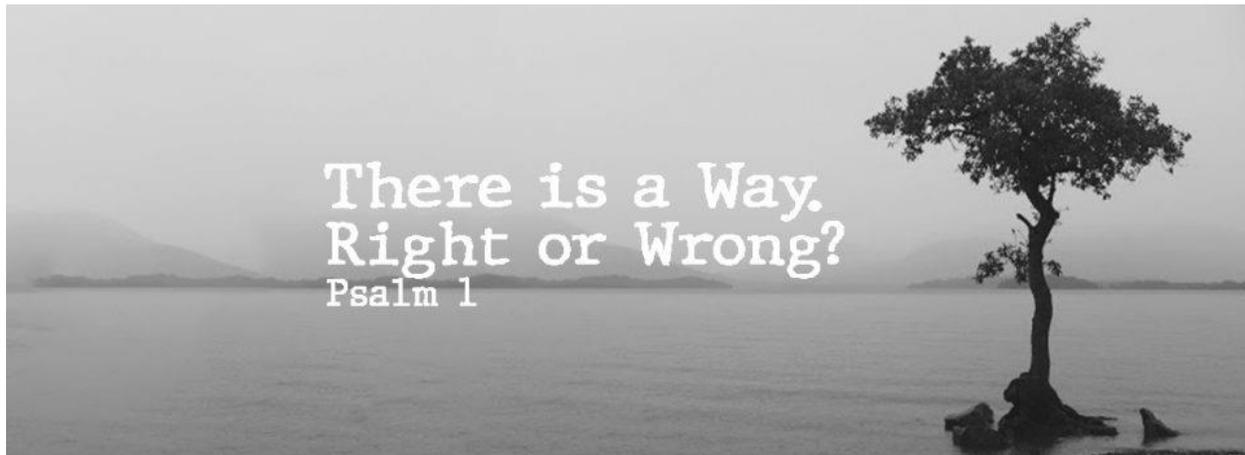


"There is a Way" Right or Wrong?



Sermon outline/slides are available [HERE](#).

Video Available Here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II6ZkXEs>

[Psalm 1](#)

Blessed is the man^[a]
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
² but his delight is in the law^[b] of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

³ He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

⁴ The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

⁶ for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Sermon Transcript:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

Well, this morning, we're going to begin a new series and one that has been in my thoughts and heart for a while. It's a series, well, maybe we ought to say it like this. It's

more like they read us, then we read them. What I'm talking about here is the Psalms. And this morning, in this section of the Old Testament, we start a series from the book of Psalms. So I'm going to ask you to turn with me to Psalms 1. The Psalms are more like they read us, then we read them. When you come to the Psalms, you come face to face with the issues that are in your own heart. And you see them displayed, the issues of your own heart, in relationship to God. That's what the Psalms do. They take us there.

Now, I'm not the first person to recognize these characteristics of the Psalms. As a matter of fact, it's been recognized for a long time. John Calvin, ever heard of him before? From the 1500s, when he was talking about the Psalms, he said this, "I have been want"...and that was a word that was used by them, indicating I have been accustomed or in the habit..I have been accustomed "to call this book, the book of Psalms, not inappropriately, an anatomy of all parts of the soul. For there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented in a mirror." Interesting statement, this is the anatomy of the soul. And the emotions are here represented as a reflection of us, we see our soul here. It's not so much that we read the Psalms, but they read us.

Athanasius, who was a church father...Dr. Stewart and I were talking this week and he was telling me about Athanasius. And some exposure that he's been given through a podcast I think by John Piper. And the place and the influence that Athanasius had....This was back in the three hundreds, the fourth century. And Athanasius said this about the Psalms, "whereas most scriptures speaks to us, the Psalms speak for us." It's like, yes! That I relate to, I've been there, I know that! That's what the Psalms do. They are a reflection of the emotion of our own soul in a mirror to us. They are speaking for us, to God. Very interesting comment.

And now to become a little bit more contemporary, from fourth century 300 BC or the 1500s. Let me quote a believer today. His name is J. Stephen Yuille. And he says this, "In short they, the Psalms, are a catalogue of human experience. They take us on a journey through life's many ups and downs." That's what the Psalms do. They take us on the emotion that we experience. And this, contemporary also, was actually a bible study by Marilyn Kunz and Catherine Schell. They make an interesting point here that I think you ought to hear. "The Psalms, these songs and prayers, express a vivid personal relationship with God, and range in their expression of feelings from great joy to deep sorrow, from penitence and confession of sin to rejoicing and praise of God. The Psalms reveal the character of men and the nature of God."

To quote, Calvin, "I am want", meaning accustomed, to saying that the Psalms are about living with God in your life. And a God who is there in a big way, a big way. And what we experienced sings like this, Psalm 45:1, "My heart overflows with a pleasing theme...my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe", to speak about these good things, in relation to God going on in my life. And then this Psalms 62:2, from the ends of the earth, I call to Thee when my heart is sad, when it's overwhelmed, lead me to a rock that is higher than I, something more stable, something I can put my feet on, for you have been a refuge, a place where I run and I'm safe. That's the nature of the Psalms. It's not so much that we

read them, but they read us. They are about a reflection of living life with God in your life and God in a big way, the way that he is intended to be.

As a matter of fact, the whole subline of our series is this: When God is big. We need a big God, we need a big God like he is, we need him. And especially today. Another individual, commenting on such a thing as a big God, wrote a booklet called *Your God Is Too Small*. It's by J. B. Phillips. He also did a new translation of the New Testament which is used a great deal. And he said this, "The trouble with many people today is that they have not found a God big enough for modern needs. While their experience of life has grown in a score of directions, and their mental horizons have been expanded to the point of bewilderment by world events..." Any of that happened for you? Discussions I've had this week in counseling, people shaking their heads, concerning what's going on in our land, in our time. Their minds, their mental horizons have spanned it to the point of being bewildered. How can this be? How can this be? One discussion I had was about trans-species, not trans-gender, trans-species. I don't want to be a human being anymore. I want to be a leopard, a leopard, I'm going to become a leopard. And you know, how different is that? How different is it? It's to the point of bewilderment. We need a God who is big. A big God, like he's there for our souls. For our souls in the experience of our journey, and that's what the Psalms provide. It's not so much that we read them, but that they read us. And they talk to us about living life with a big God.

This morning in Psalms 1, we're going to look at this, there is a way, there is a way. Believe me today, as there has always been, there is a way, there's a way. Right or wrong, there's a way. And the Psalms goes like this, Oh, how truly happy, Blessed is the man, male or female, the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, who does not stand" Now I put a pause right there because the way the Hebrew is written, it's written with a pause right there. "does not stand in the way of sinners, he does not sit in the seat of the mockers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted beside streams of water that brings forth his fruit in due season, his leaf does not wither and whatsoever he does prospers. The ungodly, they're like the chaff which the wind blows away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord knows. The Lord knows the way of the righteous. But the way of the ungodly, it perishes, vanishes away.

Who wrote Psalms one? The Bible doesn't tell us. But Spurgeon told us that this Psalms is like a preface. This Psalms is like the beginning of the whole Bible. As a matter of fact, Spurgeon said it like this, "This Psalms may be regarded as the preface Psalm, having in it a notification of the contents of the entire book of Psalms." This puts us on notice for the entire book of Psalms. "It is the psalmist's desire to teach us of the way to blessedness and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners. This, then, is the matter of the first Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole book of Psalms make up a divine sermon." That's what Spurgeon said. It's the first one and it tells us big time, about this big God and what it is to live with him in your life.

You see, the Psalms don't so much have us read them as they read us. They're a mirror, reflecting having a big God in your life. And it's talked about like this, a tree and chaff and making these points: 1)The way that is the Lord's. That's the first thing he comments on. There's a way, there's the way that's the Lord's-verses one through three. 2)And then there's the way that is not the Lord's, it belongs to the ungodly. It's those who don't have God, they don't think in reference to God. Their lives have not been changed by God. God is left out, there is the way that is not the Lord's-verse four. 3)And then finally this, the way has been decided-what's right?..what's wrong? It's decided-verses five and six. And that's laid out for us here.

Now, as we take a look at this Psalm, there is a point. It's something Jesus said about the Psalms that I want us to pick up on first. This is a note from Jesus, Luke 24:44-45, "These are My words that I spoke to you." Now I need to give you the context here. This is after the 1st Easter Sunday, this is after the 1st resurrection day, but just shortly thereafter. There are some people who have been in and around Jerusalem on that passover, and the following events on the first day of the week. And they've heard about this stuff. But what they know is that this Jesus, who they thought was the Messiah, is now dead. And they are going back pretty forlorn because this is the one who said "because I live you'll live also" and he died and was gone from the scene. And then as stuff was going around, in the scuttlebutt and the talk, there was this news that he was back and that he was alive. And that was confusing to them. So they're traveling on the road to Emmaus, down from Jerusalem. And when they are going there, suddenly a traveler joins them and speaks to them about some things, things where they were kind of unaware of these things. And Jesus begins to tell them about the reality of himself, his death, his burial, his resurrection. And he says this, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses" and he is there in the Law of Moses, quite abundantly. "And in The Prophets", he's pictured there, presented there, presented as a type there, referred to there, given inference and "in The Prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled". The Psalms speak about Jesus, then he opened their mind to understand the scriptures. He opened their mind to grasp these things about him in the Law of Moses, The Prophets and the Psalms. As we approached the Psalms-to understand them, living with God in your life, a big God who is needed-we need to understand them relative to Jesus.

You know, when Jesus was here, he said, things like this: "I told you that you would die in your sins", John 8:24a. Then again John 8:24b he says, "unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." Same chapter, he's still speaking to folks there, and he says to them when they challenged him, "before Abraham was, I am.", verse 58. And then they picked up stones to stone him. Why? Why? Why were they going to stone him? Because he was claiming to be Yahweh, I AM, always and forever, what you need.

When we come to Psalm one, I want you to recognize immediately. Look at verse two. Who is it that has this instruction for us? Instruction to delight in. What does your Bible say? "But his delight is in the law of the Lord." How is the word Lord written there. I mean, is it in small case letters, is it in all large case letters? Large case. What is that telling us? This is Yahweh. This is I AM, always and forever, that is who is having this instruction for us. It's I AM. He's here. And he is here in the Psalms, the way that is the

Lord's, blessed. It's a blessed way. Now the word blessed refers to a deep seated joy. That's what John MacArthur said. It is an internal satisfaction or gratification that is in your heart. That's what he's talking about. And this is said like this in Psalm one. "Oh, how!!", in exclamation points if we were putting it in English, "Oh, how deeply satisfied", truly happy, carrying this internal satisfaction, "is the man", not male, not particularly female either, male or female, "is the man" who is not like this. And verse one, he points out first what he is not about, he is not, she is not, about this. And it's a good thing he starts here because he helps us see the value of what he is about. First of all, he's not about walking in a manner that's in line with ungodly advice. You know, there are many voices in this world. Have you noticed? Get online, social media, listen to the radio. There are many voices with a lot of advice coming your way, some of it free of charge, some of it you have to buy, a lot of it. And a lot of this council, a lot of it, leaves God out. And that is what's called ungodly. There is no orientation in it to God, there is no turn towards God and his direction. And this is where the truly satisfied person, who has a deep individual, personal sense of enjoyment that is shared among a community of believers, this is where his manner of life does not line up. It's not with that advice, which is so prevalent, that is leaving God out. Now, let me say in contrast to that, there is a lot of folks who are in line with ungodly advice. The one who God blesses with this deep sense of satisfaction, and enjoyment is not in line with that advice. His manner of life, ways moving through life, doesn't line up there. This is Yahweh's instruction. Right or wrong. That's a decision that we make.

Second, it's not standing in the way that those who miss the target that God had set stand, it's not that which is off target, off the mark with God, that's not where they stand. I want you to notice this, this is a progression. First of all it pictures this individual walking through life, then it pictures him kind of pausing in a position and just kind of standing there for a bit, standing there. There's a taking of a position in all three of these. There is motion going on, there is temporary standing and then there is the abiding, the permanent fixed position, the sitting in the place of the mockingly critical, that is not where the person who is blessed by God is coming down there life is not characterized by a mocking criticism. You know, I've got a concern. I've got a concern about the church broad, I've got a concern, because we have some sorrow over the direction of our culture and our society and the things they're taking on. And the way that many in the church are handling this, I shared this with my elder and one of my deacons this past week so that they know where I'm coming from on this, my concern is that even the people of God sorrowed by this....Dr. Stewart had a great thing he said about this, we're going to put it on "In The Loop Bible Stream" this week, because we talk after we go air off, okay. And we kind of interact there a bit and man! What he had to say, and what Jayson had to say, and wanted to turn the stream back on! This needs to go out there! Because his statement was that as a believer, no, I'm gonna stop here because he's gonna say it on Tuesdays "In The Loop", I'm not gonna say....My concern is that as believers, what we're tending to do is to talk with each other and have these things that we don't like, these gripes and complaints, and they're horrendous to us. Trans-specie, horrendous to us, approve, promoted in culture, horrendous. And we talk with each other and stir each other up to anger and we carry it and we brood on it. But we say nothing, nothing in public about the truth of a saving God, and there is a way and we do that, but not this. And when we do say something in public, we're so stirred up.

There's a Proverb, I think you've heard of it before, a Proverb like the the churning of milk does what? The churning produces butter and the punching of the nose produces blood. Yeah, just like that. The stirring of anger produces strife. And that's how we come across to the world because we're not forward enough to offer up God's truth, wherever it falls. But we hang back here, mockingly critical. The God instilled happiness that's deep seated, comes from a person who's not there. He's not there. She's not there. She doesn't walk there. She doesn't stand there. She doesn't sit there. She doesn't. She doesn't. It's not in our repertoire, okay, it is in our repertoire some times. And what we have to know is that the Lord's instruction is that, that's not the way to go. I AM, always and forever, what you need. I AM says this is not, this is not the way. Boy, I'd like to teach on that because it is offering truth, it is offering truth but we need to go on here.

It is like this he says, it is delighting, it is finding enjoyment, there is a sense of pleasure, there is a sense in which this is favored. There is a delighting in the Lord's law, the law of the Lord. And when he talks about the law of the Lord, he refers to all the Lord's directions, the instructions that he gives, because what he has to tell us is what makes this work well, and I can cultivate this in my heart. CS Lewis had a hard time with this. How do I find this in these laws that regulate me? But then he developed that this direction of the Lord makes life deep seatedly satisfying. And there is this cultivation of enjoyment in the Lord's law. And it comes by meditating, thinking it over and over. You know, the word that is used here is muttering. In the book of Philippians, it talks about muttering, but it's the muttering that goes on as being critically mocking. But this muttering here is to say over and over and over what the Lord's direction is to us. What the Lord's counsel is to us. What the Lord's impression is to us. This is what we ought to be sputtering and muttering, that's what he's saying to us. This is it. As we think over and over and over and over the instructions that the Lord gives to us on this. Do you find yourself inclined to do that? Do you find yourself inclined to speak to yourself? To tell yourself what God has said? It takes that if we're going to commit it into heart, it really does. I've got a couple that the Lord has brought into my life, an older couple, and the Lord is using things in their life. And when I say older, I mean like beyond 70. And I have talked to them about memorizing this passage, this one verse, and you know, it takes saying it over and over and they're apprehensive because they think they are too old. But you know, they can, we can. We've got a lot of things that we mutter over and over in our minds. And we can, and we do. And when we do, there is this God blessed way. And it kind of takes doing this day and night. He says during the daylight time I do this. Hey, do any of you ever wake up in the middle of the night? And you're kind of awake and you can't go back to sleep and your mind is just racing. Does this ever happened to anyone? In the scriptures, by the way, in the Psalms, those are called the night watches, we're going to be coming up on some of those. It's these night watches. And what are you watching for?.... Well, if we don't get that coming in time...and the way that she's behaving....and I can't understand why they're making that kind of choice...and why didn't they think about that way back here?.....Or is there a muttering to yourself, over and over, about what God said about such things? And what directions I have. That's intentional, doesn't just happen. The muttering and sputtering about what's off is what happens. This one is intentional. And it takes having a plan. Got to plan? When you wake up at night and you're there and you're not going back to sleep? Well, let's let's jump on my phone and see what's current in the social media. Maybe

there's something there. But there's a better plan. There's a better plan. This is living with God in your life when he's big, when he's big. This is living with him. By the way, I often recommend having a plan. And a place to start, if you want to know about that I'll talk to you about later because we need to go on.

Finally, this is the picture. This is the picture when a person does this. He's like a tree that's planted, and actually in the Hebrew the word is it's transplanted. It's been moved, it's been moved from one location to another location. And the location that it's moved to is by streams. And these are channels. These are intentional channels that this tree has been placed beside, these are irrigation channels. That's what he's referring to. There are trees like olive trees from the Middle East, in the arid climate, that are hundreds of years old, some people claim that they are from pre Christian era, which is 1000s of years. I don't know. I didn't count the rings. I don't know if the trees that are that old. Because they are there, planted, irrigated. This is a tree that is there with permanence. It's solid. And these streams of water, in this arid climate, where it's a dry wind and they have this water, that's present there. And the roots go down in there and they draw that water up. Do you know how a tree moves its nourishment up? It takes they're moving hundreds over time, thousands of pounds of nourishment up to the tippy top of that tree, all the way up. Do you know how this happens? It happens by the leaves. The leaves have a little cell at the bottom called the gate cell and it pops open or closes. And when it pops open. it allows the blowing wind to evaporate the water and it creates a suction, a siphon, that pulls that water carrying the nutrients all the way, through the capillaries, up that tree to the very tippy top. That's how this tree works. And this tree is strategically transplanted by God here, by streams, invested streams of water, that have been built for this. So it is nourished. And as a result, in due season, right on time, it brings its fruit and its leaf doesn't wither. Over hundreds of years, for those olives trees, maybe thousands, I don't know, I didn't count the rings. One thing I know, this works for them. And God shows, in the form of a picture, how it works for us. You are like, when the dry winds blow a-d-i-d, to be nourished and well watered, so that it produces fruit. You know, I've got a pear tree that's out in my yard. And I used to have a swimming pool there that every so often, during the summer, we'd have to go and run the water out of the pool, back filter, it was called. And you'd have to go and back filter and blow all this water out and it blew this water out right around that pear tree. And you should have seen what that pear tree did during that season. Matter of fact, Mrs. Stewart, I brought those pears to the chapel. And she said, Man, I don't get pears like this in the grocery store. Yeah, they're in my backyard. Because of the water there being blown out. And it drew it up and that's the picture he's presenting there. By the way, our pool is down now. And I don't get such good pears. Not so good. Nevertheless, this is the picture of the person that's walking, standing, sitting in the Lord's way. Blessed.

On the other hand, there's the way that's not the Lord's way. And this way that's not the Lord's way, it's just not so. This is not so the course for the one that leaves God out. Whether they're a believer who trust Him and has that work of Christ in his life but still leaves God out or they're completely not a believer. They're going in an opposite direction. This is not their course, they do walk into counsel of the ungodly, they do find themselves pausing in the way that sinners go. You know, recently we had this information about Mexico, where we were praying for Mexico. And in this, it said asked

us to pray for the people in Mexico, some Christians, who feel forced to implement their own security strategies, including engaging leaders of criminal groups themselves, believers lining up with criminals in order to obtain what they perceive as a security. Can you imagine such a thing? Hmm, I think we can. I think we have. You know, I saw a shirt or two that said "Jesus Saves" being worn by people rushing the capital. Now, you know that may have been a transplanted impression. I don't know. The one thing I know, believers lining up with that are lining up with criminals. There's a better way, there's a way, there's a way, living with God that's big in your life. There's a way. The ungodly on that course. They stay that course. They sit in that course, mockingly critical. And this is what they are like, they're like chaff. It's like chaff. You see this picture up here around this girl. You see that? That's chaff. Can you see it? I tell you where you can better see it, during harvest time when you're driving through the country. And you see those big combines and you see all that gray dust that's stirred up, that's chaff, that chaff. You know what happens to that chaff? It's blown onto the ground. As matter of fact, in the middle east when they would harvest, they didn't have combines, like we have. What it is referring to here, when they would harvest, they would have the animals go through and they would kind of walk on or they would roll something over these stocks of wheat. And it would knock the grains down. And so they would take these grains that were knocked down, and they go to a hillside and as the wind came through, it would grab this chaff, throwing it up, and the wind would drive off the husks and the pieces of stock, the chaff the dust, it would drive it off, and then the grains would fall down and they'd gather, and that stuff that went off, the chaff, they would either burn it or just let it be blown away, depending how much chaff it was. It's like chaff that's blown away.

And so we come to the conclusion on the matter. It has been decided, the way has been decided. The ungodly way, it doesn't stand. It doesn't have a position when God's evaluation comes. Even though it may want to stand in the assembly of those who are right with God through faith. And by the way, I get this, you get this, none of us lives here. All of us find our way not always in the God blessed way. But Jesus did. Jesus did always those things that were in line with pleasing the Father. And that has been given to us as a free gift through faith in Christ. Jesus, always doing the things that were pleasing in line with God, he was always right. That's been given to us as a free gift. The ungodly do not stand with those who are in the assembly of the righteous, the assembly of those in Christ, they do perish. That way of life that they're on vanishes away, because the Lord extinguishes it. That's what happens in the judgment to come. That's what happens. But the God blessed, the fearing and the loving person towards God, the one who respects how big God is, and has a response that appreciates him, that loves him. That person, he says, is known, the Lord knows, he's intimately connected with, caring for and involved with the righteous.

Conclusion of the matter here this morning. The conclusion of the matter is this. What is it to you? What is it? In this life when people are big and God is small, that's reflected. Even if it's my own opinion, when people are big and God is small, it's seen. But when God is big, it makes that other way small. So what is it for you? Is God big? For those who are in Christ, he's big! For us in Christ, He's so big that he defines everything. He's taken away my sin. He's given me a life that's blessed, that can be pursued, that I can

join him in. But for those outside of Christ, the small God makes the other way big. Some of them may even want to be in the congregation of the righteous. But their God is too small. He doesn't match the stature of Jesus and what Jesus did. He is too small. And there's many voices. There are many, many voices. But His voice, communicating His Word, is above them all to us. What is it for you? Is God big?

Father in heaven, we come before you and I thank you for the Psalms. Oh, how I need them. Oh, how I'm so intimidated by what they communicate because it shows me myself and I need a big God. I do, above all the other voices Lord, I need a big God and Your Word. In Jesus name. Amen.