Following the Fruitful Path

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Preacher: Guest: Scott Bashoor

[0:00] It is a pleasure to be back with you again this Lord's Day. I met many of you a couple weeks ago, and I think I heard there's a few visitors. And I'm a visitor too, of sorts, just a returning visitor.

Glad to be able to share the word. I wish your pastor was here. I am moved by the video that he prepared. I can sense his love for you as well as for the word.
And I know that you're well cared for by him as well as Pastor Greg. I've opened up my Bible to Psalm 1, and I invite you to do the same. And as has been mentioned before, there is a handout for the sermon today.
And I won't refer to it anymore other than on the back of it are some pictures. These are going to show up in the slideshow throughout the message. And they're just provided for your future reference.
If you don't like using handouts, I'm not insulted if you turn this into a paper airplane later on. Just wait until after the service, if you would. There's something about us that loves gardens and parks.
[1:09] Open, manicured space can often be a very appealing thing. You know, our word park is related to the Persian word for paradise. And those of you who have green thumbs, try to create a little bit of that in your front yard or your backyard.

That's my wife. She has a wonderfully green thumb. In fact, her birthday was this week. And what she wanted for her birthday was to go to nurseries. So I think it was five we went to.
And she came home with some wonderful things to put in our yard. And it's good that she has a green thumb because my family of origin, not so much. Now, my mom loved plants.
But they didn't love her so much. And I remember one day my oldest brother was helping her bring a little pallet of small plants to go into the backyard.
He brought them to the house. And I joked that if you got down real close, you could hear one plant saying to the other one, what are you in for? Now, I made the mistake many years ago of sharing that as an illustration in a sermon when I was preaching across town from where my parents lived, not thinking that friends of my mother would tell her what I said in that sermon.
[2:21] And she said to me, I know what you're in for. God has wired us to love garden life. And it's apparent that he loves gardens too.

I mean, the very first family was given a garden home. And the new heavens and the new earth are likened to the paradise of God. And the gospel is going to restore something of which was lost.
In fact, it would be more glorious than it was before. God knows how to tend a garden. And while this life can never become a perfect paradise on this side of the Lord's coming, the gospel teaches us that the Lord is cultivating something of this garden life within us even now.
We are awaiting a transplant of heavenly paradise. But even now, Christ is restoring something of the garden life of our soul. And Psalm 1 tells us something about how God cultivates that within us through his word.
Now, here's a point that's going to summarize this message. And you see it in your handout as well as on the screen. I'm going to read it and then I'm going to make a little edit that I thought of over coffee this morning. In a world that points us in all the wrong directions, Psalm 1 counsels us to find God's blessing by following his word.
[3:45] Now, here's the little edit I thought of and it was too late to get it into the slideshow or on the handouts. Psalm 1 counsels us to flourish in God's blessing by following his word.

Now, I'd like us to read the psalm at this point. I'm reading from the New American Standard. I think it'll be very similar to whatever you might have in your lap. 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.

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But his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in his law, he meditates day and night. 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 whatever he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff, which the wind drives away.
Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.
[5:05] The Lord add blessing to the reading, and now to the study of his word. This little psalm is a spectacular introduction to the whole book of psalms.

It is what has been referred to as a wisdom poem. It reads somewhat like what you would find in the book of Proverbs, doesn't it? It pronounces a blessing on the man who meditates on and lives according to God's word.
And I think what it's inviting the worshiper to do in ancient Israel is to walk in the ways of the Lord as they go through the rest of the psalms. The law of the Lord is not restricted to the law of Moses, but it's any kind of instruction.
In fact, this word that is used in the psalm for the law, that Torah, most generally means the instruction of the Lord. Psalm 1 is beautifully profound Hebrew poetry.
You can see it coming out in translation. There are many elements of the Hebrew poetry that are lost in translation, impossible for us to carry over into English. It's meter and some of the rhyming which takes place.
[6:16] But you can see painted very profoundly a contrast, can't you, between the godly and the ungodly. It describes their lifestyles and their destinies.

And it uses pictures from the orchard and the farm to describe them both. In a world that points us in all the wrong directions, Psalm 1 counsels us to flourish in God's blessing by following his word.
So here's a little preview of the psalm and of our outline today. We're going to consider, firstly, the fruitful follower of God's word. And then the fruitless followers of the world.
And lastly, some concluding counsel on life's paths. Let's look at the first section. It's verses 1 to 3, which speaks of the fruitful follower of God's word.
It begins with the phrase, how blessed. The Hebrew text is interesting. It's literally, happiness is of the man.
[7:25] Which is, the thought is, oh, the happiness is of the man. And then there's a description of what this man is like. And what's listed out in verses 1 and 2 are his spiritual commitments.

And these spiritual commitments are going to be described, first, in a negative way, things he doesn't do. And then, secondly, in a positive way, what he is committed to doing in his own actions.
So the negative side of that is in verse 1. His rejecting the wisdom of the world. Look back with me again at verse 1, where it says, 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.
This verse is very negative, except for the blessing at the front end of it. There's a string of situations which he is committed to avoiding. It's been popular for expositors to say over the years that there's a progression or a degression of sorts.
That first you're walking with the wicked, and then you're standing with the wicked. Next thing you know, you're sitting with the wicked. And I get that. But there's some reasons within the poetry of verse 1 that, to me, argues against that.
[8:40] And frankly, it's a terrible thing to be walking with the wicked. To walk in their counsel. To go the way that they tell you to do. It's really not any worse than sitting down or standing with them. It's not so much a progression as it is a spread, a variety of options that the world will present.

So let's consider the first of these. It's the most general of them. The ungodly input. That's what's at view in that phrase, Who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked.
It's the most general of the three phrases. The other two will expand on some variations of what this might be. And I want you to note something that is lost in almost all of our English Bibles. And that is that the word wicked, the wicked here, is plural.
How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of wicked ones. And this is the beginning of one of the contrasts throughout Psalm 1. That there's the one godly righteous man, as it were. And there's a whole bunch of ungodly people. And isn't this the way that we often feel in our spiritual experience? Now today, we're gathered together in the assembly. And there's a

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camaraderie, a brotherhood, and a sisterhood.
[9:50] But when you're out in the world, you often feel like you're in the minority, don't you? It highlights something of the loneliness of the righteous person.

Sometimes the righteous are outnumbered. And wicked people have counsel. They have ideas. They have erroneous ideas.
That's alternative ways of living. The truly blessed person doesn't mess with ungodly worldviews and the wisdom of this fallen world.
He doesn't embrace systems of thought that are contrary to what's been revealed in Scripture. Now I don't mean by that that non-Christian people never say anything that's right.
Sometimes non-Christian people are wise to a point. And sometimes wiser than Christian people. There are a number of many non-Christian people who are much better with their money than Christian people are.
[10:53] Even the Lord Jesus talks about that. You can find doctors who are very skillful, let's say even wise, in the way they practice their trade. Or the way a mechanic fixes your car.

And a whole spread of things. We can acknowledge that because of the image of God within people, that there is an ability for people to put thoughts together and observe things properly.
But when it comes to the big scheme of how God has ordained the world to operate and how the knowledge of God is achieved, the world will always fall short.
And then in the way that fleshes out in life, the way we're to live our life, spiritually speaking, the world is full of wrong and faulty counsel. Be careful where you get your counsel from.
Many, many people follow frothy and foolish wisdom. It sounds wise. It sounds sophisticated. That might come from someone who has a Ph.D. in something.
[11:54] You know, a lot of television counselors are really very, very foolish. Wise in their own eyes.

When somebody gives you counsel, either personally or let's say they have a platform of some sort, whether it's on television or radio or on the internet, do a couple things.
Consider the source and consider the soundness. Does what they say comport, fit with what God has revealed?
I could take the whole rest of the time giving examples of bad counsel from the world. But I have five and a half more verses to cover. Here's another thing of the wisdom of the world that he rejects. Sinful examples. That's what's tied up in that phrase. He does not stand in the path of sinners. It shifts now from what the ungodly preach to the way they practice.
[12:57] This pathway. This is the pathing. A pathing. That's not a word. Walking on a path is emblematic of living your life.

And to stand in the path suggests that you're looking down that road and thinking, I wonder if that's the way I ought to go. You're deliberating, considering.
This is part of the counsel that they give. You should go down this way. The godly man doesn't want to be even close to that. You know, the vast majority of people in the world are born staring down the wrong path.
Really, there's only a minority of people in the world who, maybe many of you, and I was blessed to grow up in a Christian home where you have godly parents who raise up their young people in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
But the vast majority of people in the world start off with a deficit of sorts. They have, of course, their own sinful nature, but then there's the example set before them of not walking in the ways of God.
[14:02] If you were not raised in a godly, gospel-loving home, you're already pointed down the wrong road. Thanks be to God, the gospel is able to change all of that.

With God's grace, you need not walk down such a path. By God's grace, you can learn to walk on different paths. You know, my grandfather on my dad's side was a drunkard.
The only time my father ever remembered him praying is when he would wake up from his drunken binges and realize that he had hit his wife and would cry out in Arabic.
My Arabic is so terrible, I'll just give you the translation. My Savior, my Savior, why have you let me go this way? Almost like he's blaming Jesus. But my dad, after serving in World War II, was gloriously saved and headed down a totally different path.
His family of origin, the spiritual state of his family of origin, didn't determine his destiny because he learned to walk in a different path.

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[15:09] Look at the third part of his rejecting the wisdom of the world. He rejects scornful attitudes. That's what's bound up in that phrase. He does not sit in the seat of scoffers.

A circle of mockers who ridicule the things of God, almost like it's a hobby of theirs. You know, some people who feel free to scoff and mock at Scripture and the Word of God and Christianity, some of them are praised as free thinkers.
But there's really no such thing as a free thinker because without Christ, all of us are in bondage to corrupted minds. You know, one place in the modern world where we see this sort of scornful attitude expressed is comedians.
Now, I enjoy humor. I throw out quips all the time. Humor is a gift of God. But you know, many public entertainers, professional comedians, rather, are only half entertainers.
They also are something of commentators on life. I'm not saying don't watch comedians, but be careful what you delight in.
[16:22] The blessed man finds no joy when the things of God are mocked. So, this verse describes negatively his commitments.

He rejects the wisdom of the world. Now, come with me to verse 2, where we see positively what he does do. How he is reflecting on the Word of the Lord.
It's not enough, you know, to just not do evil. We have to, Scriptures talk about putting off the old man, but we need to put on the new man. We need to actively do what is right, to pursue its opposite.
And the focus of this person's love is God's Word. It says in the beginning of verse 2, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.
His pleasure, his desire, not found by those comedic put-downs of the Scripture that the end of verse 1 talked about. He delights in God's instruction, delving into the revelation of the Lord and finding great pleasure in that.
[17:29] This is not just about keeping law or a list of rules. It's relishing the revelation that the Lord has given about himself. Delighting in God's instruction.

It's that same sort of desire and delight that you see talked about in passages like Psalm 19. And then Psalm 19 on steroids is Psalm 119, celebrating Scripture.
And for us as New Testament believers, we realize that the fullest expression of God's Word has been manifested in the gospel of our Lord Jesus. I mean, if the psalmist could delight in the Old Testament law and related Old Testament scriptures, how much more ought we to delight in the fuller revelation that we have in Jesus Christ?
It says at the end of verse 2, And in His law He meditates day and night. This word meditate is a very interesting word picture.
Now, I'm going to have to be careful here. It used to be, I would hear preachers tell you something I'm going to say now, and perhaps you've heard it said. Maybe you've said it yourself too. I don't know what your pastors have said, so forgive me if I step on toes here.
[18:46] All right, but have any of you ever heard that the word meditate means to chew the cud? Okay, a little bit. Good. All right. Well, maybe this idea is passing off the scene, but I used to hear preachers say, Well, this Hebrew word literally means to chew the cud.

And then they would talk about how a cow is sitting in the field. It's all by itself and all of a sudden, and it starts, out of nowhere, it starts chewing on something. Because you know how it works with those ruminating kind of creatures.
The food comes back up. They digest whatever they eat a number of times. I think that is a fine illustration of meditation. It's great.
It's just not what the word means. See, there's the mistake. The word doesn't mean that. But it's an okay illustration of it. Actually, this Hebrew word refers to a different kind of thing that animals do and humans do.
The meaning, the most literal meaning, is to mutter. As if words are coming, you're turning over thoughts and expressions, and you're sort of talking in an undertone.
[19:53] It's used of animals who are thinking about what they're going to do, like a lion as it's sort of grumbling, getting ready to pounce maybe, or of doves that are cooing, but used of people as they're sort of speaking to themselves under their breath.

I have all sorts of conversations in the shower, where I'm thinking about, I have a meeting with someone, I'm not sure how that meeting's going to go, and I'm anticipating, well, he might say that,

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and then I would say that.
Do you ever have these conversations? They never come out that way, right? The conversations always go in very different directions, but what you and I are doing in those settings, you are meditating. You're turning over the possibilities, trying to prepare yourself for what you might say in that moment.
Well, take that out of that ridiculous scenario that never works very much, and think about it with Scripture, that you're so consumed with God's word that you find yourself repeating it back and turning it over and flipping it around and trying to discern its meaning and its significance.
That's meditating. This is the same word that's used in Joshua 1, verse 8. Now, let's think about it. This is a well-known verse.
[21:13] This book of the law shall not depart out of your... What's the word? Mouth. See, we wanted to say heart.

But it's mouth. But in it you shall mutter day and night. That's why it's in your mouth. Meditating on it.
Speaking it to yourself. Turning it around. Flipping it over. Trying to understand its significance. If I had more time today, I would share with you how Psalm 1 is placed in a...
Well, I will tell you now. I just won't go into great depth about it. The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition is divided up into three parts. There's the law. That's the five books of Moses. And then there's what they call the prophets, which interestingly, in the Jewish thinking, the book of Joshua is a prophet.
He's a prophet with an inspired understanding of Israel's past. Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings are the former prophets. And then you have...
[22:19] The next book in the Hebrew Bible is Isaiah. Jeremiah, Ezekiel. These are the latter prophets. And then the final section, major section of the Old Testament is called the writings. And the first book of that is the Psalms.

And one thing that's fascinating is that the book of Joshua ties the book back to the law. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but in it you shall meditate day and night. And the Psalms, the first book of the writings, ties itself back to the law.
In his law, he meditates day and night. It's one of the seams of Scripture tying things together. The more we go over God's Word in our minds, the more likely we are to go down its path in our lives. And that's why it's so fundamentally important that we be people committed to daily being in the Word of God. Whatever shape that takes, whatever time of the day that is, whether it's reading through a book, whether it's following what you're doing here at the church, whether it's doing Scripture memory, Bible listening, whatever it is.
There is no iron... There's no formula we all must follow. And it might change throughout your life. There's room for flexibility, but what the Scripture calls us to is regularity, whatever shape that takes.
[23:43] Now, come with me to verse 3. We've seen his spiritual commitments. Look with us now about his delightful depiction. His delightful depiction in verse 3.

The godly man is going to be compared to a tree. Trees are good. They promote life by... They give shade. They give shelter. They give food and fuel. Great symbols of strength and life.
But this tree is no ordinary tree. It is a cultivated tree. A cultivated tree. You see, verse 3 begins, He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water.
I guess I'm going to step on some more sacred cows. I'm going to corral some more sacred cows today. I've seen a lot of devotional art over the years on Psalm 1, verse 3.
He shall be like a tree planted... Here's this surging river and on its edge is this mighty oak or maybe a ponderosa pine majestic, strong, fed by this torrent, torrential river.
[24:56] That's a beautiful scene. But that's not what the psalmist is talking about. The phrase planted is very often rendered in other contexts as transplanted.

The scene is not of a wild river. This is an orchard. Now, what I put up on the screen and it's on your handout as well is a wall painting and I believe this is from Assyria where they have depicted in etchings on stone an orchard.
And you notice how there's a natural waterway that they've cut canals off of and they have planted all sorts of trees along the waterways there. This is the way produce is cultivated in places like Assyria and Babylon.

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They were very adept at this sort of garden making, orchard building. You see the same sort of artwork in Egypt. Here are Egyptians who are drawing up water from the canals to water the plants that have been grown alongside that.
These are the kinds of images that the psalmist would have in his mind when he writes this word. A tree in the wild might or might not get the water that it needs.
[26:19] If it's growing in a wadi or a wash it might go through stages of fading and then flourishing. But that same kind of tree planted in an orchard an irrigated orchard what a difference.

So you could actually translate verse 3 he will be like a transplanted tree along the irrigation ditches of water. Now that's not going to sell any bookmarks or posters.
But that's the image. God is the gardener and he tends the soul of his own with his perfectly green thumb. This cultivated tree is a fruitful tree.
It yields its fruit in its season the middle of verse 3 says. Something wonderful about fruit trees. I used to love visiting my grandparents in Kentucky.
Every summer we would travel out there. They had apple trees all over their property at both a playground and a snack shop all in one. Of course some fruit trees get diseased and they don't produce when they're expected to so the keeper of the orchard needs to keep up with them and make sure that they're receiving the care that they need.
[27:33] Again our God is a master gardener. He knows how to keep us producing and productive. So apply this now to your life as you give yourself over the word of God he is able to make you fruitful in ways you could not imagine to produce things that you could not normally on your own.

He knows exactly the sort of pruning and tending that you need for that to come about to bear fruits of joy and righteousness and so many other things. The tree is described as a flourishing tree.
Its leaf does not wither. If you neglect even a cultivated tree it could not do very well. I'll tell you something about my brown thumb ism.
When I was in seminary I lived in an apartment and couldn't really grow much but I saw miniature bonsai tree. It already comes in that clay and I thought I could take care of that.
I brought it home and put it on a counter right in front of a full sun window. That was a dumb idea. I didn't know what I was doing. I thought I was giving enough water.
[28:43] I went away and I asked a roommate can you watch my tree for me. I now and I looked at it and said that's the way it looked when I left.

That poor tree wasn't flourishing at all. I have an app on my phone now called Picture This. Have you heard of that app? So you can take a picture of a plant or tree and it will analyze it and tell you what the name of the plant is its scientific name and its popular name and if you pay the annual fee it will tell you the health of the tree or this tree has been getting too much water this tree needs more water this tree is sick and going to die through the options like that the trees transplanted in God's garden don't suffer like that living according to God's word brings back something of this garden state of our soul at the end of this verse the imagery of the tree fades away it's the only thing that fades there's a line that says and whatever he does he prospers not talking about the tree making fruit or leaves now we're talking about this blessed man it's speaking here of the joy that comes from this sort of life now don't read into this some sort of health and wealth promise you don't need to read very much further in the psalms before you encounter godly people who are suffering very difficult things and it's not that they weren't didn't tend their soul properly enough the thought is that whatever god calls them to do they're able to do it well this is the same kind of word that's used back in
Joshua 1 verse 8 this book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth but in it you shall meditate day and night then you shall make your way prosperous and then you shall have good success success in what Joshua success in what God is calling you to do to lead this nation into this new land and fulfill the word of God not about becoming wealthy and healthy and all the like!
This is a psalm that's counseling us how to flourish in God's blessing by following his word now we're going to make a dramatic turn in the psalm at verse 4 as it's going to begin describing the fruitlessness the fruitless follower of the world the fruitless follower of the world a great contrast is going to be painted now between the godly person and the ungodly person there were some parallels between the description we just saw and what we're going to see it's almost as if things are being reversed now the parallels aren't total but they're close enough consider in verse 4 their terrible depiction no more tree no it begins the wicked are not so and it's plural the wicked persons are not like this there's a very short sharp reversal of phraseology here literally not so the ungodly

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ones they have no blessedness no delight in god no spiritual stability no spiritual productivity the parallels
I've mentioned are obvious although you know before we had the tree does this and it does that and does that and here we just get one little agricultural parallel not so much can be said about the ungodly life so look at the one point of comparison that's made but they are like chaff which the wind drives away this is another image from the field and farm how different it is from a tree when people are readying grain to take that to produce bread and other things like that you know the barley and the wheat it has a husk on it you can't you can't do anything with that you know if you try to bake bread with that it's going to be really really bad so what they up in the air and the wind will blow through the husk through it and carry the husk away the grain will then fall down and what do you do with those husks that are blown away
[33:43] I mean they're useless for human consumption I guess you can feed livestock with it maybe you can burn it I don't know if you got a bunch of it but what a mess that with a cultivated tree chaff is rootless and fruitless and lifeless and useless to God's higher purposes some years ago I was on my way to the seminary in Los Angeles and there was a Japanese restaurant in Burbank that I had seen many times and I had time for lunch and I thought most of the times when I go for Japanese food it's like a teriyaki shop so this was a little fancier sit down white tablecloth white napkin and I ordered teriyaki of course but they brought out before the order came a nicely arranged

I didn't know what it was but an edamame bean I all I had was one cloth napkin and people are around how am I going to get rid of this so I kind of waited until people's attention seemed to be diverted I pulled up my white napkin and now I don't have a napkin it's like chaff what good is it this image of chaff being blown away is used elsewhere in the scripture to refer to judgment one passage
I'll read to you is from our Lord Jesus in Matthew 3 verses 11 to 12 as for me this is John the Baptist speaking about Jesus as for me I baptize you with water for repentance but he who is coming after me is mightier than I and I am not fit to remove his sandals he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire his winnowing fork is in his hand and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor and he will gather the weed into the barn but he will burn up the chaff it's an emblem in both of these texts of judgment now before we move on to the next verse I want us to think about a verse that's not here so I want you to look at the white space between verses four don't do that there's a point of parallel that is not made and that is there's nothing said about the wicked man the wicked people view of God's word there's no reference to them loving it or following it or even being aware of it other than they have their own counsel and they sit around and scoff apparently scoffing at things like God's word they've got their own counsel their own way their own critique you know some non-Christian people aren't they wouldn't say that they're opposed to the Bible per se they're just kind of indifferent to it and live as if it doesn't exist sins of indifference may not be ill intended but that does not mean that indifference to God is not offensive I mean if you're graciously invited to a banquet and you don't even bother to open the invitation that is offensive but what a difference salvation makes in our hearts and our minds to give us an appetite for the things of
God I mean can you imagine yourself before especially those of you who came to the Lord when you were adults can you imagine yourself before the Lord drew you to himself coming week after week to hear somebody open up hear a 3,000 year old text and talk you about phrases and the like and yet God places within our hearts a desire to know his word and to explore it and to apply it and to live it what a difference salvation makes our interests change our delights change I'll be honest as a preacher I struggle with Christians who don't seem very interested in understanding their Bibles I know believers go through seasons of life of let's say discouragement maybe disorientation but God has placed within the believer's heart an innate desire to know him and to know his word and we ought to fan that up into a flame well come back to our text verse 5 and we'll see more of the fruitless follower of the world their miserable exclusion is mentioned in verse 5 it says therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous so what is this exclusion about well firstly there is they have no standing in the judgment now they will not stand in the judgment that doesn't mean they're not going to appear before
[39:47] God and give an account to have no standing means they have no legal standing in the judgment they have no leg to stand on the sinner who ultimately turns away from God has no standing in the end they can't well you know I did this and I did that and I wasn't as bad as them

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none of that will count for anything it's a counter point to the standing in verse one you know the godly man does not stand in the path of sinners and here the wicked will not stand in the judgment there are two different words for stand but there's a parallel drawn between them in this life the godly man refuses to stand in the path of sinners to deliberate whether to go that way and in the age to come sinners won't stand in the congregation of the righteous either how much better it is to choose being excluded from bad company now rather to be excluded from

God's company forever and note as we come into the second part of verse 5 another part of this exclusion of the wicked is they have no place with God's people in the assembly of the righteous they will not stand in the assembly of the righteous a couple things to note here the word righteous for the first time is in the plural the righteous ones a little bit of relief see the blessed man is not alone!
there are other godly people there is an assembly there is a gathering of sorts a people to whom he belongs also this word assembly the Hebrew word rhymes with the word for counsel back in verse one they're totally different words they're unrelated but it's another echo up to the beginning of the psalm another part of the contrast and the parallel the assembly that's referred to here I believe has an eschatological sense to it that this is not referring to the Israelites gathering at the temple for worship this is about the final gathering of God's people in the everlasting day the place to those who belong to the Lord will always be always together with him God's people because of his grace do have standing in the judgment and they do have an eternal audience with God isn't that wonderful in that great day they will no longer ever feel isolated or outnumbered again they'll stand together everlastingly in his presence well after painting this second picture the psalmist has one verse of conclusion concluding counsel on life's paths in verse six the terms righteous and wicked are used again this time again both of them in the plural the word for path or way that was used in verse one is here used again and what we see in the first half of the verse is that the righteous are led by the
Lord that's what's implied in this phrase for the Lord knows the way of the righteous ones what's it mean that the Lord knows the way of the righteous ones I mean this is obviously more than mental it's far beyond just acknowledgement and awareness it's not that God is some sort of a cosmic map keeper it speaks of his intimate care for his people who are on the right path this is a path which he has cut which he has made which he has sent them down and he watches over them and secures them and keeps them moving on to its destination this is a road that and that idea is more clear when you see how it's contrasted in the end of verse 6 that the wicked are destined for destruction the psalm ends but the way of the wicked ones will perish the path that wicked people who turn away from
God's revelation leads away from him to destruction the wicked might think that they're headed to some other destination some greater glory but they will perish without ever reaching whatever goal they've envisioned they don't realize that the road that they're on has all the wrong signage it says they're going one way and they're going someplace very different it is not a path to pleasure but to pain they're blinded to the reality that the bridge is out the road is washed out and around the corner some everlasting peril awaits it is ultimately a road of death our Lord Jesus might be thinking of Psalm 1 when he speaks in the gospels about that the broad way leads to destruction and many there are who go on it but the path of the
[45:25] Lord's design is narrow and few find it but oh what a difference in destination there is no wonder the righteous one doesn't want to set foot on the paths that the wicked are counseling him to take back in verse 1 even walking down that road for a little time is a complete waste of time it's not a road that the true believer can finish and there's nothing to gain on those paths that cannot be found in the greater glorious path that God has cut it is the narrow path that is the golden trail in a world that points us in all the wrong directions Psalm 1 counsels us to flourish in God's blessing by following his word this is a psalm of counsel it's urging us to aspire to a certain kind of life but it would be wrong for us to think of this as a how to sermon it's more about painting for us how different the work of

God within our lives causes us to be yes there's choices for us to make of course that's a how to but this psalm is helping us to see what a difference an intimate knowledge of the Lord makes within our lives it would also be wrong to view this passage as fatalistic as if to say well some people go the right way and some people go the wrong way and I guess that's that that's not the point this psalm is not a messianic psalm but ultimately it does point us to the need for salvation because as

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the pages of scripture unfold we realize that the natural intention of our heart is to go the wrong way to hear the wrong counsel and to agree oh that sounds great none of us perfectly keep to the one true way but you know there is one person who has our
Lord Jesus the New Testament speaks of Jesus as the perfectly blessed man because of his perfect obedience you know what the next psalm psalm 2 which these two seem to have intentionally been placed together the next psalm is about Messiah and psalm 2 ends with a blessing also perhaps we'll look at that psalm together another time our obedience is never perfect but thank God his is and the gospel teaches us that salvation is not accomplished by our performance but by Christ's he is the only perfectly godly man and he has made a way for us through the cross and faith in him gives us a new life and a new ability to live that we never could on our own father we thank you for the truths of your word of this passage we thank you for the pictures that have been painted may we see them clearly the choices are obvious help us to keep truing ourselves according to your word to go down the fruitful path of blessing that's found in knowing you through what you revealed about ourself keep us on guard against all forms of counsel and instruction and scoffing and wickedness that calls us on broad paths that many many people take help us to remember that there is a great assembly to which one day we will be a part and even now we are not alone we have brothers and sisters in the faith to encourage us along the way thank you for your great grace in Jesus that forgives sinners and turns wicked people into righteous blessed people all of this we pray in the name of Christ

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