

THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

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Lessons: Psalm 1

Today for our lesson we read the first psalm. Do you know what a psalm is? If you'd gone to a Hebrew Synagogue when the Lord was on Earth, you could have heard a psalm as it was intended to be used. The man who was reading wouldn't have read the psalm; instead he would have sung it. Psalms in Hebrew were songs—songs to be sung to the Lord; songs of praise; songs of joy; songs that asked the Lord for forgiveness; songs that asked for help. All of them were songs of worship.

Do you know why songs are important in worship? Songs are used in heaven to worship the Lord even as they are used on earth for worship. Each morning when angels wake up they hear beautiful music sung by angel choirs which turn their thoughts to the Lord and help them worship Him. The reason is because songs bring people together as one. If we know the words and the music, we can sing together, either in unison or in harmony. As we all sing we become as one. The beauty of it is that when we worship together the Lord hears one voice. Each person can give his little perfect bit to the harmony of the whole.

You know, all of heaven is a place where people come together as one. Each person has very special talents. Each person can do something that no one else in heaven can do. So they can come together as one, all giving of their special talent. This is like a beautiful song, or the work of many instruments. When they come together they sound in harmony as one beautiful chorus or performance. But suppose someone sings a bad note. What happens to the music? It doesn't sound as good as it could. Some of the beauty is hurt. So it is with us. When we work together, each using his special talents for the common good, the job is done better, and the people doing the job feel good. But when someone is selfish and does not join in the work, does not use his special talents for good, the job suffers. Angels in heaven work together, and their lives are in harmony. But evil spirits in hell, like bad notes in music, destroy their own harmony and happiness.

Now let's turn to the first psalm and see what the Lord was talking about in that psalm. You know, the psalm there says that a person is like a tree. A good person is like a very beautiful tree; a tree planted by the rivers of water; a tree that will live happily next to the calm peaceful flow of the water; a tree that will bring forth its fruit in its season, whose leaves will not wither and drop off, but instead will continue to give food to the rest of the tree so fruit could be made.

People are like trees. They take in spiritual water, or truth, and spiritual food, or good loves. By joining these together inside them they are able to do good things, to bear or bring forth spiritual fruits. When you live by truth from love you do good things for other people, and the good things you do are like the fruits of the tree. We all can take spiritual water, join it with good loves, and make it into spiritual fruit. From love we can take truth and use that truth so that we can do good. In this way we are like a tree which takes water from its roots and food from its leaves to make good fruit.

But how do we become like that beautiful tree planted by the water? What must we do to enjoy happiness? The psalm answers the question first by telling us what not to do, and then by showing us what to do. Don't follow the path to destruction! Instead follow the path to life, the path to heaven which is seen if you do as the psalm tells you. If you "delight in the law of the Lord" and "meditate day and night" on it, try to understand it and use it, then you will be like a beautiful tree.

Notice how the path to destruction is described. This path is a path that somebody can walk along, and then stand in, and at last sit stuck in. It is a path of selfishness. Walking that path is like first doing a bad thing – say hitting a friend. Standing in the path is like making up excuses for doing the bad thing – "He hit me first." Sitting in the path is actually liking the bad thing you did. You're glad you hurt your friend, and you're happy when he cries. You can see what a bad path this is to follow, and how it can, if you continue on it through your life, lead to hell. So we need to turn to another path, to refuse to walk, stand, or sit on the path to destruction. We need to remember that people who don't walk, stand, or sit in the path of selfishness can become like angels, can become like that tree planted by the water, can become capable of doing good and enjoying the happiness of heaven.

Remember, then, the value of psalms, songs in which many people can join together as one in worshiping the Lord. And remember, when you join together with others living truth and so doing good, you can become like a tree, a beautiful tree planted by the rivers of water whose leaves will not wither as it brings forth fruit in its season.