

Psalm 1 (NIV84)

1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

The two main doctrines of the Bible are Law and Gospel. The above passage may seem to elevate the Law and leave the Gospel out of the equation.

That's not the case. Another translation has it like this: "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, who does not stand on the path with sinners, and who does not sit in a meeting with mockers. But his delight is in the teaching of the LORD, and on his teaching he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2, The Evangelical Heritage Version). The Christian who delights in all that God's Word has to say, and lives his or her life avoiding sin will be truly blessed.

God's Law clearly shows what sin is and the consequences of sin, to prick consciences and convict hearts. The sweet Gospel tells of God's limitless love for sinners -- how Jesus entered our human experience to do for us what we could not do: to live perfectly in obedience to God's Law, to suffer and die as a payment for our sins, and to rise again victorious over sin, death and the devil. And all the benefits of Christ's substitutionary work are freely offered to each individual as a gift from God. That is good news!

When we meditate on that "day and night" the withering pressures of this life will not crush us or cause us to despair. Rather, we will prosper, knowing that our Lord is watching over us. Therefore, may each of us delight in the teaching of the Lord.

Prospering with you in Christ,
Pastor Golm

July 29

Afraid To Sin?

Shall we continue in sin . . . ? God forbid. . . For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:1, 23

Chrysostom, the eloquent church father, had incurred the anger of Emperor Arcadius. Enraged, the emperor consulted with his counsellors as to the best method of punishing the powerful preacher.

"Confiscate his property!" said one. "Whom will that harm?" asked his majesty. "Not Chrysostom, but only the poor, to whom he gives all he has."-"Cast him into prison!" said a second. "What would be the use? He would glory in his chains."-"Well, then kill him!" said another. "How would that help? It would only open the gates of heaven to him."

Finally, one wiser than the rest proposed: "There is only one thing in the world that Chrysostom fears. He is afraid to sin. We must make him sin!"

Can the same be said of us? Afraid to sin? Or have we tamed the ugly monster of sin to the point where we can live fairly comfortably with it? Let us remember the words with which Martin Luther begins his explanation of each of the Ten Commandments: "We should fear and love God. . ."

We should stand in awe of God because of his holiness and righteousness. We should love him because of his immeasurable compassion freely bestowed on us through Jesus Christ, his Son. We should learn to recoil instinctively from the dreadful consequences of sin, and be drawn to ever higher degrees of holiness by the wondrous love poured out for us on Calvary's cross.

We dare never forget that it was our sin which caused our blessed Lord to die for our redemption. Out of love for him, may we take our stand with St. Chrysostom, and not be ashamed if the world mockingly says of us: "He is afraid to sin."

Oh, Lord, teach me to walk in Your ways, to hate sin, and to love You more and more. Amen.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)