

Like a Tree by the River: Psalm 1's Portrait of the Righteous

Scriptures for Today: Psalm 1:1-3

***Psalm 1:1-3** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

Introduction:

We are starting the book of Psalms. What is a Psalm? A Psalm by definition is a sacred song; a hymn; a poetical composition for use in the praise or worship of God.

The book of Psalms is essentially God's song book. The world has its own music, and God has His own music. You can choose in your life what you will fill your mind with. Will you choose the songs of the world, or the songs of God?

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

It should be an easy choice. We should choose to fill our minds with God's Word and his songs. And that's what the psalms are.

When you think about songs or poems, they can be very descriptive and paint a picture in your mind. The book of Psalms does exactly that. It expresses God's Words in a poetic way.

This book opens at the start by painting a portrait of two different types of people: The righteous who delights in God's Word, and the ungodly who rejects it. It tells us there are two paths, two ways to live, two destinies. One leads to blessing and stability, and the other leads to emptiness and destruction.

Psalm 1 shows us what it takes to live a rooted, fruitful and blessed life. How do we become like that tree that is planted by the rivers of water? Maybe you're saying, "why is this important?" I want you to think about the instability of this world.

Everywhere you look, people are chasing stability but standing on sinking sand. One moment they're confident, the next they're collapsing. Families are breaking, morals are bending, people are burning out. We've built lives on temporary things—social status, entertainment, feelings, wealth—and then wonder why everything falls apart when the storm hits.

Our culture is like a forest of uprooted trees: people constantly moving, constantly searching, never satisfied. And maybe you feel that in your own life—unsettled, exhausted, stretched thin, wondering why you can't seem to find solid ground. Psalm 1 is God's answer to that. It's a picture of what real stability looks like—not in the economy, not in emotions, not in financial success, but in being rooted in God Himself.

I want you to please consider this question for a moment...

If you took a snapshot of your life right now—your friends, your habits, your priorities, your relationship with God—and you examined everything, what would it reveal?

Are the choices you're making today positioning you to be *like a tree planted by rivers of water*, growing stronger and more fruitful over time?

Or are you slowly drifting toward dry shallow ground and instability? Think long-term. In ten, fifteen, twenty years from now, will you still be planted firm, or will you be withered and uprooted because of the choices you're making today?

If you can look honestly at that snapshot of your life and say, "I don't think I'm making the right choices," or "I don't think I'm headed in the right direction," then today is the day to make a change.

Because where you're planted today will determine if you will still be rooted tomorrow.

What does it take to grow into this tree that is planted by the waters? Every tree starts out from a tiny seed. But that seed won't grow if it's planted in the wrong place, and it won't thrive if it's missing the basic ingredients of life—sunlight, nourishment, and water.

Spiritually, the same is true for us. If we want to be strong, fruitful believers—deeply rooted, not easily shaken—we have to be planted in the right environment, nourished by the right source, and growing with the right purpose.

Let's look at this portrait of the righteous man and see how we grow into this Tree by the river.

As we focus in on these three verses I want you to see three main points:

- 1. Be planted in the right place.**
- 2. Be nourished by the right source.**
- 3. Let God produce the results in His time.**

Exposition: Psalm 1:1–3 — “Growing into a Tree by the River”

1. You Must Be Planted in the Right Place (v. 1)

Psalm 1:1 Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

In order to grow like a strong deep-rooted tree, you must be planted in the right place.

Going back to the snapshot of your life, think about the environment that you're in, the people that you spend time with, the voices that you allow to influence you.

These things play an extremely important role in your spiritual growth.

Think about how if a seed is planted in a harsh environment, it will not be able to take root.

Jesus Explains this in Matthew 13...

Matthew 13:3-7 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; **4** And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: **5** Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: **6** And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. **7** And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

In these examples, the sower or farmer spread the seed on the ground and some fell onto the wayside, it was devoured by the birds, some fell on stony places, and it was scorched by the sun because it was not rooted in the earth, some fell among thorns, and it sprung up and was choked by the thorns.

Notice these are all harsh environments that did not allow the seeds to successfully grow and be deeply rooted. It's the same for us as believers, if we are in a harsh environment around the wrong people, around the wrong activities, around the wrong conversations, we will--not--grow.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

I want you to notice the downward progression of this verse. It says blessed is the man that **WALKETH** not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor **STANDETH** in the way of sinner, nor **SITTETH** in the seat of the scornful.

Do you see the downward spiral of Walking, then Standing, then Sitting?

In your life, when it comes to sin, things often start out small. Satan uses subtly. He's the greatest deceiver that has ever lived. He doesn't drag you into sin overnight—he slowly walks you there.

Think about how this happens in real life. You start to hang around a particular person or group of people that are doing wrong. At first, you're just **walking** with them, talking, watching, listening to their counsel. Not participating.

Then you start to get comfortable with those individuals and that leads to **standing** with them—sticking around for longer. Keeping company.

Before long, you're sitting with the scornful—fully comfortable. Actively participating in the same sin that you might have been trying to avoid.

It's a downward spiral and the end leads to death and destruction.

The choice of where you plant yourself today will impact your life greatly, long into the future.

If you have not done this already, it's time to evaluate who you are receiving your counsel from, who are you standing with day by day, who are you sitting with and keeping company within your life?

Where are you currently planted? You need to be planted in the right place. Away from **UNGODLY** counsel, away from people that are enticing you to **sin against the Lord**, away from scornfuls that have **no regard for the things of God**.

If you do not remove yourself from these things, if you choose to keep company with evil doers. You will not grow, your roots will not be planted deep, and you will be uprooted at the first sign of trouble and hardship.

2 Peter 2:6-8 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; **7** And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: **8** (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

Lot is the perfect example of what happens when you plant yourself in the wrong place.

Abraham's nephew didn't start out living in Sodom—he started by *looking* that way. Genesis 13 says he “pitched his tent toward Sodom.” At first, he was just *near* the wicked city, close enough to enjoy its benefits but far enough to keep his reputation. But little by little, he drifted closer.

The next time we see him, he's not outside the city—he's living *inside* it. He traded the safety of Abraham's company for the corruption of Sodom's streets. And what did it do to him? The Bible says his soul was *vexed*—troubled, tormented—by the filthy conversation (lifestyle) of those around him. He was saved, but miserable. Surrounded by evil, his spiritual life shriveled. He lost his testimony, his peace, his family, and his joy.

Lot chose to plant himself in an evil environment, and it cost him big time.

You have to ask yourself: **Will you stay planted in the wrong place, or will you move to good ground?**

Will you keep receiving counsel from the ungodly—or will you start seeking wisdom from God's Word and godly people?

Will you keep sitting with those who mock truth—or surround yourself with those who provoke you to love and good works?

Maybe for you, like Lot, it's time to move. Maybe you need to get out of a place where sin is normal. It's vexing your soul when you are around that. Sometimes it's hard to see until you get out, take a step back and look at the wake of destruction that it left in your life.

Maybe you need to cut off toxic relationships that keep you from growing in Christ. Maybe you need to stop meeting with friends who constantly pull you into compromise.

Whatever it is—**be planted in the right place.**

Because if you're not, you won't have a chance to grow. Start by coming to church every week. Come when the doors are open. Be around your brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. You will lose nothing, and gain way more than you can imagine.

2. You Must Be Nourished by the Right Source (v. 2)

Psalm 1:1-2 Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **2** But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

You can be planted in the right place, but if you're not being nourished by the right source, growth will never happen. You could have the best soil, the perfect environment, perfect humidity and temperature—but if you're feeding on poison instead of water, you'll still wither and die.

What you feed on will determine how deep your roots will grow. If you feed on the world, don't be surprised when your faith starves.

If you feed on fleshly things—music that glorifies sin, movies that celebrate evil (and understand what you're watching. You're being entertained by serial adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, and addicts of all kinds. That's what the industry promotes and feeds off of. Imagine if Jesus Christ was here on this earth in the flesh right now and you asked him "Hey Jesus, do you want to watch this Hollywood movie with me and be entertained by sin?" Would you really watch that in the presence of the most holy and righteous being who has ever walked on earth? God in the flesh. Do you think he would want to watch that with you? Think about these things.)

If you feed on fleshly things, music, movies, tv, conversations filled with gossip and filth—don't expect to be like a tree that is deeply rooted by the rivers of water. It's not going to happen. You cannot grow spiritually while you're feeding on carnal things.

Galatians 6:7-8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. **8** For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

You can't fill your mind with trash all week and expect spiritual treasure on Sunday. You can't spend hours scrolling social media and minutes reading your Bible and think you're going to bear fruit and be strong in this life.

We all need to ask ourselves: What am I consuming every day? Ask yourself in the morning, what am I going to consume today. Ask yourself in the evening, what did I consume today?

Because whatever you feed the most is what will grow the strongest.

If you feed your flesh—your flesh will dominate.

If you feed your spirit—your spirit will flourish.

You get to choose your diet. And also understand as a parent, you get to choose your children's diet.

It is your responsibility to show them how to feed their spirit with the good and righteous things of God.

For example, it's time for us as adults to stop feeding our flesh with garbage on tiktok and social media, I promise you it's loaded with garbage and filth. You don't want to be like Lot whose soul was being vexed. Our minds have been so conditioned, and these things have been normalized in our brains that we can't see what it's doing to us. Sometimes it takes a slap in the face, someone pulling us out of the fire to realize what we are doing to ourselves. We are setting ourselves up for certain failure. We are setting our children up for certain failure if we do not wake up and see that feeding the flesh will lead to destruction and ruin in our lives.

We must choose the right diet. We must be nourished by the right source. Notice what the righteous man delights in:

Psalms 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Psalms 119:103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

If you've lost your appetite for the Word of God, it's because you've been snacking on the world too much.

You're too full of entertainment to be hungry for truth.
You're too distracted by the noise of the world to hear the voice of God.

If you want to grow like that tree by the river, you've got to stay near the river—where the living water flows. You can't thrive if you're drinking from polluted puddles.

Look again at Psalm 1:2—

Psalm 1:2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; **and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**

Meditate doesn't mean just to read—it means to dwell on it, to roll it over in your mind, to chew on it until it becomes part of you.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

If you want success in this life—I'm not talking about the success of this world, money, fame, vain things—I'm talking about true success from God, a peace that surpasses all understanding, unending joy and happiness found in the saviour...

Then you have to be nourished by the Word of God day and night.
Not occasionally. Not when you feel like it. *Day and night.*

You can't live on a couple of sermons a week. You can't survive spiritually on Sunday alone.
You must feed daily, drink deeply, and stay close to the Source.

If the Word of God doesn't satisfy you right now, it's time to stop feeding your flesh, ask God to make you hungry again for His Word.

Go back to that snapshot of your life...What are you currently feeding your soul with?
Is it the Word of God—or the world's garbage?
Are you delighting in Scripture—or are you just distracted by screens?

The blessed man delights in the law of the Lord.
He doesn't snack on Scripture—he feasts on it.
He doesn't sip occasionally—he drinks deeply.

You must be nourished by the right source if you want to grow.
Otherwise, you'll dry up and blow away like chaff in the wind.

3. Let God Produce the Results in His Time (v. 3)

Psalm 1:1-3 Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **2** But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

This is the portrait of the righteous man — the blessed man. This is the result of being planted in the right place and nourished by the right source.

Notice, it doesn't say he *might* be like a tree — it says he ***shall be***.

When your life is rooted in the Word of God, you *will* bear fruit, you will not wither, and you will prosper. That's not opinion; that's from God promise.

This is what every believer should desire to be — *like a tree planted by rivers of water*.

Not a tumbleweed blowing with every wind of doctrine, not a withered plant in the desert, but a tree— strong, alive, unmovable.

This tree has roots that go deep. It's not moved by storms. The drought may come, the heat may rise, but the roots are drinking from the river that never runs dry.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. **8** For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

That's the kind of life God wants for you — stable, fruitful, and faithful through every season.

But fruit isn't just about your personal blessings.

It's not just peace, joy, or answered prayers (though those are part of it).

It's about **spiritual reproduction** — the fruit of your labor for the gospel.

When you're planted in God's Word, you won't just grow — you'll multiply.

You'll lead others to Christ.

You'll raise children who love the Lord.

You'll disciple believers.

You'll leave behind a spiritual legacy that continues long after you're gone.

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

The greatest evidence of being deeply rooted in Christ is that your life begins producing new life in others. Your testimony draws people to the Savior not yourself. That's what happens when the living water of God flows through you — it refreshes everyone around you.

But you also need to notice It says, that the tree *"bringeth forth his fruit in his season."* There will be seasons of growth, seasons of pruning, and seasons of harvest. Don't get discouraged if you're not seeing the fruit you hoped for right now. Maybe you're still in the season of watering. Keep sowing. Keep serving. Keep praying for that loved one. God will bring the increase in His timing.

It also says in Psalm 1:3 that "His leaf also shall not wither."

Even in hard times, even when the world around you dries up, the blessed man still stands green and full of life. When we are rooted deeply in the Word of God.. We will still praise God when others are panicking. We will still give when others are hoarding. We will still believe when others are doubting. Why? Because our source is not this world – it's the living God.

Conclusion: Planted in Christ, Bearing Fruit That Lasts

Psalm 1:1-3 gives us a clear portrait of the blessed life — a life that is *planted in the right place, nourished by the right source, and producing the right fruit.* It's not a life free from storms — it's a life that stands strong through them because it's rooted in the living water of God's Word.

But here's the thing, you cannot plant yourself in the right place until you've been *planted in the right Person*. That Person is Jesus Christ.

In order to receive eternal salvation, everlasting life in heaven, you must be born again. You must put all your faith and trust in the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. He died paid for all your sins. Receive His payment and His sacrifice by believing on Him today. Know that He can save you without your help, and you will never lose your salvation because you are kept by the power of God.

Once you have 100% of your trust in Him, then it's time to grow your roots deep and be grounded in truth. Then you will bear fruit and prosper if you keep Him close.

As we close, I want you to go back to that snapshot of your life one more time. Take time to examine it closely. Do it when you go home, do it often. Ask yourself, "**Where are you planted today?**"

Are you around the wrong people, the wrong influences?

What is our source of nourishment? Are you filling your mind with the garbage of the world? Are you vexing your righteous soul like lot? Or are you Letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord?

God is inviting you to come closer to the water.

He's offering you a life that's stable, fruitful, and blessed — a life that glorifies Him and points others to Christ.

Don't waste another season being planted in the wrong soil.

Come to the River. Let your roots go deep in Jesus Christ.

And let God produce fruit through your life that will last forever.

Matthew 13:8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Let's pray.