

Intro to the Psalms

3/5/18

Psalms

As we transition from Ephesians to the Psalms, I want us to be able to in some way connect the dots between the two. They are not as removed as they might seem.

If we consider the prayers that Paul prayed for the Ephesian church, we realize that he is praying that they understand who God is, what He has done, and who the Ephesians are in Him. That is also the message we find in Psalms. The Psalms are poems and songs written by God's people in response to Him.

Paul ends his by instructing the Ephesians that they were in a spiritual battle. In the midst of the battle they were to utilize the gifts that God had given them for the fight. He also was very clear that although the pieces of armor are effective and sufficient, they are only so in light of God's power. The Ephesians were, and we are to pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. They were, and we are in a spiritual battle that can only be won by the power of the Spirit. Many of the Psalms are cries from David and others that God would do battle for them.

As we dipped our toe in the water in Psalm 1 yesterday, someone called my attention to another parallel that I completely missed. In Psalm 1 the psalmist is drawing a contrast between the wicked who consistently engage sinfulness in an ever increasing dynamic. They walk in the counsel of the wicked, they stand or tarry in the way of sinners, and then they sit or reside in the seat of scoffers. My friend said it called his attention to the same three terms in Ephesians that describe the exact opposite progression in believers. In Ephesians 2:6 Paul declares the Ephesians were seated in the heavenlies with Christ. Because of their position in Christ Paul contrasts the way they used to walk (Ephesians 2:2; 4:17) with how they should now walk. Ephesians 2:10; 5:2, 8) The culminating statement is in Ephesians 5:15, "Look carefully then how you **walk**, not as unwise but as wise."

At the end of Ephesians Paul encourages the Ephesians to do all that they can to stand. Not in the way of sinners, but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

My friend went on to say that considering Psalm 1 caused him to look back on the book of Ephesians with a new perspective. It is much like when he is in the woods very familiar with his surroundings, but as he climbs the next ridge he gains an entirely new perspective on where he had been. I think that is a great illustration.

Psalm 1 sets the stage for and introduces the Psalms. It uses some typical conventions of Hebrew poetry by contrasting two types of individuals, one who is blessed in his relationship with God, and the wicked who stand opposed to God. One delights and meditates on God's law. The other scoffs at God's law. One is like a tree planted by streams of water. The other is like the chaff which is blown away.

The Psalm ends by declaring the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. What a great picture in contrasting opposite directions in life. What a great challenge to constantly assess which direction we are headed and consciously pursue what we decide we really desire.

Questions to consider:

1. What is the picture that the psalmist is drawing in Psalm 1 of a person who is blessed? How does that compare to what Jesus said about those who are blessed in the beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)?

