

THE TWO WAYS OF LIFE

PSALM 1:1-6

Introduction:

There are only two kinds of people in the world. The real issue that divides them is their relationship to God. This relationship with God manifests itself in their way of life and ultimately in their destinies. One is like a fruitful tree and the other is like worthless trash.

The Psalmist wrote this Psalm to introduce the whole book of Psalm with a view to encouraging us to choose the way of the godly. It is a wisdom Psalm, or one that is very useful for teaching.

It is also helpful for evaluating your own life. To which group do I belong? Am I more like a tree or chaff? Am I among the godly or the ungodly? The two ways are set forth in clear contrast--and I am one or the other.

I. THE WAY OF THE GODLY

1. The godly disassociate with the wicked of this world.

I am borrowing the word "disassociate" from the Expositor's Bible Commentary. I borrowed it because it describes a strong and decisive act. The godly person does not walk in their counsel, or associate with them in their behavior, nor participate with them in their actions and attitudes.

Jesus said that His disciples were not of this world, and this surely true of the godly.

2. The godly associate themselves with God's will.

Again, I borrowing "associate" from the same commentary.

The Old Testament people associated the will of God with the Torah, the law of God. The godly person receives the word of the Lord into her life, and then meditates on it day and night--with a view of molding personal life to reflect the precepts of the law.

Jesus spoke often of those who do the will of the Father in heaven.

This should be seen a positive--not a negative. James spoke of a "law of liberty." When the law of the Lord is received in the soul, the mind, the heart of humans, it liberates them from the dark impulses of their fallen nature and the strong appeal of the world around them and saves them from the deception of the devil.

3. The godly enjoy a life of fruitfulness and prosperity.

O how blessed the godly are! They are 'like at tree planted by the rivers of water.' "Planted" carries the idea of being transplanted.

God in his providence puts their lives into a place where they can bear fruit, and enjoy success in all that they do.

This life takes on the quality of the evergreen tree--"its leaf does not wither." There is a beautiful consistency in the life of the godly. They are not perfect, but they are consistent and fruitful.

4. The godly are delivered in the day of judgment.

In his description of the ungodly, David introduces the certainty of judgment. The implication is that the godly will indeed survive the day of judgment, and will enjoy life with God forever.

Does this sound good? It should! This Psalm was written to encourage us to choose the way of the godly. It will look even better after we consider the briefer statement about the way of the ungodly, the unrighteous.

II. THE WAY OF THE UNGODLY

The way of the godly is introduced with the word "blessed", happiness, being spiritually fortunate. The blessedness of the godly is a gift from the gracious God that they know and serve.

While the opposite word "cursed" is not used in the Psalm, the idea is there. The brief description of the way of the ungodly paints a bleak picture.

1. The way of the ungodly is worthless.

They are like the "chaff". The farmer would cast his gathered grain up into an afternoon breeze so that the grain could be separated from the chaff. He was interested in the grain only. The chaff was useless and worthless. He could not feed his family with it; he could not even feed his cattle with it. He was ready for the wind to blow it away. There is nothing permanent or lasting about chaff. There may be a glitter that goes with the life of the ungodly, but in the end there is nothing to preserve for eternity. If something or someone has not eternal value, then it is worthless, it is chaff. The only thing that can give lasting value to a life is a relationship with the eternal God. Apart from Him, everyone and everything is destined for the fire of judgment.

2. The way of the ungodly has no future.

There is a final judgment, a judgment of God that will determine everything. The frightening reality is that the ungodly "will not stand in the judgment." They will stand before God with bowed heads and without excuse. They will have followed their own whims rather than the word of God, lived for their own pleasures rather than His pleasure, sought to glorify their name, rather than

his name, made self center of their lives rather than God. Such a life has no future.

3. The way of the ungodly ends in destruction.

The summary verse of the Psalm sharpens the contrast in destiny. The Lord "knows" the righteous and their ways. This means that they will be under his care in this world and into the world to come. They have put their lives under His shepherding care, and He will not forsake His own.

But it is different with the ungodly. "But the way of the ungodly will perish." They chose to live their lives apart from, rejected His counsel in favor of the counsel of the world, ignored His will so they could pursue their own life. The logical end of such a life is doom, destruction, perishing.

According to Jesus our Lord, the way of the ungodly is a broad way. It is not difficult. The way of the godly is narrow and challenging. To walk in the way of the righteous will require a whole-hearted commitment to God, and persistence in that way. But at the end of the easy, self-centered life is always doom perishing.

Actually it requires no decision to follow the way of the ungodly.

It is the natural way of humans. The challenge comes to find and live in the way of the godly.

As of today, where do you stand? Are you clearly on the path that leads to life, or the one leads to death?