

“How to Succeed in Everything You Do”  
(Psalm 1)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning,

We were exhorted to live openly as Christians –

To walk as Jesus walked,

To live as He lived.

We saw there was a mixed group at Jerusalem

Waiting for Jesus to show up at the feast:

Some thought He was a good man –

That He was the Messiah –

While others thought He was a deceiver –

That He was leading the people astray.

The second group was very outspoken,

But not the first –

They were afraid of the Jewish leaders,

Because they knew they had determined to do away with Him.

Jesus tells us this is something we can't do

If we are to follow Him:

We can't be ashamed of His Gospel,

We can't fear men, but must confess Him before men,

Even though it means we will be persecuted.

## B. Preview.

I want us to focus this evening

On what it means to walk as He walked –

To live openly as Christians –

Not only because this is what He commands us to do,

Not only because this is what we must do

If the kingdom is to advance;

But also because this is the path we must walk

If we are to receive His blessing in our efforts to serve Him.

Let's consider three things:

1. That there is blessing for obedience.
2. What that blessing is.
3. How to gain that blessing.

## II. Sermon.

### A. First, there is blessing for obedience (v. 1).

The psalmist writes, "*How blessed* is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" (v. 1).

1. The man who would be blessed by Him,  
 Can't go the same direction as the world,  
 But must live the life Jesus calls us to live.

This was one of the main reasons

God sent His Son into the world:

Not only that He might redeem a people to glorify His grace,

Not just that He would save a people to give to His Son,

Not merely that we might be saved from hell

And come to know Him in a personal relationship,

But that we might become like Jesus –

Paul writes, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29) –

That we might be holy, as He is holy –

Again Paul writes, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him” (Eph. 1:4).

In other words, that we might be an obedient people.

Before He saved us, we were like the rest of mankind –

Nothing more than rebels and enemies.

Paul writes, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest” (Eph. 2:1-3).

But God changed all that through His Son.

Paul writes to the Ephesians, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

And he writes to Timothy that Jesus “gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (2 Tim. 2:14).

Jesus came that we might become like Him.

This is perhaps the evidence

That is most emphasized in Scripture

That shows we really belong to Him.

We can claim that we love the Lord

And that we belong to Him,

But unless we are becoming what it is

That Jesus came into the world to make us

It's really a meaningless and useless claim.

Jesus didn't come *merely* that we might know *about* Him –

Though He does want us to learn about Him

And His will for our lives.

Knowing doctrine/theology is a means to this end,

But it's not the end.

He didn't come merely that we might know *Him* –

Though He did come for this reason as well.

He wants us to know Him in the sense of loving Him,

But He also wants us to experience that love in the way we live:

As Paul writes, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Phil. 3:10).

He came that we might become like Him –

That we might obey His commandments

As He obeyed His Father's commandments.

This was His main purpose:

That we might turn from being rebels and enemies

And become His servants and friends.

2. But having said this,

Let me emphasize what the Lord does in this psalm:

*He doesn't command us to serve Him for nothing:*

There is blessing: "*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*" (v. 1).

Scripture is full of God's promises of blessing for obedience.

"How blessed are those who keep justice, who practice righteousness at all times!" (106:3).

"Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments" (112:1).

"How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all *their* heart. They also do no unrighteousness; they walk in His ways" (119:1-3).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:3-9).

Jesus earned heaven for you by His obedience –

You are saved by His grace

Received by faith alone –

*But there is also blessing promised for your obedience.*

B. Second, let's look at what that blessing is (v. 3-6).

The psalmist shows us positively

Through the image of a well-watered tree,

And negatively through the image of chaff.

He writes, "He [*i.e.*, the one who obeys] 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. The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (vv. 3-6).

1. If you will obey the Lord, He will make you a fruitful tree:

a. The psalmist uses a picture

Of a healthy and vibrant tree,

One that is securely rooted in the ground,

Continually nourished by a plentiful water supply,

With healthy foliage

And constantly bearing useful fruit.

b. If you will obey Him,

If you will purpose to avoid sin,

And do what is pleasing to Him,

You will not only have spiritual life,

But an abundance of life:

You will be firmly rooted in Christ,

Have continual supplies of His Spirit,

And bring forth useful fruit –

The fruit of Christ-likeness,

The fruits of the Spirit,

The fruit of good works.

The Lord will bless you in what you do –

That is, in what you do for Him,

Because everything you do is to be for Him and His glory.

He will be with you in the things you attempt for Him.

That doesn't mean these things will be easy,

But it does mean in the end

The Lord will bring good out of them.

It also shows that the Lord knows you (v. 6),

And that you know Him,

And that you will stand in the judgment.

The Father blessed Jesus

Because He always did those things that were pleasing to Him.

If we try to do what is pleasing to Him in all we do,

He will bless us as well.

2. Perhaps this can be better seen

In the contrast the psalmist makes

With those who don't obey:

“The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away” (v. 4) –

They are like dead straw,

That isn't rooted in Christ,

That can't take in water of the Spirit because it has no root,

And that bears no useful fruit.

When adversity comes, it drives them away.

And they will not stand in God's judgment.

Jesus used the image of a fruitful tree

To teach us this same truth in the Sermon on the Mount:

“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:17-20).

What does this mean?

He continues, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but *he who does the will of My Father* who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, *YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS*’” (vv. 21-23).

It's not enough to say we're Christians

If we're living like the world –

Jesus will disown us in that day.

Those who have really trusted Him,

Who are known by Him,

Obey Him.

C. Finally, let's consider how to gain this blessing (v. 2).

It only comes through delighting in His Law.

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night”  
(v. 2).

1. You must first trust Jesus and turn from sin.

There is where you must begin.

God won't accept anything from you

Unless you have a Mediator

And the only Mediator He has provided is Jesus Christ:

“For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man  
Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the  
proper time” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father  
but through Me” (John 14:6).

2. Second, you must delight in the Law of the Lord.

This is only possible if your heart has been changed by His Spirit –

You won't desire His Law at all without the Spirit's work.

But having this desire,

You need to realize there are differing levels.

You must not only like His Law –

You must love it,

It must be your delight,

Even as it was Jesus'.

3. Third, delighting in it, you must meditate in it day and night.

You must not be content

With knowing the bare meaning of what it says.

The Pharisees were masters at keeping the letter of the Law,

But missing the whole point behind it.

You need to understand its broader spiritual meaning –

What the Lord is really after in His commands:

That it's not enough merely not to murder,

But that you must also not hate your neighbor,

You must not think about injuring them,

Or want to injure them in your heart;

That you must also desire their wellbeing,

And do what you can to protect their lives.

You need to let His Law search your thoughts and your heart,

To show you anything that is displeasing to Him.

David writes, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way" (Ps. 139:23-24).

4. Finally, you need to apply it, live it, make all your decisions based on it.

It won't do you any good to know what He requires, but not do it.

Peter writes, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the

first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,' and, 'A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire'" (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Knowing what He wants you to do,

Allow is to guide you in everything you do.

##### 5. The Lord wants you to obey Him.

This is one of the main reasons why He saved you.

It's the evidence that you belong to Him.

It leads to a virtuous circle that will make you more useful to Him.

It's the path of His blessing.

But don't forget:

It's not enough to know what He wants,

You must also do it if you want His blessing.

James writes, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does" (1:22-25).

Amen.

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