

"A Tale of Two Men"
Psalm 1

May 22, 2005

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction: God's word divides mankind into two kinds of people

1. this is not between M_____ and W_____ (Galatians 3:28)
2. this is not between R_____ and P_____ (or, alternatively, between servants and masters, Galatians 3:28)
3. it is not between J_____ and G_____ (Galatians 3:28), although
 - a. Romans 3:1–2, the J_____ had the advantage of receiving the O_____ (or revelation) of God
 - b. Acts 4:10–12, the promised M_____–Saviour would be born among the J_____

B. God's Two Kinds of People

1. these are
 - a. the R_____ Man (the "godly")
 - b. the W_____ Man (the "ungodly")
2. (Matthew 25:31–34 and Psalm 1) these two men are marked by their differing destinies
 - a. the godly will be B_____ by God
 - b. the ungodly are A_____ and their way will P_____

C. What marks the man who is one of the ungodly?

1. in God's eyes it is not simply that they are ...
 - a. openly S_____
 - b. claim to be an A_____
2. you cannot escape being ungodly just by being R_____
3. John 3:16–18, Matthew 22:42, 1 John 5:12
 - a. the only escape (salvation) from being one of the ungodly is through B_____ in the name of the only begotten Son of God
 - b. those who don't do this are J_____ (condemned) already
 - c. those who have the Son have L_____
4. what the Bible has to say about salvation
 - a. Psalm 40:1–3 is a testimony of one who has been saved because he C_____ unto the Lord
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 tells us that God can save (wash, sanctify, justify) any S_____ no matter how terrible their S_____
 - c. God can do this
 - (A) Ephesians 2:4–5, because of His M_____ and L_____
 - (B) 2 Corinthians 5:21, because Jesus Christ bore our S_____ we can be counted as R_____ by God in Christ

D. What marks the man who is one of the godly?

1. Ephesians 2:8–10, he desires to walk in the G_____ W_____ that God has prepared beforehand
2. Psalm 1:1, he avoids the path that leads to S_____
3. although he knows that works of the L_____ will not make him one of the godly (Romans 3:20), he D_____ in it (Psalm 1:2 and Romans 7:22) because, like the Great Example, his desire is to P_____ God by doing God's will
4. Psalm 1:3, he will bear F_____ because God has planted him and is tending him so that he does

A. Introduction

1. this is not an original thought on my part, but rather one that is well known: God's word divides all mankind into two kinds
 - a. this division is not between men and women
 - (A) although that is a very ancient distinction
 - (B) existing from the days of creation
 - (C) certainly one that important
 - (D) God's word has much to say in particular to both men and to women
 - (1) telling of unique privileges, responsibilities of each
 - (2) recounting the great heroics of each
 - (E) but, before God, this distinction is temporary
 - (1) it disappears in the eternal scheme of things
 - (2) Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28 (NAS): "... there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
 - b. nor are the two kinds the rich and the poor; or expressed in other terms, the servants and the masters
 - (A) this is also a very obvious. real division in the world today, and one upon which politicians and others spend a great deal of effort debating
 - (B) nor does the Bible ignore this
 - (1) for God imposes upon the privileged of this world
 - (2) a responsibility for the world's needy
 - (3) which in ancient times was particularly addressed to widows, to orphans, to what we would call "refugees" or foreigners living in the land, and to others who were poor and in debt
 - (4) in fact, one of the most progressive social laws ever enacted was by God through Moses whereby the vicious cycle of poverty was averted by the forgiveness of all debts and the return of all lands to their families in the year of jubilee
 - (C) although God's word points out certain difficulties that riches present of a spiritual nature, this division into rich and poor, into servants and masters, is not critical before God: Galatians 3:28 (NAS): "... there is neither slave nor free man ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

- c. the two kinds are not Jew and Gentile
- (A) yes, the children of Israel were elected — chosen — by God to be a special nation
 - (1) to be witnesses to God's holiness and might
 - (2) to bear His name before all the nations of the earth
 - (3) to be the recipients of His grace and goodness
 - (4) to be the repositories of His revelation – as found in Romans 3:1–2 (NAS): *Then what advantage has the Jew? ... First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.*
 - (5) all this is undeniable
 - (B) furthermore, it was through this nation that God's chosen One, His Elect, His Messiah, His true Israel, Jesus came to bring salvation to mankind
 - (1) Peter speaking in Acts 4:10a, 12 (NAS): *"let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead ... there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."*
 - (2) but, in Christ, that division disappear; reading again Galatians 3:28 (NAS): *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*
- d. no, the two kinds of people into which God's word divides all mankind, is one that cuts across
- (A) both men and women
 - (B) both rich and poor
 - (C) both masters and slaves
 - (D) both Jew and Gentile
 - (E) and any other division that you might care to make, such as colour of skin, country of origin, age; whatever
 - (F) you shall find it in our Scripture reading, Psalm 1

B. « Read Psalm 1 in the NAS version » ¹ How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. ⁴ The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the

wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.”

C. God’s Two Kinds of People

1. Psalm 1 introduces both the book Psalms as a whole, and, more particularly, the first book of the Psalms (from 1 through 41), being principally prayers of David
 - a. this Psalm draws a quick sketch, a pen and ink portrait of “God’s Two Kinds of People”
 - (A) first, there is the Righteous Man; the “godly”
 - (B) second, there is the Wicked Man; the “ungodly”
 - (C) this the same division that permeates God’s word
 - (D) it’s a black and white division without any shades of grey at all
 - b. for this first kind — the Righteous
 - (A) the Psalms are their prayer book, their hymn book, part of their statement of faith
 - (B) the Psalms express their hopes, their aspirations, their cares, their prayers and their worship to God
 - (C) but these are meaningless to us unless we are first assured that we are part of that first kind of people
2. the Bible tells us that these two kinds of people are marked, not by their gender, not by their social status or wealth, not by their race or nationality, but by their destiny
 - a. consider Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:31–34, 41 (NAS): *But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” ... Then He will also say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, {the opposite of blessed} into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;”*
 - b. just two kinds of people, just two; you are one or the other
 - c. the “Wicked Man” has a fearful fate

- (A) in the Psalm, verse 6, "the way of the wicked will perish"
- (B) in Jesus' words, "into eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels"

3. you and I may be reluctant and shy about even thinking of applying the term "Righteous Man (or Woman)" to ourselves
- a. feeling that this is a term or description
 - (A) of which we are unworthy
 - (B) which we would be presumptuous to take to us
 - b. yet, with such a fearful fate — everlasting punishing — in view, is it not something that demands our attention? ... had we not better be very sure
 - (A) that we understand what distinguishes the Righteous Man from the Wicked Man?
 - (B) that we know what it is whereby God reckons or counts a person to be righteous?

D. What distinguishes the "Wicked Man"?

1. Who is the "Wicked Man"?
- a. is he (or she) the open, wanton sinner?
 - (A) who curses the name of God and Jesus?
 - (B) who disregards the laws of God and of man?
 - (C) yes, such a one falls in this kind; but not him alone
 - b. is he (or she) the atheist, the agnostic?
 - (A) who ignores or refutes Christianity?
 - (B) who mocks the Christian and reviles His Christ?
 - (C) who espouses vain and false philosophies?
 - (D) yes, such a one falls in this kind; but not him alone
 - c. does religion provide an escape from being Wicked?
 - (A) there are many sincerely religious people this morning who never-the-less before God are part of the Wicked
 - (B) because in the pride of their hearts they are trusting in their own works of righteousness
 - (C) no; religion itself does not give salvation (an escape)
 - d. perhaps the question as to who is the "Wicked Man" is best answered by another question:

2. Is there a way whereby I can be spared, be saved, escape from being considered by God as a “Wicked Man”?
 - a. we have already remarked on the fact that the mark of the “Wicked Man” is the fact of his fearful fate
 - (A) that he is headed for eternal punishment
 - (B) that “his way will perish”
 - b. Jesus gave the criteria whereby any man, any woman can escape that fearful fate, can be saved, in John 3:16–18 (NAS): “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” and verse 36 of the same chapter, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
 - c. the distinguishing mark for anyone here this morning is how he or she answers the question, “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” (Matthew 22:42 NAS)
 - d. because, “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” (1 John 5:12 NAS) ... that’s pretty black and white isn’t it?
 - (A) do you have the Son of God?
 - (B) do you have life?
 - (C) is He your own personal Saviour?

3. listen to what God’s word has to say on this subject
 - a. listen to this testimony of one who experienced God’s saving power in Psalm 40:1–3 (NAS): I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay; And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear, And will trust in the Lord.
 - b. hear the kind of people upon whom God is willing to place the label “Righteous Men” in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NAS): Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor

thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

- c. discover how God can do this from
 - (A) Ephesians 2:4–5 (NAS): *But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)*
 - (B) and from 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NAS): *He made Him who knew no sin {that is Jesus Christ} to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
- d. so it is Christ's work on the cross, and Christ's work alone, when it is applied by faith to a man or to a woman, that changes their kind from "Wicked" to "Righteous" and Hebrews 11, Romans 4, and Galatians 3 tell us that this was equally true of the Old Testament saint as it is of the New Testament saint

E. What distinguishes the "Righteous Man"

- 1. now that we have seen that being in this kind is not a cause for boasting but a cause for praise — because it depends not upon our good works but upon Christ's, we can look at this Psalm and discern what the evidence should be in our lives
 - a. that is the message of that great salvation text, Ephesians 2:8–10 (NAS): *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
 - b. so let us note a number of lessons for the believer
- 2. one: the "Righteous Man" avoids the sickening spiral of sin that leads downward away from God
 - a. verse 1 (NIV): *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.*
 - b. first, note that there is here a progression in association
 - (A) walking — going into the neighbourhood of sin
 - (B) standing — placing oneself under the allure of sin

- (C) sitting — getting downright comfortable around sin
- (D) the Righteous Man avoids the last by never getting started walking along the path to sin
- c. second, there is an emphasis in this Psalm of the Righteous Man's disassociating himself from the deeds of the Wicked
 - (A) for this is something that is possible even when life will thrust us cheek to jowl with wicked, sinners, mockers
 - (B) but the soul of the Righteous Man finds itself vexed by their wickedness, their sin, their scorn of God
 - (C) and he does not partake of their deeds
- 3. two: the "Righteous Man" nurtures a deepening relationship with God
 - a. verse 2 (NIV): **But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.**
 - b. now, some people see that word "law" and respond
 - (A) "Old Testament!"
 - (B) "works!"
 - (C) "Romans 3:20 (NAS): **because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified {counted as righteous} in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.**"
 - (D) "that's not for us: we're under grace"
 - c. well that's true if you are trying to gain salvation by works or you are trying to preserve salvation by works
 - d. but it ignores what Paul later said, while describing the battle between our old physical nature and our new spiritual nature, in Romans, 7:22 (NAS): **"For I joyfully concur {or, KJV, delight} with the law of God in the inner man"** — the same spirit found throughout Psalm 119
 - e. we should then be following in imitation of our Saviour who testified (John 8:29, NAS): **"And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."**
 - f. that is what should mark believer, that he delights in seeking and in doing the things that will please God
- 4. three: the "Righteous Man" is fruitful by God's gracious work
 - a. verse 3 (NIV): **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.

- b. just one comment: the Righteous Man, this tree, does not grow anywhere by chance ... he is planted very carefully
- c. the Lord Jesus called His Father a husbandman — a farmer — the fruitfulness of a tree depends on the farmer's care; so, when we produce fruit, give the glory to God!

F. Conclusion

- 1. I have only touched on the truths that are in this Psalm
 - a. only the Lord Jesus Christ ever lived up to it challenge
 - b. living in a sinful world being beset by temptation
 - c. ministering to, caring for, seeking, saving lost, sinful people
 - d. so that we are blessed because of His righteousness

- 2. Which, then, of these two men will you be?

- 3. Look then to Christ in faith
 - a. for salvation — escape — from being the “Wicked”
 - b. to being “Righteous;” to living daily in fellowship with God

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in *square brackets*. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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