs. bad...

“in/on His law” = the Word of God... there is no substitute for God’s inspired Word!

“he meditates” = think of like “marinates”

To be immersed in, permeated by, and thoroughly re-flavored supernaturally

We know it is a supernatural thing because 1 Cor. 2:14 says you couldn’t “get it” unless God gave you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart that is ready to receive...

“day and night” = constant and continuous...

There is no time that is outside of “night and day”

This eliminates any wiggle room for the wicked to dilute God’s words...

Note: You won’t/can’t walk, stand, or sit with the wicked when you are meditating & marinating in God’s Word!

v.3 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.

“He will be” = Note the affirmation... there is no “maybe” here... this is a present reality that has not yet come to fruition.... God’s promises (even the prophetic ones) are guaranteed!

“like a tree firmly planted by streams of water” - cf. Jeremiah 17:7-8

Jeremiah 17:7-8:

*“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord
And whose trust is the Lord.
“For he will be like a tree planted by the water,
That extends its roots by a stream
And will not fear when the heat comes;
But its leaves will be green,
And it will not be anxious in a year of drought
Nor cease to yield fruit.”*

“Which yields its fruit” = two key words to focus on...

“yields” = produces... puts forth... talk is cheap!

“fruit” = leaves are indictors but fruit if proof.

The problem is that we are not fruit inspectors... but God knows
Jesus said the fruit reveals the root....

Read Ephesians 4:15... Jude 3ff... 2 Peter 2...

“in its season” = note the timely nature of seasonal expectations...

When God has given us an assignment, it has a “season”

Note that God is sovereign over the seasons in our lives...

His expectations are coupled with His empowerment – Amen!

“and” = another conjunction... the connection continues, contrasting the righteous with the wicked...

“its leaf” = it’s “sign” of life and precursor to fruit production...

Think about it... you will never see fruit come from a leaf-less tree...

Healthy leaves are a good “indication” that things are going well...
But the fruit is the proof and the Lord is the fruit-Inspector.

“**does not wither**” = “crushed but not destroyed” – God is the life-giving Source and no one and nothing can kill (eternally) what/who God gives life to!

“...none that the Father gives Me will fall thru My hands...” – Jesus

“**and**” = yet another conjunction... do you get the sense that God is making a point here!

“**in whatever he does**” = Amen!!! Whatever we do in the Lord & for the Lord...

Note: this is *not* a reference to anything “*religious*”...
not anything “*good*”...
not anything “*approved by men*”...
not anything other than what God would endorse!

“**he prospers.**” = What a promise of prosperity!

We need to define “prospers” – God’s definition differs from the world’s...

Sadly, God’s definition differs from much of the church...

To prosper biblically is to be given the opportunity to
make much of Jesus... to be an instrument used
by God to the glory of God...

Consequently, sometimes biblical prosperity:

Looks like exactly what you might expect...

Looks very different:

- Suffering
- Persecution
- “...and if I perish, I perish!”

v.4 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives/blows away.

“**The wicked**” = again, back to the contrasted group... the opposition to God & His people

“**The wicked are not so,**” = Lest there be any doubt, God’s Word is telling us here that the wicked are NOT like the worshipful children of God!

God is here saying: there is a distinct difference...

Even if you can't see it!

The "wicked" are opposite of worshippers!

"But" = this contrasting word sets up an emphasizing contrast.... the previous "are not so" made the point initially. However, God felt it important enough to double down on the contrast so here He underscores it...

Quote: Matthew Henry on v.4

"The description of the ungodly is given in v.4. In general, they are the reverse of the righteous, both in character and condition: (Quoting v.4a) They are not so. The Septuagint (the first Greek translation of the Old Testament) emphatically repeats this by translating the opening phrase this way: 'Not so the ungodly; the ungodly are not so; they are led by the counsel of the wicked, in the way of sinners, to the seat of the scoffers; they get no delight in the law of God (a.k.a. God's Word), nor ever think of it; they bring forth no fruit but rather the grapes of Sodom & Gomorra."

"they" = the "wicked" – those who are living in opposition to God's Word, will, & way...

"are like chaff" – the totally useless, value-diminishing, labor-adding by-product of wheat

"which the wind" – NOTE: the "wind" is a biblical metaphor for the Holy Spirit... don't miss the implications of the Spirit's role in what follows...

"which the wind drives/blows away." = separated, intentionally sent away from the wheat

v.5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly/congregation of the righteous.

"Therefore" = here comes the consequence / end result of the condition stated above...

"the wicked" = those who choose not to actually serve God (regardless of what they say)

"will not stand" = means "will not last" or "will not be affirmed"

*** They will be "cast down" like defeated sheep (Psalm 23 sermon)

"in the judgment" = in God's eternal evaluation... they won't "stand up" on Judgment Day:

*** They are going "down" on decision & division day!

"Nor" = a negative conjunction... the group that follows is linked to the one prior

*** Those deemed to be "wicked" & lost "sinners" on Judgment Day...

“sinners” = another category of God-haters...

“in the assembly/congregation of the righteous” =

*** Eternally speaking = “heaven”

*** Earthly speaking = hard to stay in gospel LIVING church

***** DISTINGUISH between WICKED ACTS
&
WICKED PEOPLE *****

NOTE: David did wicked acts (2 Samuel 11-12)... but Jesus endorsed David as:
“a man after God’s own heart.”

David was a righteous man who did wicked things...
the key difference is the heart!

Surrender separates sinners!

Read **Psalm 51:1-13** (of 19)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

7 Purge me... and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Redemption & Restoration Require Repentance!

“The wicked in this world, ridicule the righteous and their congregation, they despise them, and care not for their company. Justly, therefore; the ungodly will be forever separated from the righteous. Hypocrites in this world, under the disguise of a plausible profession, (*a right-looking religion*), may thrust themselves into the congregation of the righteous, and (even) remain undisturbed and undiscovered there; - but Christ (will not and) cannot be (deceived) – though His ministers may be... The day is coming when the LORD will separate... the sheep from the goats, and the wheat from the weeds.” - **Matthew Henry**

2 KEY POINTS:

1. The cross can cover any sin(s)... GRACE wins!
2. Sin must be acknowledged and repented of... by the grace of God

Paul is the PERFECT EXAMPLE OF BOTH POINTS....

Galatians 1-2...

1 Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— **2** and all the brothers who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, **4** who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, **5** to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

6 ***I am astonished** that you are **so quickly deserting** him who called you in the grace of Christ and are **turning to a different gospel**— **7** not that there is another one, but **there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel** of Christ. **8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*

10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me

is not man's gospel. **12** For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. **13** For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. **14** And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. **15** But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, **16** was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles...

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas... and... **21** Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. **22** And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. **23** They only were hearing it said, "**He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.**" **24** And they glorified God because of me.

2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me... **4** Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— **5** to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you....

Paul Opposes Peter

2:11 But when Cephas/PETER came to Antioch, **I opposed him to his face,** because he stood condemned. **12** For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; **but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.** **13** And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that **even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.** **14** But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, **I said to Cephas before them all...**

6 For **the LORD knows**/watches-over the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

"**For the LORD knows**" = lets not forget who we're talking about here... GOD KNOWS ALL!

"**the way of the righteous**" = God is watching & watching over His children's way – Amen!

"**But**" = note the contrast... where there is divine protection & promise for the righteous... the same cannot be said for the wicked.

"**the way of the wicked**" = again, God knows, God is watching, & God's wrath is coming

"**will perish**" = eternal damnation. Hell awaits the wicked – unless they repent & receive God's saving grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

So in closing...

How are we to find spiritual stability in life's precarious predicaments?

Read *Philippians ch.3 thru 4:9...*

The Goal of Life -- 3:1ff *Finally, my brothers (and sisters), **rejoice in the Lord.** To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.*

2 Beware of the dogs, **beware** of the evil workers, **beware of the false circumcision**; **3** for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh **4** although I myself might have confidence... in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I have far more: **5** circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, **9** and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, **10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; **11** in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. **13** Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do:

...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus...

17 Brothers, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. **18** For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, **19** whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things...

4:1-9 -- Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way **stand firm in the Lord**, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to **live in harmony in the Lord.** **3** Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. **6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And **the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **dwell on these things.**

9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, **practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.**