

Rhythm of Life: Roots

Psalm 1

Small Group Discussion

Opening question:

- This week's theme has to do with putting "roots" down into a source of spiritual nourishment. What is it that you feel feeds you spiritually? What has enabled you to become stable, rooted, or grounded?

TAKE TURNS READING PSALM 1

1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

1. Psalm one begins by describing the "blessed" or "happy" person. Review the same word in other verses and describe what you think this word "blessed" means. (Below are verses where the same Hebrew word translated "blessed" appears).
 - Job 5:17 "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.
 - Ps 32:2 How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!
 - Ps 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
 - Ps 40:4 How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust, and has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood.
 - Pr 3:13 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding.
2. Before examining what the blessed person does and does not do, Pastor Josh first described the results of this person's choices. Verse 3 states, "'That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.'"
 - a. Name all the positive spiritual results found in this metaphor of a tree.
 - b. Is this metaphor at all motivating? Why?
 - c. Can you name someone in your life currently for whom this tree description is fitting? Who exemplifies this kind of life?
3. In verse 1 we see three warnings about what to avoid, if we want this result of being like a firmly planted tree.
 - a. What are these things to avoid? Do you see a progression of sin in them? Describe.
 - b. What do each of these things compare to today? Why is it so hard to avoid them?
4. The Psalmist then (in v. 2) describes the positive key to becoming like a firmly planted tree: to delight in the law of the Lord, by meditating on it day and night.
 - a. How are "delight" and "meditate" different? Define each.

- b. What would it look like today to meditate “day and night” on God’s Word? (The Psalmist probably had in mind the idea of beginning and ending your day in this way).
 - c. Why does the psalmist use the word “law” when he could have used the phrase “God’s Word” or “Scripture”? (Pastor Josh explained the following: *The word “law” here translates the Hebrew word “torah.” According to OT scholar Derek Kidner, it basically means “direction,” or “instruction.” It can be confined to a single command, or to the books of the Law, but here, it extends to mean the whole of Scripture... The writer is implying that for the Scriptures to have the kind of effect that he describes here, you have to see them as law—in other words, as **authoritative**.*)
 - d. Discuss the following quote, from Timothy Keller. What do you think of this idea of wrestling with God as you reflect on his word? “If you just toss the stuff that offends your sensibilities, you can’t wrestle with God. And real relationships... involve wrestling. If you take out the parts that offend you, you are creating a god who can never wrestle with you, who is impotent. You can’t be changed by the word.”
 - e. Pastor Ken said in his sermon the Sunday before last, “If we want to grow our friendship with God, we will cultivate a rhythm of spending time with him. Friendships take time. Sharing time with God should never be seen as a duty: it’s a get to, not a have to; a may, not a must. “The blessed person is the one who meditates on the word of God, gnawing and sucking its marrow, growling with delight over it.” **Why do you think it is so hard to “delight” in God’s Word?**
 - f. Pastor Josh said that the ability to delight in all of Scripture—even when it shows you your shortcomings—depends on seeing Jesus and his undying love for you at the center of the story. How does this change the way you approach Scripture?
5. What are the practical effects of...
 - a. ...delighting in God’s word on a regular basis? Go back to the metaphor of v. 3 if that helps.
 - b. ...ignoring God’s word? Go back to the description of the wicked in vv. 4-6 if needed.
 - c. Is the contrasting metaphors of a tree vs. that of chaff motivating? How so?
 6. What is the biggest practical hindrance to your rhythm of reading and meditating on Scripture?
 7. Pastor Josh suggested using the acronym TACS (from Martin Luther) as a practical way of meditating on Scripture. Apply that approach to the teaching of Psalm 1, now that you have studied it. How would you then Adore God, Confess your sin, and Supplicate (ask of God) in response to the teaching of Psalm 1?

Share and Pray: Let’s spend some time sharing prayer requests of adoration, confession, and supplication, and then pray through them together.