

July 17, 2007

Hello West Side,

I thought it would be helpful to share a devotional thought with you every now and then through email. I'm not making any promises about the future, but here are a few thoughts based on Psalm 1, a beautiful psalm which contrasts the paths of the righteous and the wicked.

Psalm 1:1-6 (NASB)

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!
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 in 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.

The first three lines illustrate the blessedness of those who do not take their place alongside the unrighteous. This does not mean that we avoid every association with those who are not righteous, but it does mean that we do not take our station with them. We do not become like them. We do not blend in with them in ways that lead us down their own destructive paths.

But what makes us different?

The critical point of difference, according to this psalm, is that those who are righteous will love and immerse themselves in God's law. If we are truly living righteous lives, we will pursue things that are lasting. We will look to Scripture to learn how God wants us to live, and we will find strength, sustenance, vitality, and fruitfulness.

The wicked, however, go their own way. They ignore the law of God and abandon His teachings for their own private goals and passions. They do this because they believe it will bring prosperity and pleasure. In the end, however, their choices lead to devastation and ruin. Just as the righteous have no rightful place among the wicked, the wicked have no rightful place among the righteous, because the Lord is there. And the Lord knows all our ways.

The psalm really does present a striking contrast, doesn't it. My prayer is that each of us will make a decision today to take our place with God in the assembly of the righteous and to avoid the destruction that awaits those who walk with the wicked.

God bless,
Patrick Barber