

Sunday 22 August 2021

Sunday Devotion Based on Psalm One

I know that we have spent some time on Psalm 1 already but there is still so much to glean from the word of God even if we have to keep saying the same things over and over again. In this devotion, I want to simply go over some of what we have learnt already, from this beautiful Psalm.

In Psalm 1, God asks, are we willing to trust Him and to make the right choice. God wants us to place Him first by having our mind and heart anchored in His word. God wants us to think of Him, follow His truth, and take the right action. Two key words are important to note and notice the progression: delight, then meditation. Delight is a response of the heart to the beauty and value of something or someone—in this case, to God’s Word. But meditation involves careful sustained thought—it takes work and involves the will. Meditation allows the Word to penetrate our minds, hearts, and wills more deeply. Meditation sends our roots down deep, taking in more and more of the life-giving water of the Word.

Another word often used to describe meditation, is the word “murmur”. It refers to staying in the Word of God, reading it, repeating it, speaking it so that it stays on our lips. It is like we are murmuring God’s Word to ourselves. The result of staying in the Word of God is significant. The longer we stay in the Word, the more the Word affects our thoughts. Our thoughts always affect our actions. So, staying in the Word literally affects how we live. And when we live the way the scripture says we should live, there is blessing.

The Psalm speaks of the fact that the blessed, prospers or thrives. There is fruit in season. In other words, staying faithful to the Word of God does not always produce fruit immediately. Sometimes the fruit is delayed but is always produced when it is the right time (in season). Then the other aspect of prospering is continuous life. Fruit comes in season. Life is constant as indicated by the statement that the leaf does not wither. Just imagine a beautiful, sturdy, well-watered, fruitful tree. That is what we should be. We must be like trees that are planted by streams of water. So be the tree and not the chaff that is easily blown away. We learn here that, happiness is a dynamic process that involves and requires a life of meditation upon God’s word, so that we can discern what God would have us do in any and every situation. This is what Jesus meant when He says that we are to “love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind and our neighbour as our self.

Psalm 1 urges us to take the path that leads to a lifestyle that finds its source in the Creator. When we choose this path, we have at our disposal divine instructions that give us nourishment to make it through life. Here we find meaning and purpose that yield a joy that cannot be found anywhere else. And then the Psalm uses the image of a tree that is planted by streams of water to convey the ideas of stability with strong roots, of

freshness with green leaves and of fruitfulness that is evident of a healthy life. Therefore, the healthy life of a Christian is one that is well planted beside the life-giving waters of scripture and prayer.

Remember that our choices have repercussions. Psalm 1 invites a choice — our choice. The Psalm shows us that there are clearly two contrasting ways that yield sharply different consequences—happy and perish. These are the first and last words of the psalm. Will we choose God’s way, which promises life? Or will we choose to go our own way? The promise reinforces that the God-directed and neighbour-oriented way is the most rewarding and happiness-producing life possible. The choice is ours.

And finally, the Psalm urges us to be intentional. We are to intentionally cultivate the desire to take delight and to meditate on God’s Word day and night. But how? If possible, find a consistent time, place, and plan. Then read slowly and carefully. Reread and reread. Read out loud and read prayerfully. Read with a pen in hand and read with an open heart. Memorize texts that you read. Or you could read with other people and talk about what you see and learn and take as much time as possible to enjoy and treasure the word of God. And there is no better time to delight and meditate on the word of God than times like we are facing now.

In light of the series of studies we’ve had on Psalm 1 thus far, I want to pose a couple of questions for reflection.

Questions to Ponder

What attitudes have you abandoned because these are no longer compatible with your understanding of God? How has that change of mind influenced your actions?

May God’s grace and peace be with you all,

Bobby Kusilifu