



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Psalms Sermon Series

Supports Session 1: God's Wisdom

Sermon Title: "Two Roads" (Psalm 1:1-6)

Connection to Session 1

The book of Psalms opens with a description of two kinds of people: the righteous and the wicked. The psalmist describes the righteous and the wicked in terms of the paths they travel and the stability they enjoy. The psalmist encourages the reader and listener to pursue the path of the righteous.

Introduction/Opening

Originally published in 1915, Robert Frost wrote the poem "The Road Not Taken." It is a well-known poem about choosing which way to go in life. The final lines read, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." We face choices in life every day, but the most important choice is whether we will follow the path of the righteous or the path of the wicked.

Outline

1. The Life of the Righteous is Marked by Daily Delight in God's Word (Ps. 1:1-2)

- a. The first Psalm begins with a description of the disposition and state of the righteous—they are "happy" or blessed (v. 1).
- b. To enjoy this happy or blessed disposition, the psalmist told us there are things to avoid and things to pursue. First, the righteous avoid the ways of the wicked.
- c. There is an obvious progression in verse 1: walking, standing, and sitting. When one "walks in the advice of the wicked," it is not long before they "stand in the pathway of sinners," and finally, they end sitting "in the company of mockers" (v. 1).
- d. The righteous are aware of the company they keep. As Proverbs 13:20 says, "The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm."
- e. Instead, the life of the righteous delights in the Lord's instruction. Rather than listening to the wicked, the righteous listen to the Lord. Daily delight in the Lord and his word will help keep us from the way of the wicked.
- f. When Joshua was charged to take the place of Moses after Moses died, God said, "Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that

you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do” (Josh. 1:7-8).

2. The Life of the Righteous is Marked by Stability and Fruitfulness (Ps. 1:3-4)

- a. The psalmist provided us with a beautiful simile to describe the life of the righteous—a sturdy and fruitful tree planted near a nourishing stream.
- b. Agricultural imagery is common in the Bible. Jesus used the illustration of the vine and the branches to describe the relationship between Himself and His followers (John 15:1-5). The point is the same; the source from which we draw life matters greatly.
- c. Those who follow the path of the righteous, unlike the wicked, are stable and strong. Their roots go deep, receiving their nourishment from Christ and his Word.
- d. The life of the wicked exists in stark contrast to the righteous, demonstrating instability and fruitlessness. In the New Testament, Paul encourages the church to mature in Christ, not being “blown around by every wind of teaching” (Eph. 4:14). Followers of Jesus who draw their life from Him enjoy stability in the gospel.

3. The Life of the Wicked is Marked by its Destruction (Ps. 1:5-6)

- a. Understanding the end of the path of the wicked should caution us from traveling in their way. The wicked will not be able to “stand” any longer (vv. 1,5), and they will be cast out and blown away.
- b. All of us previously identified with the wicked, dead in our sin (Eph. 2:1-3). It took the death and resurrection of the one true righteous person, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sin through our faith in him.
- c. When Christ returns, He will judge the living and the dead (2 Tim 4:1). True followers of Jesus will demonstrate their faith by righteous living. In fact, it is the grace of God in the gospel that teaches us to renounce wickedness (Titus 2:12).
- d. While the wicked will perish, the righteous enjoy the watchful care of God over their lives now and in eternity (Ps. 1:6).

Conclusion

When we are deciding between two courses of action, one righteous and the other wicked, we should remember the blessing that comes with righteousness and the judgment that comes with wickedness. Wisdom is the ability to make good choices in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The righteous person in Christ looks at the way of the wicked, sees the instability and fruitlessness of life, and discerns its end in destruction. In so doing, they avoid wickedness and pursue righteousness.

Jesse Welliver is the Senior Pastor of Summit Baptist Church in Loganville, GA. He earned his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. He is married to Rachel, and they have four daughters.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible, Copyright 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.