

091921 "Blessed Way" Psalm 1:1-6

About 25 Miles away from the coast of Southern California is Santa Catalina Island. It takes about an hour by a speedboat to get to this beautiful island from the coast. On July 4th, 1952, a female swimmer named Florence Chadwick tried to reach this island by swimming. She already had the experience of crossing the British straits. She prepared for this challenge with rigorous training. It was quite foggy that day. After swimming through cold seawater, heavy waves, and fogs for 15 hours and 55 minutes, she gave up, because she could not see at all because of the fog. But the destination was only half a mile away from her. The reporters asked, "Did you know that you were so close to the shore when you gave up?" Surprised, she answered, "I couldn't see the destination at all. I couldn't see anything. If I had seen the coast, I would have finished it."

Dear beloved, where do you place the destination of your life?

When encountering speed bumps, people react in two ways. Some regard them as an obstacle, whereas others regard them as a necessity to protect young children. There is a saying that 10% of success in life depends on what happens to you while 90% depends on how you react to what happens to you. Are you unable to see the future due to various life problems that have arisen due to COVID-19? Today's Psalm chapter 1 talks about the blessed, and tells us where the path of true faith is and where it ends. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you may become a blessed person who finds the right path through the word of God.

Psalm 1 verses 1-3 discuss the righteous and the blessed lives, whereas verses 4-6 discuss the lives of the evil and the futile results. The life of the righteous is firm like a tree planted by the streams of water and bears fruits in its seasons; it has vitality. However, the life of the evil is compared to chaff. Chaff looks just like wheat on the outside. But you can distinguish them

when the wind blows. Because there is no seed in it, chaff will fly away. Today's psalm talks about that fruitlessness in terms of lifelessness.

Then, let's talk about the righteous first. We often think about righteousness in terms of possession. For example, we think about how many good deeds we have done. We measure how often we prayed, helped others, and went on short-term missions. When we think in this way, we tend to look for people who are worse than us. We think that compared to them we are okay. We think that we can pass as the righteous. Because it is about our own strength and determination, we are more likely to become prideful. So we tend to judge and condemn others. How do I know? Because I've experienced it. Having confidence in life is important, but being arrogant and ignoring and condemning others is another matter.

I will tell you more about my calling as a pastor later, but briefly when I met Jesus Christ personally in my first year of high school, there were two things that I started. One was to read the Bible very diligently, and the other was to go to all public worship services, including daily early morning prayer service. If I had to choose a book of Proverbs in one day, I read it all the way through, underlined it, highlighted it, took notes and read it diligently. I went to the morning prayer meeting at 5am without missing a single day, and even when I was in my senior year of high school, I studied until midnight at school, and when I came home, I woke up at 4:30am and went to the early morning prayer meeting without fail. At the Friday Praise and Prayer Meeting, I was proud to pray with patience even when my legs were cramped by kneeling on my knees for a longer time than the elder who prayed for the longest time. So, back then, it seemed that God only loved me. Still, gradually, I began to feel proud inside me. I thought I worked harder than anyone else, so other people looked insignificant in my eyes. This is my shameful story. However, while reading and learning the Word of God, I came to realize that love for God and love for people cannot be lost. I'll talk more about God's call later.

The Bible doesn't frame 'righteousness' in a possessive way! Righteousness is not possessive but relational! The righteous are those who take roots in God's Word for nourishment, currently being nourished. (NOT for being arrogant and ignoring and/or judging others). In other words, they are those who have the right relationship with God in the present tense. It doesn't say "the righteous will be planted by the streams of water once they die." It says, "They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. . ."

Ultimately, the righteous and the wicked diverge in their attitude toward God's Word in Psalm chapter 1. The righteous delight in the Word and accept it as their standard of life. They receive it as "the Word I should keep." By contrast, the wicked take God's word lightly. In fact, because there are many other things that they regard as important, although they sometimes listen to the Word, they do not value it. As John the Baptist said, we must decrease, and Jesus must increase. But many tend to believe people more than Jesus. It is one of the signs of the end times. Even if they know the Word, they use it to judge others rather than examining their own lives.

When we read the Bible, we should read it to grow our relationship with God, rather than from the perspective of possession ("Because I read 30 chapters, I am good for today. It's mine because I read it.") Instead of that, we should read it, asking what God may want from "me" today. "Oh God, it is difficult to do something new because of COVID-19, and people do not come to church, so how should we carry out the ministry?" In response to my question, the Bible today says that no matter how much we are in the time of pandemic, our life must still be planted by the brook of God's Word, and we must be nourished every day from the river of grace! A good relationship cannot be established in a day. The same goes for your relationship with God. It takes one step at a time, for a long time in patience.

Today's passage said that the righteous is firm like a tree. Because they are in the right relationship with God and are firmly rooted in the Word, they can withstand any difficulty; their root will not shake, and they continue to bear fruits constantly. In that sense, their lives are prosperous. This world defines prosperity as a state where everything goes according to my plan and my will and being rich. But the Bible defines prosperity as "being accompanied by God." I will give an example from the Bible on this prosperity later. As you set your heart upon God and are firmly rooted in God's Word, that life is prosperous. I hope you believe this.

Furthermore, pay attention to the order of presentation in the passage! The blessed are those first "who do not follow the advice of the wicked", second "who do not take the path that sinners tread, third "who do not sit in the seat of scoffers." Brothers and sisters in Christ, at some point while walking, people want to stop. When they stop, they will want to sit. This passage is not describing three kinds of wicked ones; it describes a process by which one is corrupted. "The wicked ones" are not someone somewhere far away. If people walk in the path of the wicked, they take that path and sit on it. We should discover this principle in today's psalm and be alert spiritually as we continue our path of faith.

In our lives, we encounter situations like COVID-19 which saps our strength and draws anxiety in us. But in times like this, we have to be like the trees planted by the streams!

[I read a Korean short poem called "The Rich." I want to share this as it seems suitable for today's message. Let's listen to it.](#)

[He asks me to give](#)

[As I ask what I shall give as a poor person](#)

[He says don't you have](#)

[A precious phrase](#)

Warm gaze

Friendly smile

Comfortable embrace?

As I look again

I am truly rich.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, the blessed life exists in the right relationship with God. It refers to taking root in God's word daily and living with it. To us, there is the way of life that Jesus has shown. Although the fog of COVID-19 blurs our sight, if we follow Jesus who is our way, we won't get lost and dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Fairfield Grace, May God's grace and peace and blessing be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.