

## Devotion for Sunday 5 September 2021

### “Be like a Tree – Psalm 1:3”

You must have read through the Psalm many, many times by now, I am sure. But even if you have, can I ask you to read through it again prayerfully. Remember that Psalm 1 asks a very fundamental question *of us*: “Who are we, and who are we becoming?”

Psalm 1 offers us a life we can choose to live, a life that comes from walking with God. When God created us, He did so with a specific vision, for the blessed or well-lived life in mind; through Jesus Christ, and by his Holy Spirit, we are empowered to live out that vision. The blessed life isn't an easy life, or a life in which nothing bad happens. The blessed life is one in which we are rooted in God, even in the midst of circumstances beyond our control. God calls us to be rooted in Him, like a tree planted by living streams, and to walk the path that leads to life eternal. The Psalm makes us enter through this gate of choosing the way toward this blessed life. And we read with delight, as this way of life is opened up to us through meditating on His word.

There is even more, something more along this way that we could cultivate. Imagine that this is actually a journey, and we can begin to conceive of God as a constant companion or a travelling friend. Someone that walks with us and talks with us and we can walk with and talk with as we journey. We do enjoy the company and fun times we have with family and friends, don't we? Which we surely cherish. I am sure God would love us to develop such meaningful companionship with Him too. And so, it is not just words we are asked to delight and meditate on, but a person we can truly love, befriend and cherish. Remember, God wants to be known, understood, reflected upon and explored intellectually as well as spiritually. We are wired to discover immense fulfilment in the simple probing of the heart, the nature of God, to praise and to give Him glory.

And there is another thing we need to remember. The Christian life is not pretending to be somebody we are not, but rather discovering who we really are, and then being that person, authentically and zealously. Someone once said, a tree gives glory to God by being a tree. In doing so, it 'consents' to God's creative love. It expresses or fulfils an idea which is in God's mind. So, the more a tree is like itself, the more it is fulfilling its purpose in God. The challenge for us then is, to ask ourselves, are we actually living according to the vision that God has in mind? The more we consent to be what God made us to be, the more we become Christ-like. Trees never try to be something else. They are content to be trees. But you and I struggle. We can try to be whoever we want to be, but the less we are in sync with God's plan, the more unfulfilled our lives become. We cannot find truth and meaning just any other way but only by the way of life God intends for us.

Jesus said, “you will know them by their fruits”. Am I being like a tree with my roots down deep? Our life is not our own: we depend on the sun, the rain, the grace and power of God which we do not control but only soak up as precious gifts. We live in the light, but my roots go down deep where only God knows. We know that we are not able to do what God wants of us. We are not capable of the life God wants for us, on our own, but His grace is able to help us. Remember, a changed life is the gift of God's Spirit. Paul describes this new life, the life for which we were made, as “the

fruit of the Spirit;" not "the fruit of our good intentions." The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This is the fruit we are to bear. So, let's be like trees.

Finally, we don't grow deeper into God's love so that we can reap all the benefits and just have a personal relationship with God. We grow deeper so that our lives reach widely and bear fruit for the sake of the world. Say this out loud with me, "If we want to reach further, we have to grow deeper."

Point for Further Reflection

What might be the invitation from the Lord through the words of this Psalm? How will you respond? Write down what the Lord is saying to you and how might you share it with others.

May the grace and peace of God be with you all.

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