

Reflection Questions: ***Psalm 1***

For the message, "Two ways to Live" given by Pastor Mike Ivancic
at New City Church of Calgary on May 14 2017

These discussion questions are designed primarily to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Psalm 1

A summary of the sermon: Psalm 1, a wisdom Psalm, tells us that regardless of the differences we see in the kinds of lives that are lived today that these are simply variations of only two possible ways of living. The life of the blessed/righteous/wise and the life of ungodly/unrighteous/foolish. The difference between these two ways of living is answered by who or what do you root your life in? This is the language of faith: in whom or what do you place your trust and ultimate confidence.

The blessed way of life is a life of deep joy and contentment, and is known by its constant and complete trust in God who is its life source. It is a life that, because it's rooted in a constant supply of grace (streams of living water), is always fruitful and growing regardless of the external circumstances. In fact, the greater the adversity this kind of life goes through, rather than weakening, the stronger, more stable, more solid one becomes as it drives deeper trust in the God who is in and above all things.

The life of the ungodly, on the other hand, is known simply as a life without reference to God. It not only describes those who don't believe in God or are indifference to him it also refers to the person who believes in God, who goes to church, who lives a moral life but whose soul is not rooted in God as the source of their lives. Because their soul is not rooted in the very thing that is designed to give it life and stability (i.e. God) it is often a life characterized by hollowness and superficiality and drift.

Our modern culture, in the name of freedom, has foolishly and tragically severed its roots from God along with the tradition of Biblical faith and therefore has unwittingly also disconnected itself from the very thing that gives us stability, a strong foundation, substance and growth. We now live in a modern world where everything changes, nothing lasts and everything is fading.

Psalm 1 does not primarily give us moral imperatives to obey or steps to follow to realize a Blessed way of Life. It is a description of a life created and rooted in grace, a life that is not deserved or merited but freely given to us by God. Like all Scriptures it is a portrait and vision that is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ who alone as the blessed, righteous and Godly one took on our curse, unrighteousness and ungodliness that by faith in Him we can be firmly rooted in God's life forever as our all in all.

It is this story of God's active presence in history working for His glory and our joy and culminating in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ that we are to delight in, meditate on and practice so that we are not only "planted" in God but that we grow up in all things in Him.

Bottom Line: Although Psalm 1 portrays two kinds of lives; it is only a life that has been rooted in God's grace that sustains, nourishes, protects and strengthens our life regardless of what may come our way. Only this "blessed way of life" will last.

QUESTIONS

1. How does this text speak to your life?

- How are you challenged, convicted, encouraged, or surprised by this text?
- What things are you rooting (trusting, depending) your life in that are highly dependent on favorable circumstances. If those circumstances were to disappear or be threatened how would you respond?
- How can we ask for and receive the good things in life as gift from God (e.g. career, friends, family, marriage) without rooting our lives in them and risk being severely disappointed and disillusioned?
- Are there any aspects of your life that you have come to realize that you have not rooted in God (decision making, career and vocation, marriage, sexuality, others)

2. How does this text speak to us as a church community?

- What would it look like for us a church community if we are to live out this text in our city?
- How are we as Christians affected by the counsel of the ungodly? How can we help each other to spiritually discern ungodliness in order not to be affected and shaped by it?
- How can we can practically help each other to “delight ourselves in the law of the Lord” in light of the gospel?

3. How does this text speak to our city?

- What aspects of the message of this text would cause the greatest offense to our city if they heard it? What would be the greatest hope and encouragement?
- Can you imagine if just the Christians in Calgary took this message to heart? Describe how things would change?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life.

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

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