

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adults Sunday School

PSALM 15 – CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GODLY MAN

I. INTRODUCTION

A Psalm of David. David is a man after God's own heart. His relationship with God is the closest when he was under great trials and difficulties. And it was probably before he became the king of Israel. Those were likely the best years of his life as he experienced God's power and goodness upon him when he was in the most helpless situations. That period was the time when many of his psalms were written.

In this psalm we shall learn what a godly man is. David portrays him as a righteous, temperate, and God-fearing man. May God enable us to be such a godly man with all these characteristics.

II. THE GODLY MAN IS A RIGHTEOUS MAN

Verse 1 “LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?”

These are the two rhetorical questions as the psalmist begins his psalm. What is the answer then? Is he not the godly man who abide in God's tabernacle and dwell in His holy hill? And specifically, this godly man is a righteous man as proven by verse two.

The psalmist is introducing the godly man to us so that we too may be like one. And interestingly, these questions are posed to God as the psalmist calls upon Him as LORD. This is the covenantal name of God that emphasizes the relationship with His people. Christianity is more than just a religion. It is a relationship that is restored between God and man. God desired all men to be restored to Him and for the relationship that is broken by sin be restored again. The only way to which such a restoration is possible is Christ. Whosoever believes in Him will be brought back to God again.

Both tabernacle and holy hill speak of God's dwelling place on earth. One is built temporally and the other is permanent. The tabernacle is a moving tent which the children of Israel carried while they were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. The tabernacle is the holy place where the people meet God with their sacrifices. It was finally stayed put in a particular location after they entered into the land of promise. The holy hill is rightly referred to the city called Jerusalem that was built on the mountain. And there the temple of God was built, and no longer had to move from place to place.

As these questions are posed to God, it means that He is the One who is going to approve and judge who is worthy to dwell in His presence, be it in a temporal or permanent place. And the answer is obvious. He is none other than the one who is righteous according to verse 2.

Verse 2, “He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.”

There are three verbs that describe the righteous man by the way he: walks, works, and speaks. We shall look into each of them.

Walketh uprightly. This is talking about his life. His life is described as a life of righteousness. This righteousness is based upon the law of God. He lived his life in obedience to God and according to the law of righteousness. There is always a sense of upholding righteousness and the glory of God.

Worketh righteousness. Is there any difference between worketh righteousness and walketh uprightly? It seems to be the same. But there is a slight difference which can be significant. Walketh uprightly focuses on the way of life which keeps sin at the bay, while worketh righteousness focuses on the work itself on how a believer trusts and leans upon God.

Speaketh the truth in his heart. We live in a world of lies and deception. Fake news are everywhere now. Who is telling the truth? Who will tell the truth? You and I are God's children. We are no more the children of the Devil who is the father of lies. And since our heavenly Father is truth, we are supposed to be the children of the Truth. And so we must always tell the truth. And it begins in our heart. We must be convicted in our heart that no matter what happened, we are to tell nothing but the truth. The time will come when your faith will be tested. Will you pass because you tell the truth? Or will you fail because you prefer to tell lies?

III. THE GODLY MAN IS A TEMPERATE MAN

Verse 3, “He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.”

There are three verbs that described a temperate man by his word and deed. These are all in the negatives.

Backbiteth not with his tongue. To backbite is to talk behind someone's back to destroy his reputation. Oftentimes backbiting includes maligning someone of things he did not do. Words can kill and destroy. Those who backbite have a wicked heart. Because they were out to destroy and not build and edify.

Doeth evil to his neighbour. Instead of helping and building up the neighbour, it is an evil thing to hurt and destroy the neighbour.

Taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. This means not to put your neighbour to open shame or out to embarrass your neighbour. It is important to be careful with both words and deeds so that we will not be a stumbling block unto others and hurt them unnecessarily.

IV. THE GODLY MAN IS A GOD-FEARING MAN

Verse 4, “In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”

When a man fears God, he will not be afraid of man and what man can do to him. Not only that, he will have great discernment upon the people around him. He will know if they fear God or not by their words and deeds. To those who do not fear God, he will not allow himself to be influenced by them or to follow their ungodly ways. And this is all because he fears God more than he fears men.

And so in his eyes, the psalmist says a vile person is contemned. A vile person is one whose conduct and behaviour deserves reprobation and was condemned by God in His Word. And the God-fearing man will submit the same judgment as God.

But to those who fear God, he honours them. The word “honour” literally means to give weight. He will cherish them and give them the respect they deserve. And he stands with them having the same mind of Christ in fearing God more than fearing men.

A God-fearing man will make sure he is careful with his words and especially the promises he made. If he has indeed made a sinful oath, the wise thing to do is to break the oath and not keep it. He will then only be chargeable for making a careless oath. But if he were to fulfil the sinful oath knowingly, that would be a double sin. Or in the case that because of the oath (nothing sinful in nature), he had to suffer loss. So be it, as he must fulfil the oath and regard this as a lesson learnt not to make a vow without serious consideration again.

Verse 5a, “He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. ...”

Putting money to usury is not wrong persay. For Jesus, in the parable of the talents, said to the one with one talent how he ought to have put the money in the bank so that he could have earned some interest with it (Matthew 25:27) instead of burying it in the ground. What is wrong with usury is when one tried to take advantage of the poor and needy. And it is exactly what this verse is teaching against. The poor and needy are unable to fend themselves and therefore are at the mercy of those above them. The God-fearing man will take care of them. He will not take advantage of them to gain their reward. He will be self-giving and be willing to make sacrifices, without calling them to repay him.

VI. CONCLUSION

Verse 5b, “... He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”

This is the answer to the rhetorical questions given in verse one. The godly man who is righteous, temperate and God-fearing will dwell in God’s tabernacle and His holy hill. He shall have a very solid and firm foundation in the Lord. And that explains why he will never be moved. For God is with him. One with God is truly the majority. And he has all the strength and power he needs in life to overcome any difficulties and trials before him.

God belongs to him forever. And this is more than what we could ask for. Nothing should be able to move us because we are in God’s good hands. But, are we righteous, temperate and God-fearing? May God help us. Amen.