



Scripture: Psalm 1:1-6

Main Idea: Although we fail to live righteously, Jesus is our righteousness.

Hey guys! Welcome to [youth group]. My name is _____, and I am so glad to be with you tonight, as we spend time in God's Word together. We are going to be spending the next four weeks in a series called *Songs of the Soul*, where each week, we'll dig into the book of Psalms to see how they apply to our lives.

There are a few reasons I want to do this. First and most importantly, we're going to study the Psalms, because we find Jesus in the Psalms. As Christians, we believe that the whole Bible is about Jesus. In the Old Testament, Jesus was promised. In the Gospels, Jesus is revealed. In the book of Acts, Jesus is preached, in the letters of the New Testament, Jesus is explained, and in the book of Revelation, Jesus is expected. All of it centers on Jesus. One of the coolest stories in the Bible to me is a conversation that Jesus has with two of His disciples right after his resurrection in Luke 24. He was walking down the road with them, and as they were walking, He explained to them how the entire Bible was about Himself. I would have loved to have been a part of that conversation.

Secondly, we're going to spend time looking at the Psalms, because they teach us to pray. The book of Psalms is a collection of poems and prayers made by the people of God that spans over 1000 years of history. Every human emotion you can think of is covered in the Psalms, and they give us a frame of reference for how we can come to God with our feelings. We are allowed to come to Him when we're angry. We're allowed to come to Him when we're scared, or sad, or happy. They teach us to pray in all circumstances.

Finally, we're going to spend time in the Psalms, because ultimately, they teach us to worship in all of life's circumstances. It is my heart's desire that we would be a youth group and a church who loves God and worships Him. The Psalms teach us to do just that. So, if you've got your Bible, go ahead and turn with me to Psalm 1. While you're turning there, I'd love to tell a quick story.

[Teacher's Note: tell a funny and light-hearted story here about an experience you had with plants, where you had the opposite of a green thumb.]

I share that story, because the Psalm we're about to look at describes two people, and it compares them to plants—plants that are taken care of and are full of life and fruit, and plants that are dead and withered away. The Psalm is going to lay out two different paths we can take, that will either lead us to life or to death, and it's up to us to choose which one we take. So, with that, let's read together, and dive into what God's Word has to say to us about each of these paths.

Psalm 1:1-6 (ESV)

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

[Teacher's Note: Pray here, asking that the Lord would speak to your students.]

Right off the bat, we get a picture of the first man, and the psalmist calls him blessed. In Hebrew, this word "blessed" simply means happy. So, the first line of this Psalm tells us the secret to happiness. And what does it

take to be happy? Well, the Psalm gives us three things not to do, and two things we should do to be happy. First, what not to do: *Happy is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.* When we first look at this verse, it looks like it's repeating the same idea three times. This idea that we shouldn't hang around sinners. But if we look at it closely, we can see a little bit of a progression in the verbs. First, don't walk in the counsel of the wicked, then, don't stand in the way of sinners, and finally, don't sit in the seat of scoffers. We go from walking with the wicked, to standing with them, and finally to sitting with them and identifying with them.

The idea here is that the more time we spend in our sin, the more we'll desire our sin and orient our lives around it. Instead, God's Word calls us to take a different path. Instead, looking at verse 2, there are two things we should do.

First, delight in the law of the Lord, and second, meditate on it day and night. These are two different ideas, but they go together. First, God calls us to delight in His Word. Sometimes, it can be easy to feel like reading our Bible is a chore. It's almost like it's something we have to do. But that isn't God's desire for us. When we read the Bible, we should see the love of God on every page. All throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, we see that God has mercy and forgiveness for His people when they don't measure up. We should see the kindness and goodness of God toward us as we spend time in His Word, and *that* should make us excited to know Him more. And when we feel this way about God's Word, it will cause us to meditate on His Word. The word "meditate" in this verse literally means "to whisper to yourself." The Psalm is saying that we should think about God's Word and remind ourselves of the truths of Scripture all the time. The more we delight in God's Word, the more we'll hide it in our heart and think about it. And the more we think about His Word and memorize it, the more we'll delight in it. It's like a cycle. And what happens to the person who doesn't walk, stand, or sit with the wicked, but delights in God's word?



Icebreaker:

- What has been a high and a low from the previous week?

Observation—What's in the text?

- What emotions and attitudes do you notice in David's prayer in Psalm 51?
- What are some of the specific things David asks God to do in this psalm? [Teacher's Note: Look at verbs like "have mercy," "wash," "cleanse," "create," "restore." What does this show us about how David views his sin and God's mercy?]

Interpretation—Why does this matter?

- Why do you think David starts his prayer by focusing on God's mercy instead of his own actions?
- How does it change the way we confess sin when we focus on God's character?
- David says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Why can't we fix our sin problem on our own?

Gospel Connection

- What hope do we have today that David couldn't fully see yet?
- How does Jesus' death on the cross fulfill David's prayer for cleansing and forgiveness? [Teacher's Note: See 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:22—Jesus' blood truly makes us clean.]

Application

- David said God desires "a broken and contrite heart." What does that kind of heart look like in your life?
- Is there any sin you need to confess to God? How can this group support you in turning from it?
- How can you remind yourself this week that God is ready and willing to forgive? [Note: Close your time in small groups by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.]

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