

Psalm 1

These brief notes recap some of the main themes from the sermon.

The Dichotomy of Man

This Psalm, like many others and, in fact, the entire Bible, groups mankind into just two categories: the Righteous and the Wicked.

Romans is a key text to colour these for us. It discusses the wicked first.

The Wicked

Read: Romans 1:18-32.

Who are the Wicked? List some of the key points concerning ungodliness.

Note: there are many here, but the most important to ensure people pick up are: it is *deliberate* (v20-21), *deceptive* (v22), and *deadly* (v32).

Read: Romans 3:9-18

What is the message? Ensure we accept this truth that nobody is righteous.

The Righteous

Read: Romans 3:21-31

Who are the Righteous?

Of course, the answer is those who are justified by faith, apart from works.

Psalm 1 exhorts us to not do 3 things and to do 2. If our righteousness is not at stake, why put in effort?

The answer is joy. The Psalm is written to the righteous, that he might understand how to walk in his righteousness and thus abound in true joy.

The Negatives

There are three negatives. See if people can remember what the three different clauses are discussing.

1. Don't accept the mindset and advice of ungodly people,
2. Don't behave like law-breaking ones,
3. Don't seek rest or comfort in the presence of God-haters and mockers.

Think of different areas of secular advice, such as marriage, career, finance, etc. What might decide whether we accept the advice? What is the spirit or principle here?

Good counsel comes from the Wonderful Counsellor, Jesus Christ. By extension, it comes from His people. All advice must be examined in the light of God's word, and accepted or rejected only after prayer.



What laws is it acceptable for us to break?

Obviously a trick question! In general, the mindset of the world seems to be (a) if it does not directly hurt anyone, and (b) if there is minimal risk of being caught, the law may be freely broken. Our prerogative is to strive to be completely above reproach (1 Thess 5:22)

How do we balance sharing the Gospel, against 2 Cor 6:14-18? Read the text first.

The issue is fellowship and association, being identified with them. We are to be *in* the world, but not *of* it. If we are pleasant company for somebody who hates God, we are doing something wrong!

The Value of God's Word

Delighting in God's Word is easy to give lip-service to, but the reality is it is a constant battle for most of us to give God and His Word the time that He deserves.

Discuss some of the barriers we face. How can we mitigate these?

The best advice I think is to book time. Make a regular appointment with God, and keep it. Seeing how He honours that will lead to ever-increasing delight in His word.

Meditation

We used the cow as a picture of meditation. The way a cow eats and digests grass is similar to how we meditate: small pieces at a time, chew them over thoroughly, and if it still can't be digested (that is, understood) then bring it back and chew some more.

Read: John 16:13

Recall that Jesus Himself has gone on record with this promise. We can claim it!

Remind the group that meditate here means *murmur*, perhaps revisit Joshua 1:8. Ensure people are happy with this concept. I think the main value in doing this is it helps us keep focus on the text we are considering, and helps to explore the different nuances of the wording.

The Tree

God uses a tree to depict men.

What are some of the hallmarks of a healthy tree?

Hopefully strength, stability and fruitfulness will all come out.

What's meant by fruit "in season"? What seasons are there for fruit?

Review Galatians 5:22-23 if required. Patience in testing, kindness with the stranger, faithfulness when given responsibility, etc.



He Knows Our Way

We looked at John 10:14 and Nahum 1:7 to explore what this means.

Knowing our way means more than just being aware of what's coming up, but implies tender care and attention. Nothing is accidental or without purpose in the life of a Christian. (Perhaps review Romans 8:28)

Why is this important? How does it affect us now?

Firstly, it should give a deep sense of joy and confidence. God's gracious, specific, detailed life plan for us is truly what's best for us.

Secondly, it means that we are where God wants us *now*, and our challenge is to "blossom where we are planted." Rather than seek to change where we are planted, how can we honour God and live out the Great Commission where He has us right now?

Does this mean we should not plan ahead? Should we have 5-year plans, or 10-year plans?

Not at all. The Lord wants and requires careful stewardship from us of the things he has entrusted to us, and that requires a degree of planning. However, these plans we make must be made prayerfully, and be ready to change if God requires us to.