**“Blessed Is the Man”**

**Introduction:**

Read Robert Frost’s poem.

**The Road Not Taken**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both And be one traveler, long I stood And looked down one as far as I could To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair, And having perhaps the better claim Because it was grassy and wanted wear, Though as for that the passing there, Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay In leaves no step had trodden black. Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh Somewhere ages and ages hence Two roads diverged in a wood, and I, I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.

More than two thousand years before Frost penned those words, the Psalmist wrote this. Read Psalm 1. “Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall 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 ungodly shall perish.” NKJV

This marvelous work may have served as an introduction to the entire collection of Psalms. As are many introductions, it may have been written last to state in a simple and concise way what the other one hundred forty-nine Psalms sought to bring forth, the blessedness of the righteous and the ultimate despair of the ungodly.

**Theme:**

There are only two paths in life, the path of the righteous or the path of the ungodly. There is no middle ground. It is either good or evil, either right or wrong. Any attempt to make choices fuzzy or grey is an effort to lead us away from God’s Holy Word.

**Body:**

1. **The Righteous**
2. “Blessed” The one about to be described receives a wide variety of blessings [plural in Hebrew] for the type of life he lives. He is extremely fortunate in terms of what lies ahead and will experience genuine happiness.
3. Negative Characteristics
4. “Walks not. . .” Walks refers to all the activities of one’s life. Counsel is the advice, plans, purposes and practices of one’s life. Ungodly describes the unrighteous, the wicked, those who have no place in their lives for God, such as those Paul describes in Romans 1. Solomon gives similar instruction in Proverbs 4:14-15. “Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on.” NKJV A righteous one does not seek advice from the ungodly.
5. “Stands not. . .” Stands means a more fixed position. He stopped long enough to allow the wicked to exert influence. The path is well-worn; the track is well-defined. Sinners miss the mark, pass beyond limits, transgress.
6. “Sits not. . .” Sits implies that one takes up residence with. He is comfortable in the company with evil men. Seat places one in a permanent lifestyle, fixed. Scornful is possibly the worst of all. One mocks or scorns the truth and God and all that’s good. We see here a steady progression into sin: walking, standing, sitting. One heeds advice from ungodly men and steps off the right path onto crooked ones. Then one allows sin and its allurements to gain a firm hold. Lastly, one completely yields to evil and finds pleasure in that lifestyle. He ends up despising God just as the scornful do! The righteous man avoids like a plague this negative descent into sin. He remembers that it all starts with listening to advice of the ungodly.
7. **Positive Characteristics**
8. The righteous man does not seek advice from the ungodly, but rather from the Word of God. He “delights” in it and finds pleasure and joy in it. Also there is joy from doing it. (Psalm 40:8) “I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.” NKJV
9. “Meditate” is to ponder, reflect, contemplate. All day long – Psalm 119:97 “Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.” NKJV Does this picture of the righteous describe you?
10. **Results of being righteous**
11. “Fed and nourished from an unending fountain of rich treasures.” James Meadows. In this life as well as the next!
12. To “bear fruit” is an inevitable outcome of being righteous. (Psalm 92:12-14) “The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord Shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing, NKJV
13. The leaf does not wither, but has permanence. It stays green. This reminds me of II Corinthians 4:16 “. . . Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” NKJV
14. “Shall prosper” The righteous man, who meditates on and follows the Word of God, always prospers spiritually. (I Timothy 4:8) “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” NKJV
15. **The Ungodly** There is a stark contrast between righteous and unrighteous.
16. “Are not so.” The ungodly ignore God, do not read His Word, and delight in sin and its worldly pleasures.
17. “Like chaff” The ungodly are worthless, of no value. The wind blows away the chaff.
18. “Stand in judgment” The ungodly are not able to endure. They will not be found approved or justified on the Day of Judgment. (I Timothy 5:24) “Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.” NKJV
19. “Sinners in the congregation. . .” Let us remember that the ungodly and sinners are not just the vile and evil, but it includes dedicated, religious people who are not following the Word of God in terms of salvation and worship or members of the body of Christ who fail to use their talents or are simply unconcerned and uncaring about their Christian service. (Matthew 7:21-23) “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you: depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ ”NKJV One day all the righteous of all time will be together in one great assembly. The great Judgment scene of Matthew 25 comes to mind with the sheep on the right and the goats on the left. The two groups will be eternally separated.
20. **The Lord Knows the Difference** Psalm 1:6 “For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.” NKJV God recognizes who the righteous are and He grants His approval! God has prepared a great homecoming for them, as well as an eternal home in heaven. But He does not approve of the ungodly. A place is waiting for them as well; it is prepared for the devil and his angels.

**Invitation:** Which path are you travelling today – the righteous or the ungodly? Remember who the ungodly are.

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