

**Psalm 1:1-2**  
**Happy The Person**

**Intro:** Our human writing history... poems, histories, novels (12<sup>th</sup> century France), biographies (Gospels), wisdom (the collected, over a time period teachings of a culture) Each country has its own wisdom sayings. Here are some American wise sayings: A big wife and a big barn, will not do a man any harm... A clean conscience makes a soft pillow...A smile is worth a 1000 words... A person who gets all wrapped up in himself makes a mighty small package... **A man is judged by the company he keeps.** Just like Psalm 1 is saying, we can be guilty by association. Psalm 1 not like the other psalms...

**Read: Happy is the one who has not followed the counsel of the wicked or taken the path of sinners, or joined the company of the insolent; rather, the teaching of the Lord is his delight, and he studies that teaching day and night. He is like a tree planted beside streams of water, which yield its fruit in season, whose foliage never fades, and whatever it produces thrives.**

**Not so the wicked; rather, they are like chaff that wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not survive the judgement, not will sinners, in the assembly of the righteous, but the way of the wicked is doomed.** Psalm 1 and 2 one item. Begin with Happy and end with Happy. They make up an Intro...

Dripping with wisdom. Answers all main questions of life... What is Real, who is really well off, who is a really good person, how to become such a good person?

What is the common answer to these around the world? In America for ex. Surveys 200k home, 2 cars, vacation home, 3 vacations a year, best schools, set for life. That's the really well-off person. In Buddhism: You eliminate human suffering and fear and you thrive when you get rid of human desire. That's a really good person. Psalm 1 gives us a different reality, the truest one. One I can give personal witness to. You do too.

Rabbi Yudan labels Psalm 1 the choices of psalms. Wisdom of God, his teaching, his Torah. Instruction, not legalistic rule keeping. In keeping with the wisdom or teaching Psalm, **I will take my time teaching it. Wisdom cannot be rushed. It's like a Werther's original candy, you can't rush it. Today focus on verses 1-2.**

Vs. 1. 3 words: **Happy the man.** Asherei ha ish. No verb. Oh the happinesses (Plural). Not passing pleasure. Permanent deep rooted sense of happiness. Not happy as in some are happy some are sad. Happiness that comes from doing the right thing. It's the same word used in Matthew 5:3. Happy are the poor in spirit... Not baruk, blessing, which is a word that is used of God and man. Asherei is used only of man never of God. Always describes something present, not future, or something promised for later. It describes what is already there. The writer Sees a man doing what is right by God and says Happy the man. In other places: Happy the nation whose God is Yah... Happy are those who have claimed God to be theirs, who walk in the light of his presence. Happy is what God is saying about those who follow him and do life with him.

**The man.** There are 4 different words to use for man. This word for man is used when the Bible wants us to know the kind of person a man is. He has courage. He has integrity. His life is together. He's one person as opposed to many like the wicked. He stands out from the wicked, sinners, scoffers as a happy person of God. Put him in a crowd and he is noticeable.

Why noticeable? There are things he doesn't do. There are things he does do. First because he has avoided, kept his distance from the ways that produce sadness, confusion, a bad life. What doesn't he do? Doesn't walk along side, linger or keep company with the dark, corrupt side of life. Dark side has three names:

**Wicked:** People who willfully do what is wrong and oppose the ones who do what is right, the righteous. You can tell them apart. The word is used all over the Psalms. They are full of themselves: Arrogant, full of pride, hateful of others, plot evil, unjust, use terror to oppress others, they boast in their wrongdoing, they cheat others of anything they can, you do them a good turn, they do you a bad one. God to them is distant. He can't hear or see what they do. They don't trust God or fear him. It's not to their advantage to do so. The Happy Man resists all those in society who promote any of these things. He doesn't follow in their footsteps in any way. In other words, he sees this kind of life, and he goes the other way.

**Sinners:** They are the ones who miss the path or goal of life with God. They are wayward. They choose the wrong ways habitually. Their sinning is a chronic condition. Fellowship with them people and you're in danger of becoming like them. Don't stand in their way as in don't linger by staring at their ways of life. Don't think about it, don't entertain the thought of doing what they do.

**Scoffers, insolents, mockers, cynics:** The foolish. They don't have enough moral fiber to do what they know is right. They don't want to be corrected, they threaten the social order. They take good values and step on them and cheer on others who join them. Sitting with them, sharing the same bench with them, at the gate of the city, where they make decisions and devise ways and laws that are foolish and against decency is a foolish act for the happy man. He stays away.

In other words, he is not guilty by being one or by associating with that lifestyle of wrong doing. He steers clear of evil, appearance of evil, and does what is good.

So Ps 1 says the good life is not to be guilty by associating with the wrong side of life. But it's more than what not to do. It's also what you do. They give themselves to the Torah of God.

**They practice Torah and delight in it.** Torah is not laws. Torah is God's teaching and instruction. It's his wisdom of God written down. It's his guidance to live by. It's the way he has prescribed that life should be. All the wisdom that God has put in his word is his *torah*. Moses asks his people: What nation has laws and rules as perfect as all this Torah or teaching that I set before you this day? Choose *torah* and you will live. Choose whatever else and you will perish.

**Meditate:** When a dove moans it is meditating, when a lion growls he is meditating. In Psalm 2 it's used for conspire or plot in vain. They talk about the bad they are going to do. They whisper it in the halls. So to meditate, contrary to popular belief is not to be silent. Though I love silence. It takes a tongue, a palate, a mouth to do it. You need a voice. This means not thinking or silence or something that happens only in the brain but the organs of sound are engaged in it. Moses says to Joshua: Don't let torah leave your mouth (not your brain) but meditate, or say the words day and night (Joshua 1:8). Bottom line is: This happy person takes books, chapters, passages, verses of the Bible and studies them, reads them aloud, learns them by memory and keeps at it until they become part of him. He eats the words. They become sweetness in him.

Until recently silent reading was almost unheard of. When people in the Middle Ages read they read out loud. When, thousands of years ago, the Egyptians taught their children, they taught them to recite or chant what they needed to learn. "Write with your hand and read with your mouth" comes a saying from 1200 b.c. Egypt. In Chinese, the character to study is to read aloud, and discuss.

Tevey in Fiddler on the roof sings: If I were rich, I'd have the time that I lack/To sit in the synagogue and pray./And maybe have a seat by the Eastern wall./And I'd discuss the holy books with the learned men, several hours every day./That would be the sweetest thing of all./That's biblical meditation. It's not emptying the mind. It's filling the mind and the mouth with words we say.

Right about the time of Jesus a Jewish group, a sect, called the Essenes or the Qumran people, left society in an area called Qumran, close to the dead sea and took up what Moses said to Joshua seriously: Don't let the torah depart from your mouth. They set up a 24 hour reading of the OT. They divided their community into subgroups of 10. 1 person of the 10 was always awake and reading, studying, saying the words of sacred texts of the Bible. And they only had just a few copies. Today we are inundated with copies, but very little reading.

### **Three Implications:**

There is guilt by association--- There is guilt by association and there is happiness by association.

1). The guilt comes from associating with the ways of the world and its evils. John warns the church about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life (the arrogance that comes from thinking that we know better than God how to live). There are whole systems in our society that are geared to make us lust after people and things and be proud of it. In the psalms these people are given a name: They are called the enemies because they go against David and the people of God. They practice sin and are proud of it.

It's the fools who say in their hearts there is no God, anything goes. They are hostile to God. They want to tear down any semblance of God in society. The enemies are also those who are part of the believing community who don't obey the teachings of God. The enemies are those who are also in the community but want to attack what they see as wrong based on their own ways of thinking like the Pharisees and scribes in Jesus' day. The happy man avoids this guilt by association with these.

We do have to rub shoulders with the world. But we don't have to do what the world does. Martin Luther says a bee may hover around my head but I don't have to let it land on it.

There is redemptive association. That is what Jesus practiced. He welcomed sinner and ate with them. His influence on them was great. They were attracted to him. Jesus practiced redemptive association with you and me. He took the guilt and shame of our sins and bore it on the cross that we might be happy in him and at peace with God.

2). God created man for happiness. And that is also happiness by association. Happiness that comes from obedience and trust in the teachings of God. Associating ourselves with his wisdom pays a million-fold in being happy in Jesus. Jonathan Edwards, the American philosopher and theologian said: "God created man for nothing else but happiness." The happiness that comes from rooting our lives deep in the soil of the word of God. The hymn comes to mind: **When we walk with the Lord, in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way. When we do his good will, he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.**

3). Eat this book--- the angel tells John on the island of Patmos. Jesus ate the book and it sustained him: "I have food you don't know about" when he was speaking to the Samaritan woman. We encourage our church to practice BELLS. One of the L's is for learning Jesus. We ask that we continually read through the Gospels. Why? So we can learn Jesus by heart.

A friend of mine, Greg Fraser in Edmonton, AB, Canada... has two children... as a gift on their weddings he gave them Bibles. Not ones he bought. But ones he copied himself by his own hand writing. Immerse yourself in the text. Choose a favourite passage Perhaps a Psalm a day and copy it. Say it as you do. Memorize it. Write it out and give it away to a friend, a colleague. Tell them: "This means so much to me." Don't be preachy about it. You're sharing something precious to you.

Wouldn't be wonderful if each family made it a point of shared activity to write out a book of the Bible for each of the children or grandchildren in their own handwriting. Do you think an hour of television is better than an hour of reading and writing, and studying and reciting the word of God? We seek pleasure when what we're looking for is happiness and happiness comes, as promised from eating the Book.