

The Greatest Story (Part 21):

Rooted In the Word

Psalm 1

Memory Verses: Psalm 1:1-3

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction

I remember as a young man being like a leaf driven by the wind all over the place. **Ephesians 4:14 says that “so we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”** Well that was me; tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, or human thought. I think that was perhaps a lot of our experiences. It's a big world with lots of thoughts being thrown at you from all different directions. Your parents, your teachers, your friends, the television. And, with all of those different thoughts and teachings coming at you... how do you determine which ones are true and worth building your life upon? I guess I just went wherever it seemed the wind was blowing at the time. At church the wind would blow one way. At home perhaps a slight variation. With my friends it would blow in a completely different direction... and this little leaf was all over the place.

My kids are like that. Two weeks ago Vera was all about Frozen and Moana, but last week she was all about the Avengers and Thanos, but two days ago she watched GooseBumps 2, a scary show for kids, three times. I don't think she knows what she likes or who she is. Is she a princess, a super hero, or a scary monster? Sometimes she likes playing this game where she acts like a dog and crawls around on her knees begging for food and licking our hands and barking. It's cute for a couple of minutes but when it goes on for two days I start to get a little worried. Is she a dog or a human? I don't think she knows. She's just going where the wind takes her I guess.

Some of us are still like that. We are still tossed to and fro like the waves or like a leaf in the wind. We haven't found solid ground or a firm foundation because we just tend to go where ever the wind blows. And that's not a good thing. I think some people like not having a firm foundation... they think it makes them flexible, but in reality it just makes them lost. Because here's the thing... there is such a thing as absolute truth and for those of us who find it and accept it... we have a solid footing that helps us to prosper in this life and secures our position in the next.

Over the past two months we have been looking at how these winds have thrown the kings of Israel all over the place. At one point Elijah told king Ahab and the people of Israel that they had to stop wavering between two opinions. If God is God follow him but if there is

another god then follow him, but stop being tossed to and fro like a leaf in the wind. Job was given that choice as well, whether to curse God or to praise God. He chose to praise him in the midst of his pain. Zeb, Ezra and Nehemiah were given that choice as well. They could be bullied and not finish the work the Lord placed on their hearts or they could overcome the opposition and build the temple and the walls for their God.

Which has led us this week to begin looking at the Psalms. The Psalms have many different authors. Solomon wrote a couple, Moses wrote one, Asaph, David's worship leader wrote a couple as did Korah and his sons... but the majority, 73 in fact were written by King David. And as we've seen, King David wavered a little... but not much. In fact was probably one of the least wavering of all of the kings of Israel because he had a foundation in God. Today we are going to read **Psalm 1** and see how David found such a firm foundation. And what we are going to see is... **The Word of God Is The End of Wavering**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we notice here in **verse 1** is that... **We Are Rooted in the Word When It Becomes Our Number One Counselor (vs.1)**. As we mentioned before the world has a lot of counselors and here we see three categories of counselors; the wicked counselor, the sinful counselor, and the scornful counselor.

Lets first examine the counsel of the wicked. The wicked tend to be obvious about their evil; it's apparent, and for the most part they aren't trying to hide it. Their sins are the ones we count as the really bad ones... Drugs, adultery, theft... even murder. This counselor would say, “Hey man, lets get wasted and live for the moment and do whatever we want cause you only live once. Live it up, there are no rules.” This counsel often leads to a short life or a very hard life with very few friends and a hardened heart.

Next we see the counsel of the sinful, and what we notice right off the bat is that the levels of the obscurity of sin increases. You see, even the word sin seems less evil then the word wicked. I mean people choose wickedness but sin... aren't we all sinners. It's natural to sin right, but not necessarily natural to be wicked. And the sins become less obvious with this counselor. Adultery, theft, and murder are replaced with lying, slander, and lust. You know white lies... white sin... if there were such a thing. I mean these people could even be a little religious. Perhaps they attend church every now and then. And this counselor would say, “Hey man, church is cool once in a while but we're all human. A lie is sometimes necessary and you have to do what you have to do.”

But then we get to the counsel of the scoffer. You see when the Bible speaks of scoffers its not usually speaking of those who mock the religion of the jews or Christians. Instead it speaks of those who are

religious but mock God with their false worship. So scoffers are those who mock God by pretending to be Christians yet have hearts who are far from him. So it makes sense that this group is depicted by some of the least obvious sins; sins like anger, gossip, bitterness, apathy, cynicism, neglect, and arrogance. In fact the biggest sins of the scoffer is their passive sins... they sing hymns but neglect to serve the poor, they dress in their Sunday best but neglect to help the widow and the orphan, they say amen in the sermon but neglect to share their faith with their co-workers. They are pretenders and God almost hates their actions more than the sinners and the wicked. This counselor says, "Hey man, be good, go to church, dress the right way, and say the right things on Sunday. Monday through Saturday doesn't matter that much."

And as you can see, as the levels of the severity of sin decreases the easier it becomes to be comfortable. At first you walk in obvious sin... keeping your options open... to just sow your wild oats for a time or to make it a lifestyle. But then it becomes easier to just stand in less severe sin, until eventually you are so comfortable in nominal sin that you sit down and become rooted. It is for this reason that it is so hard for nominal religious Christians to be disciplined... they are rooted in their sinful state and need to be uprooted and woken up before it's too late.

Regardless if listen to the wicked, the sinful, or the scoffer, the point is the same... **If you listen to worldly counselors you will be led astray to worship yourself and neglect your God.** This counsel will make you like a wave tossed back and forth living to some degree for God on Sundays or Holidays but living for self the rest of the time. Your belief will be rooted in self pleasure rather than God's glory and that is not the way God designed you to live. So what is the cure to this counsel? **The Word of God Is The End of Wavering .**

Blessed is the man who doesn't follow these counselors, but follows the counsel of God in his Word. God must become your chief counselor. **Psalm 119:24** says that the testimonies of God are my delight and my counselors. The word of God is the source of God's counsel. So our chief counsel must come from God's word. The counsel of God's word is contrary to the counsel of this world. "Live it up" is countered with live for God. "Do what you have to do" is countered with do what God calls you to do. "Be religious" is countered with be in relationship with God. So the question remains... "how often are we looking to the world for answers rather than God's word? **The Word of God Is The End of Wavering**

The next thing we see in verses 2-3 is.... **We Are Blessed by the Word When We Become Devoted To It (vs.2-3)** So.. we don't follow worldly counsel but we follow Biblical counsel. One is the negative and one is the positive. One is what not to do and one is what

to do. We will be blessed (verse 1) when you don't follow worldly counsel, and we will be blessed when you follow biblical counsel. So... how do we follow Biblical counsel? That may seem like a silly question but I think most Christians don't answer it correctly. I think most think that the main source of biblical counsel comes from the pastor, a christian friend, or a christian book! All of those can be good but they aren't the best. They aren't the Bible! The way to get Biblical counsel is to read the Bible. In fact, you must become devoted to it. Just recently I asked our Deacons what they thought devoted meant. They said things like... to be devoted to something means you make it your top priority. If you are devoted to something then it comes before other things. Another answered that it means that you are willing to chase after it no matter what. In **verse 2** we see that to be devoted to the Bible means to delight in his law and meditate on it day and night. So first, to delight in the Bible means that you learn to love God's word. The more you read it the more you enjoy it. Eventually you see it as necessary for your joy. To meditate on it day and night means that you become dependent on it. Eventually you see it as necessary for living.

When we are devoted to the Word it transforms the way we think. **Romans 12:2** says that we are to not conform to this world by living according to its counsel but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The word renews our minds in real ways. The word gives us a firm foundation and a solid rock perception of the world. It shows a worldview that isn't fluid but is true; a standard. It roots us like a **tree** (vs3). Where once we were a leaf tossed in the wind... now we can be a tree planted and rooted in one solid place. **The Word of God Is The End of Wavering.**

And when we are rooted in the word we will be blessed by the word. The first way we are blessed by the word is that it plants us by streams of water. We see water mentioned a lot in the Bible symbolically. Jesus calls himself the river of life that if one drinks they will never thirst again. The Holy Spirit is also given the allegorical presentation of water. In fact the Holy Spirit is the way we are sustained forever in Jesus Christ. He is the river of life. And so... we see that the Holy Spirit works in us in accordance to our obedience and understanding of the word. The more we are rooted in the word the more the Holy Spirit helps guide us. The word gives us a biblical knowledge and the spirit gives us a supernatural help to live according to the word. So if you want that water that never runs dry... be rooted in the Word.

The word also helps us produce fruit. As a healthy tree with deep roots and living water flowing through our limbs we can produce real good fruit. Your life will not produce good fruit apart from the word but with it you will produce awesome fruit like; discipleship, evangelism, transformation, fruits of the Spirit, etc.. You see everyone wants purpose – to produce something good. The word shows us the only real way to do that.

The word also helps us to leave behind the picture of a withering leaf tossed in the wind. The word produces leaves that are green and stay

attached to the tree. So now we are no longer an unattached frail leaf tossed by the wind. Instead we are now a solid stable tree attached and unshaken. Those rooted in the word no longer waver. **The Word of God Is The End of Wavering**

And then the Word causes those who are rooted in it to prosper in all that they do. You see the Bible is wisdom for life and those who live according to its principles stand a much better chance of being successful. But we aren't talking about material success as much as spiritual success. You see... **the only sure way to be blessed with abundant life is to be devoted to the wisdom of God's word.** That abundant life prosperity may include wealth and health but we know that it may not. Real prosperity is spiritual prosperity... producing fruit that grows us in Christ and makes us treasure spiritual things over material things. So prosper... in the Word of God.

Lastly, in verses 4-6 we see that ... **We Are Saved by the Word By Placing Our Faith In It (vs.4-6)** Those who don't root themselves in the word will not only be tossed like a leaf in this lifetime but they will be judged in the next. They will have no stability here and no peace there. The wind drives the chaff away in this life and the chaff is burned in the next (**Matthew 3:12**). The wicked will be judged and they will not stand. Get this... they stood in their sin in vs1 but now they can't stand before a holy God's wrath and they will perish.

Not the righteous. Those who are rooted in the word will not perish because the Lord knows them. Look at **Matthew 7:21-23.** There will be plenty who played games who took the counsel of this world and scoffed at God in their religious activity who Jesus says I never knew you. But that's not those who are rooted in the word, they will be saved because they were known by God through his Word. How are the righteous saved, by placing their faith in what the word says about Christ our savior. This means that there is a measure of faith you must place in the word in order to place your faith in Christ.

You see... Jesus is the Word. **Salvation is found in placing your trust in Christ the Word.** **John 1:1** calls Christ the Word. Being rooted in the word ultimately means being rooted in Christ. This is the ultimate stability. And this foundation doesn't just root you for a lifetime but for an eternity, never to be shaken again. **The Word of God Is The End of Wavering.** Christ is the end of wavering.

Application (Resolution, You)

So it's simple right... Don't follow the counsel of this world. Worldly counsel leads to sinful selfish pleasure seeking purposelessness and in it you will waver forever with no stability. So again... how much

are you listening to the counselors of this world versus the counsel of scripture?

Be Devoted to the Bible. You will find the stream of the holy spirit constantly guiding and nourishing you. You will find water that causes you to never thirst again for the things of this world. You will produce good fruit – fruit of the spirit that transforms lives. You will no longer be shaken like a leaf but be a tree that has leaves that don't wither or shake off. You will prosper in the abundant life that God wants for you. So... how devoted are you to the word of God? Do you delight yourself in the word of God? Do you meditate on it day and night?

Ultimately, root yourself in Christ through his word. Those who aren't rooted in the word of Christ will perish. Have you rooted yourself in Christ by believing in his death and resurrection as the means for salvation?

Conclusion

So.. you have a choice today. Are you a **leaf** detached and withering being tossed back and forth by the wind of indecision because you have no real counselors, no real foundation? There is no future for this leaf except to wither and burn like chaff.

Or are you a **tree** rooted by streams of living water that is stable and firm because of the firm foundation of God's Word and the savior the Word points to? **The Word of God Is The End of Wavering**