

“Biblical Prosperity”  
(Psalm 1)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Having finished the book of Romans, I want us to spend a little time in the Psalms. Really for two reasons:

- a. Summer is coming and many of us will be on vacation.
  - (i) The psalms give us more manageable passages.
  - (ii) Each is a complete topic on its own.
  - (iii) If you miss one or several, you don't lose continuity.
  
- b. More importantly, the psalms are very experiential in content.
  - (i) They not only teach doctrine, but give us examples of the saints living and experiencing the truth of that doctrine.
  - (ii) They show us the struggles of the Christian life and how trust in the Lord results in blessing.

2. Experiential Christianity is what we should be seeking.

- a. We should want to move beyond simply knowing the truths of Christianity.
  - (i) This is something that is particularly a problem in Reformed denominations.
  - (ii) We think Christianity is only a matter of orthodoxy – right belief.
  - (iii) We forget it is also a matter of orthopraxy – right living.
  
- b. We should want to experience the truth, to live it.
  - (i) God isn't merely going to examine our knowledge on Judgment Day.
  - (ii) His judgment will be based on how well we lived according to what we knew.
  - (iii) We must strive not only to learn, but to live the Christian life.
  - (iv) The psalms can help us do this.
  
- c. The psalms are full of the experiences of the saints: their joys, sorrows, complaints, fears, their trust and faith in God.
  - (i) They can give us instruction and comfort in similar situations.
  - (ii) They give us hope that though we have sinned, our sins can be and are forgiven in Christ.
  - (iii) They give us the expectation that the Lord will fight and overcome our enemies, especially our sins.
  - (iv) They tell us how to obtain God's blessing now.
  - (v) And they help us to look forward to a more glorious future.

B. Preview.

1. Psalm One begins where we need to begin – where these blessings come from.

- a. They remind us that it's not the man who knows the right thing to do that is blessed, but the one who does what he knows to be right.
  - b. On one occasion, Jesus told His disciples regarding the necessity of humbling themselves and being servants to one another, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).
    - (i) Knowing isn't enough.
    - (ii) We must also do what we know.
    - (iii) If we know, but don't do, we only make ourselves more culpable for not doing.
  - c. Jesus also said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall" (Matt. 7:24-27).
  - d. There is blessing to be found in the path of obedience: This is, in essence, what we're going to see in Psalm One.
2. This morning, what I want us to consider are three things:
- a. Who it is that receives the blessing of the Lord.
  - b. What these blessings are that he receives.
  - c. What happens to those who choose not to walk in the path of obedience.

## II. Sermon.

- A. First, who is it that receives the blessing of the Lord?
  - 1. It is the man who doesn't practice sin, rebellion, isn't on the broad road.
    - a. Who doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked:
      - (i) Who doesn't listen to their ideas.
      - (ii) Who doesn't follow the ways of the world.
    - b. Who doesn't stand in the path of sinners:
      - (i) There are times when the Christian falls into sin – stumbles into the way of the broad path.
      - (ii) But he is not of the mind or heart to walk on it for long and doesn't belong there.
      - (iii) The man heading for destruction lives on that path, but not the godly man.
  - c. And who doesn't sit in the seat of scoffers:
    - (i) He doesn't sit with the world/wicked and mock/make fun of those who are trying to live for God's glory.
    - (ii) This is the end of the road for those listen to the world, who find a home on the path of destruction – their hearts become so hard that they eventually ridicule those who want to live for Christ.

- (iii) This is a very dangerous situation.
- (iv) The man who receives the Lord's blessing is not this way.
- (v) He rejects that way because God rejects it.

2. Rather, he practices righteousness:

- a. He delights in the Law.
  - (i) He just doesn't tolerate it, put up with it, live uncomfortably with it.
  - (ii) He delights in it, is pleased with it, takes pleasure in it.
  - (iii) It is the joy of his heart. He loves it.
- b. He meditates on it day and night.
  - (i) You tend to think about what you love. It's on your mind.
  - (ii) The righteous man considers the Law, mulls it over until he understands it.
  - (iii) But he does so, obviously, not just to know, but to do what it says.
- c. And he approves of that way because God approves of it.
  - (i) "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous" (v. 6).
  - (ii) This is the path He approves of.
  - (iii) And so does the righteous man.
- d. The man who is blessed is the man who thinks like God and who has the affections of God's heart in his own.
  - (i) One who is godly is like God.
  - (ii) Even as one who is a Christian is one who is like Christ.
  - (iii) It is the godly man, the Christian, who is blessed of God, because he delights in what God delights in.

B. What are the blessings that God promises to those who live a godly life?

- 1. He will be a fruitful tree:
  - a. We all appreciate a fruit tree that's productive.
  - b. This is what the godly man or woman is like:
    - (i) Firmly planted by streams of water.
    - (ii) Yields fruit in its season.
    - (iii) Leaf does not wither.
    - (iv) He will be spiritually healthy – filled with living water/the Spirit – and bears much fruit, according to their giftedness and God's will.
- 2. Whatever he does will prosper:
  - a. When he does what he is called to do in God's way, his work will prosper.
    - (i) It doesn't always turn out the way he may like it at first.
    - (ii) There may be difficult times; it may look as though what he does is hopelessly falling apart.
    - (iii) But if he is walking with the Lord in His will, it will turn out just as He wants it to.
    - (iv) He can always be certain of this: God is sovereign.

- b. But even in the middle of difficult times, God will make sure that he prospers spiritually.
  - (i) God will work it together for good.
  - (ii) He will be near to those who constantly draw near to Him.
- 3. This prosperity will especially show itself on the Day of Judgment:
  - a. As Edwards said, it doesn't really matter who prospers (materially) below. What matters is who does above.
  - b. The righteous man will *stand* on the Judgment because of the righteousness of Christ.
  - c. His walking in righteousness is the indicator that he will.
  - d. And to the degree he obeyed and bore fruit, to that degree he will be blessed.
- C. Finally, what will happen to those who don't walk in the path of obedience?
  - 1. Those who go their own way, do their own thing, are the captains of their own fate, will get just the opposite:
    - a. Rather than being fruit bearing trees, they will be like chaff driven by the wind.
    - b. They will not stand in the judgment with the righteous, but on the left with the goats/accursed.
    - c. They will not receive the Lord's blessing, but His everlasting curse in hell fire and damnation.
  - 2. They chose the path God does not approve of, and so they will receive their chosen portion in the lake which burns with fire: "The way of the wicked will perish" (v. 6).

### III. Application.

- A. Do you love God's Law? Have you chosen His path?
  - 1. God's blessing is only in the way of righteousness.
    - a. If you choose to walk on the broad path of destruction, you'll receive what is at the end of that road.
    - b. But if you walk on the narrow path of life, you will receive blessing in this life and in the one to come.
  - 2. Again, realize the psalmist is not teaching salvation by works.
    - a. This wasn't true in the OT, nor is it in the NT.
    - b. We are saved only by the righteousness of Christ.
    - c. But saving faith produces works:
      - (i) A changed life, direction, disposition of heart.
      - (ii) It makes you like Christ, who is the express image of the invisible God.
      - (iii) It makes you like God.
      - (iv) Does God love His Law? Does Christ love it? Yes.
      - (v) If you are a Christian then you will love it to.
      - (vi) If not, then:
        - (a) You must turn from your sins and trust in Christ.
        - (b) You must submit to Him, walk in His wisdom and not your own.
        - (c) If you do, you will stand on that final day.

- (d) You will be blessed forever in heaven.
  - (e) If you don't, you will perish.
- B. But second, realize that having come to Christ, the way we live makes a difference.
1. Obedience brings the blessing of God.
    - a. Obedience will be rewarded in heaven.
      - (i) Parable of the Talents, Minas, 1 Cor. 3.
      - (ii) The Christian who struggles to make the smallest steps of obedience will not be rewarded as fully as the Christian who makes great strides in his obedience and fruitfulness.
      - (iii) What is that reward?
        - (a) A greater capacity to enjoy heaven.
        - (b) All will be full and suffer no lack; but those more greatly rewarded will have a larger capacity to be blessed.
    - b. But don't forget that obedience will also be rewarded here.
      - (i) Success in the things we do in life.
      - (ii) Spiritual joy and blessing.
  2. Therefore, we should strive to bear as much fruit as we can – for the honor of Christ and for the honor He will bestow on that day.
  3. Contrary to what the world believes, prosperity doesn't come from living for self: it comes from living to God.