



Psalms 1-5

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Tape #7169
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bible to Psalms and tonight we begin with Psalm 1. In the Hebrew, it was called *praises*. It was their prayer and praise book. It was their hymnal for the people. It is called one of the books of poetry. But Hebrew poetry is different from ours. When we talk about poetry, we think of rhyming words. And we think of a rhythm or a meter in our poetry. But we use their thinking of in terms of words rhyming. I understand that the shortest poem is on the subject of the antiquity of microbes. The poem is "Adam had 'em." There is the rhyming and so we think of the rhyming. I like the rhyming along with the meter and styles of rhyming. That is why I am a particular fan of Robert Service. I like the way he rhymes within the line and then he rhymes every other line. That's the type of rhyming and meter that I like. But there are all kinds of meters and rhyming.

In the Hebrew, it isn't the rhyming of words. You think, "Well, that must rhyme in the Hebrew." No. Hebrew poetry doesn't rhyme. It's thoughts and it is the repetition of a thought in a little different way with a little different emphasis. They saw the beauty in the thought itself. And in the repetition of the thought. So, many times you'll read "The Lord is my refuge and my strength. The Lord is my helper. The Lord is my deliverer." And it is the building of the thoughts concerning the Lord.

There is also contrasting thoughts. In the first Psalm, the poetry is in the contrast between the righteous man and the ungodly man. The idea of the contrast is the poetry of the first Psalm. The first Psalm, it is suggested that it was written by Solomon, the son of David, as more or less an introduction to the Jewish hymnal. Now the main subject of the Psalms is "Yahweh" or "Jehovah." This name of God, which literally means "the becoming one," as God becomes to you whatever your need might be, is used at least twice in every single Psalm. There are many expressions for God. Of course the Yahweh is the most predominant in the Psalms. There is the *Elohim*, which is the plural form for God. There is the *Adoni* which is "the Lord." In the Psalms, the predominant is Yahweh or Jehovah.

So getting into Psalm 1, it begins the first word is, of course, "happy." The word "blessed" is literally "happy." The last word of the first Psalm is "perish." And there you have the contrast between the godly "happy" and the ungodly "perish."

[Happy or] *blessed is the man (1:1).*

And so we're given the characteristics of this blessed man. First of all,

He walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. He stands not in the way of sinners. [That is in the path with the sinners.] *And he sits not in the seat of the scornful (1:1).*

There are those who see a progression here. First of all, walking, secondly, standing, and then sitting among. God's blessed man, three negatives. He doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, he doesn't stand in the way of sinners, he doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful.

But [in contrast] his delight [positive] is in the law of the Lord. And in His law does he meditate day and night (1:2).

Going back to the first chapter of Joshua, Moses as he was preparing to leave the command into the hands of Joshua, gave him a commission, a charge. In verse six of chapter one, Moses said to Joshua, "Be strong and of a good courage. For unto this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them." I beg your pardon, this is not from Moses, this is from the Lord himself to Joshua. "Only be thou strong and very courageous that you may observe *to do* according to all the law which

Moses my servant commanded thee. Turn not from it, to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth but you shall meditate therein day and night. That you might observe to do according to all that is written therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.” God’s commission to Joshua at the death of Moses, when Joshua’s taking over. Basically, it is “Keep the law. Meditate in it day and night.” And the result will be that you will prosper in whatever you do.

A very close comparison to the first Psalm. “His delight is in the law of the Lord. And in His law does he meditate day and night.” (1:2) What will be the result of this man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the way of the sinners, not sits in the seat of the scornful. But he delights himself in the law of God, meditating in it day and night.

He [first of all] will be like a tree that is planted by the rivers of water (1:3).

It is interesting looking from an airplane down over the countryside, you can see where the streams are by just the rows of green trees that are next to rivers, to the streams.

Like a tree planted by the river of water. Bringing forth his fruit in his season, [and then the promise that] his leaf also shall not wither. [It is really a promise of a ripe old age, healthy.] And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper (1:3)

Now, sharp contrast,

The ungodly are not so [they’re not happy]. But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the day of judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous (1:4–5).

There is a day of judgment coming the ungodly will perish. They will not stand in that day. They will not be allowed to stand in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish (1:6).

Psalm 2

The second Psalm is the first of the Messianic Psalms. There are many who consider the first Psalm as just an introduction. But the second Psalm is quoted in Acts by Steven and he calls it the second Psalm. It is a Psalm that is quoted quite often in the New Testament in several different places. It is a Psalm concerning Jesus Christ. His first of all rejection by man.

Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? For the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His Messiah (2:1–2).

The word “Messiah” is translated here “anointed” and that is the true translation of the word *Meshiac* is the “anointed one.”

Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. And then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure (2:3–5).

The first part is concerning the rejection of God’s Messiah by the nations, by the rulers. The heathen rage, the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and His Messiah. In the book of Acts, chapter 4, the disciples had been threatened severe punishment if they would dare to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. And after these threats, they were released and they came back to the company of believers and they shared with them the experiences they had just gone through. They were arrested and severely threatened of the punishment that would come to them if they dared to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. So they prayed together and in their prayer, they began their prayer by the declaration “Oh Lord, thou art God. You have created the heavens and the earth

and everything that is in them. And by David you said ‘Why do the heathen rage and the rulers and the kings of the earth gather together against your Messiah.’” And they said “Lord, that is exactly what is happening. We saw the rulers gathered together against your Messiah. We experienced this day the very things that were prophesied and predicted by David.” And they understood that the experience they had just gone through dealing with the rulers of the Jews was in part a fulfillment of this particular prophesy.

It was in a way sort of a comfort to them to realize that God knows all about our circumstances a thousand years before we go through them. I am sort of amused sometimes at myself when I pray. I think I need to inform God about what just happened to me. But God knew all about it a thousand years ago. And as the disciples are praying, they recognize “Lord, this is *exactly* what happened to us. What you spoke about through David is exactly what transpired with us today. The rulers were gathered together against you and against your Messiah, your Anointed One.”

This passage will have its full fulfillment in the future. When the anti-Christ gathers together the people in order to try to stand against the future reign of Jesus Christ, Jesus is coming again to establish the kingdom of God upon this earth. And that’s what this Psalm basically is about. As Jesus is preparing to return, the anti-Christ will gather together the kings of the nations and the rulers and the nations of the world will be gathered together in an endeavor to prohibit the return and the reign of Jesus Christ. That is where this is fulfilled where it says that the Lord sitting in heaven will laugh. How feeble, how puny is man to think that he can stand against the eternal God, or thwart the purposes of God. And God will look down at all this assembled might of men, as they gather with their nuclear weapons and gather with their poisonous gases and all of this modern warfare. And they think that they are almost invincible. And God will look down and see this whole array as they have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah, and he’ll just chuckle. He’ll say “Ho, ho, ho. Look at that. Poor fools.” And the anti-Christ, who will be displaying all of this power and might and working wonders and all so that the world will say “Who is able to make war with the beast?” When Jesus returns, he will be destroyed with the brightness of the coming of Christ. It won’t even be a contest. The sharp sword that goes forth out of his mouth, and the anti-Christ and the false prophet are finished.

He who sits in the heavens will laugh; the Lord will see their derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath [this great tribulation period] and the vexing of them in his sore displeasure (2:4-5):

Oh, God has been so patient. I marvel at the patience of God when I look at the world in which we live. I see the way that God is mocked and I hear people mocking God and the concepts of God and I just marvel at the patience of God. But the day of His patience will come to an end. “And he will vex them in His sore displeasure.” The Lord declares:

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion (2:6).

God is going to establish His throne, His King, even Jesus. And Jesus shall reign from the holy hill of Zion. Now Jesus speaks, and He said:

I will declare the decree (2:7):

This is the decree that God gave to Jesus Christ. Now when we read of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, it said “who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross despising the shame.” The cross was a horrible thing, something that Jesus despised. But He endured it, for the joy that was set before Him. Now what was the joy that was set before him? The decree that God made to Him. What was the decree? He said “I will declare to you the decree.” This is God’s decree:

Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the

Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all thee that put their trust in Him (2:7–12).

So the decree is that “Thou art my beloved Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” The decree is the reign of Jesus Christ over the earth. The promise of the Father. He will set His king upon the holy hill of Zion, and Jesus shall reign over the whole earth.

It is interesting that up until the eleventh century, all of the Jewish commentators saw this as a prophesy of the Messiah. But when they saw how it so completely fit Jesus Christ in the eleventh century the Jewish commentators changed and said “No, this wasn’t a prophesy concerning Jesus Christ.” But up until the eleventh century, every commentary recognized this as a prophesy of Jesus Christ. But they decided that the Messiah was not the Son of God. And they began to declare their rejection of the claim of Jesus Christ as being the Messiah because He also claimed to be the Son of God, and they had come to the decision that the Messiah was not the Son of God. And to the present day they will declare to you the basic reason why they reject the Messiahship of Jesus is his claim to be the Son of God. And yet, what was the decree? “Thou are my Son. This day have I begotten thee.” The only begotten Son of God. Of course, in Isaiah the prophesy also said “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”

During the days of Jesus upon the earth, in those days, the Jews did not reject him because he said he was the Son of God. That is not why they rejected his claim as the Messiah. For when they were examining Jesus, and he was standing before the high priest, the high priest said to him, “Are you the Messiah?” And Jesus answered, “You said it.” And so he the said, “Are you then the Son of God?” Because they recognized and believed at that time that the Messiah would be the Son of God. And again, Jesus responded, “You said it.” And they said, “What have we of need of any further witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy out of his own mouth.”

When they took up stones to stone him at one point, Jesus said, “Many good works have I done here in your midst, for which of the good works are you going to stone me? I’ve healed a lot of people, are you going to stone me because I’ve healed that blind man or that lame man? For which of the good works are you stoning me?” And they said, “We are not stoning you because of your good works, but because you being a man are constantly affirming the Son of God.” Constantly affirming you are the Son of God.

“Thou art my beloved Son,” this is the decree that God made. “This day have I begotten thee.” Now, it goes on then to tell about the reign of Christ. His reign over the earth will be an absolute iron-clad reign. When Jesus establishes the kingdom of God, when God sets his king on the holy hill of Zion, and Jesus reigns over the earth, it speaks of his reign as being breaking them with a rod of iron and dashing them in pieces like a clay pot.

Satan will be bound and will be in the abusso. We will return with Christ as he establishes his reign upon the earth. And we will reign with him for a thousand years. In the messages to the churches, I believe it’s to the church of Thyatira, it’s in Acts chapter 2, verses 26—27, “and he that overcometh and keepeth my works till the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my father.”

Jesus is going to share his reign with the church and we will reign with him. In chapter one of the book of Revelation, “unto him who loved us and gave himself for us, and we shall reign with him on the earth.” Chapter five, in the song of the church in heaven, the worthiness of the lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals, for you were slain and have redeemed us by your blood out of all the nations and tongues and people, and you have made us unto our God a kingdom of priests and we shall reign with you upon the earth.

We will be reigning with Christ upon the earth, and according to our faithfulness now in the things he has entrusted to us will determine the extent of our reigning with him when he returns. There is that parable that Jesus gave of the lord who went away to a far country and gave unto his servants, entrusted unto his servants hands his goods. To one he gave five talents, to another four, to another one. And when the lord

returned, he required from his servants and accounting of that which he had entrusted to them. To the one that was given five talents he came and he said, "Lord you gave me five and I went out and gained another five and here are ten." And the lord said, "Well done thou good and faithful servant. Thou has been faithful in the little things, now I will make thee ruler over ten cities. Enter in to the joy of the lord." To the one that received the four, he said, "I've gained another four, and here are eight." He said, "Well done, I will make you ruler over eight cities."

And so the faithfulness to what God entrusts to us now will determine the extent of our reigning with him in that day. I believe that in our reigning with Christ, being in our new bodies that we will have expanded powers and knowledge over our present conditions. I believe that we will have the ability to understand the thoughts and the plans of people so that when a person is planning to rip off his neighbor's lawn mower, we'll know about it. When the guy sneaks out of his house in the middle of the night to go over and rip off the lawnmower we'll be there and go "Hey fella. No, no. You want to live unrighteously, you don't get to live in the kingdom." They'll be cut off. There will be severe punishment. Reigning with a rod of iron, breaking them as a potter's vessel. It will be an iron-fisted reign over the earth during that thousand years.

The Psalm ends with a word to the wise.

Be instructed ye judges of the earth, be wise you kings. Serve the Lord with fear or reverence him, serve him and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry and you perish from the way when his wrath is kindled for just a little. Blessed are they who put their trust in him (2:10-12).

Psalm 3

Psalm three is entitled "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son." David was a man after God's own heart. For he was a man after the heart of God. But David was far from perfect. Which is encouraging. It means that God can love an imperfect man and God can declare an imperfect man that he's a man after God's own heart.

We are all, of course, familiar with David's sin with Bathsheba. While her husband was out serving in David's army, David had an adulterous affair with her and she became pregnant. The prophet Nathan came to David to rebuke David over this. And in the rebuke, number one, the child was declared by Nathan going to die. Secondly, that because of David's sin, especially in the case of the husband of Bathsheba, Uriah, who David had put to death in order that he would be free to marry Bathsheba. He said "Out of your own family, a sword is going to arise against you."

The son of David, Absalom, desired the kingdom. So he went down to Hebron and he blew the trumpet and gathered together an army of people. He had in clever subterfuge sort of stood outside the palace and people would come to see his father for judgment and all and he would say "Oh, you've got a real cause here, but if you take it to my dad, he's so busy. He doesn't have time for people, he's just such a busy man with the whole kingdom. It's a shame that dad can't take time for you, but if you want to declare your cause to me I'll be glad to give you judgment." And Absalom stole the hearts of the people away from David. Then he announced his rebellion. And with his army, he came marching from Hebron up to Jerusalem. And David barefooted weeping with a handkerchief over his head crossed the little brook, Kidron, escaping from the advancing army of Absalom. His future is uncertain. The kingdom is uncertain. It looks like the popular movement is toward Absalom and David is being driven out. While he is fleeing from this rebellion within his own family, David cried:

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me. Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul "There is no help for him in God" (3:1-2).

The declaration of his position. Now so many times when you get this *Selah* it sort of announces the end of that particular thought and the movement into a new thought. The first thought is all of the enemies that I

have. They have risen up against me. They are saying, “Hey, God won’t help him. There is no help for him in God.” Now going into this next strophe,

But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me. You’re my glory and the lifter up of my head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me out of his holy hill (3:3–4).

My life is being threatened. My son is rebelling. I’m fleeing for my life. People have turned against me. They’re saying there’s no help, God won’t even help him. But Lord, you are my shield, my defense. You’re the one that lifts up my head. I cried and you heard me. That one again ends with a *Selah*.

Now, the next strophe is the result now of having put the thing in perspective, having placed it in God’s hands, calling upon God to help him. The people said that God won’t help him, but he has that assurance that God will help him. And so he said:

I laid me down and I slept. I awakened, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me roundabout. Arise, O Lord, save me O my God. For you have smitten all my enemies on the cheekbone, you have broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs unto the Lord. Your blessings are upon your people (3:5–8).

So David’s ultimate cry of victory, crying unto the Lord, he received his help and declares his confidence. He’s able to sleep in the midst of all of the problems.

Psalm 4

The fourth Psalm is more or less a continuation of the third. It is to the chief musician on Neginoth. The Neginoth is a stringed instrument so it was to be accompanied with this guitar or harp or stringed instrument of some sort.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness. You have enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer (4:1).

So the first cry is unto God. Then to those who are oppressing him. David cries to God and God responds. This portion is really God’s word and it’s interesting how that so often in the Psalms God speaks. God responds to the Psalmist.

I think it is a classic example, the ninety-first Psalm how the Psalmist lays out. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord ‘He is my refuge, my fortress, my God. In Him will I trust.’ He will deliver me from the pestilences and from all of these things (91:1–3).” Now, verse 14 after the Psalmist has declared all of these wonderful things about God, God responds. He said “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high because he has known my name. He shall call upon me and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation (91:14–16).” God responds to the things that the Psalmist said.

In Psalm thirty-two, again you have the declaration of the Psalmist and the response of God. He’s talking about, “Oh how happy is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. To whom the Lord does not impute iniquity.” And then he talks about his own personal case with, probably when he was feeling guilty over Bathsheba and Uriah and the thing that he had done. He kept silent; he wouldn’t confess it. But as a result of his silence, he was going through a hell. He was just being ripped up inside. Finally he acknowledged his sin. He did not try to hide his iniquity any longer. “I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.’ And you forgave the iniquity of my sin (33:5).” He said “You are my hiding place, you will preserve me from trouble; you will surround me with songs of deliverance (33:7).” Then God responded and he said, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with my eye. Don’t be like a mule that doesn’t have understanding, whose mouth must be held with a bit and a bridle

lest they will come near ought to you.” So God responds. This is again one of the Psalms where it goes into sort of a prophesy. God speaking and responding.

O ye sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? (4:2)

I think of today in which we live how men seek to turn the glory of God into shame. Paul talks about it in Romans chapter one. “For the wrath of God shall be revealed from heaven against all of the ungodly and those who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. For when they knew God, they glorified him not as God but they became vain in their imaginations. Their foolish hearts were darkened and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools for they changed the glory of an incorruptible God and fashioned their gods like animals and creeping things.”

How long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will love emptiness? (4:2)

How empty are the things of the world and yet how people love them. They love the vain glory, the passing glory of the world.

How long will you seek after lying [leasing is another term for lying]. Know that the Lord has set him apart that is godly for himself. The Lord will hear when I call unto Him (4:2–3).

I love that. God has set apart His own people for Himself. The Psalmist said:

Stand in awe and sin not. Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still. [That time of just meditation and thinking about God.] Offer the sacrifices of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord (4:4–5).

In the last Psalm, there are those who were saying “There’s no help for him in God.” These same people were saying, or perhaps David’s friends were saying “Who shall show us any good?” Today, there are many who are saying “Who shall show us any good? Is life really worth living?” David answered:

Lord, lift thou up the light of your countenance upon us (4:6).

In other words, interpreted, this is, “Lord help us to find what you have found, where you have found it.” Who will show us any good. Those are words of a cynic. Those are words of a person disappointed with the past. They look around and they see no hope. They see no reason for living and no reason for going on. Who will show us any good? But David answered:

You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased (4:7).

The joy of the Lord that I have is greater than the joy of the wicked in the midst of their prosperity.

I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for you Lord only make me to dwell in safety (4:8).

God’s protective watchful care.

Psalm 5

The fifth Psalm is a Psalm concerning the inheritance, the righteous people are the Lord’s inheritance. Neginoth is not an instrument, it’s a word that means inheritance. So it’s the chief musician concerning inheritance. It’s a Psalm of David.

Give ear to my words O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my king and my God, for unto you will I pray (5:1–2).

So David’s introduction to this prayer. Calling upon the Lord to hear. To consider or hearken.

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning O Lord. In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee and will look up (5:3).

What a glorious thing it is to start the day with the consciousness of the Lord. Before you get out of bed, to greet the Lord. Now, the previous Psalm there is, “Many who say, ‘Who shall show us any good?’” They are the kind of people who say, “Good Lord, it’s morning.” The others are those who wake up and say, “Good morning, Lord.” What a difference it makes in the day. Your attitude towards things.

Lord in the morning will I call. In the morning will I lift up my voice. And I think it’s so important to begin our day in a commitment of ourselves and the day to the Lord. I love to do that before I get out of bed. I just lie there for a moment just communing with the Lord. Thanking him for another day and another opportunity to serve Him and presenting myself afresh to him. Say, “Lord, today is yours. My life is yours. Work out your plan and your purposes in my life. I’m just available Lord for you to use as you desire. Guide my steps in your ways.” So David is pretty much declaring the same thing.

In the morning I will direct my prayer to thee and will look up. For you are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness and neither shall evil dwell with you. The foolish shall not stand in your sight, and you hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy them that speak lies. The Lord will abhor the bloody [or bloodthirsty] and deceitful man (5:3–6).

We read so many times that the bloody man is literally the bloodthirsty. Those that are seeking after blood. Bloodthirsty and deceitful men.

But as for me, I will come into your house in the multitude of your mercy. And in your fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. Lead me, O Lord in thy righteousness because of mine enemies. Make thy way straight before my face (5:7–8).

What a fabulous prayer to offer the Lord in the morning. “Lead me, O Lord in thy righteousness.” Lead me this day in the right path and make thy way straight before my face. In other words, “Give me a clear understanding of what you want.” How many times I’ve prayed that in many situations. “Lord show me what your will is. Help me to have a real knowledge of what you want from me in this situation.”

Make your way plain before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth. Their inward part is very wickedness. Their throat is an open sepulchre. They flatter with their tongue (5:8–9).

Jesus spoke about the Pharisees who were like white washed sepulchre. They looked all clean and fancy, but within are dead man’s bones. Paul quotes in Romans 3:13 this particular Psalm of David. “Their throat is an open sepulchre: they flatter with their tongue.” The prayer of David is:

Destroy thou them, O God! Let them fall by their own counsel. Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions. For they have rebelled against you. But let all those that put their trust in You (5:10–11);

Now here is the contrast. The Hebrew poetry is in contrast so many times. The contrast here is the righteous with the unrighteous; there is no faithfulness in their mouth.

But let all of those that put their trust in thee rejoice. Let them ever shout for joy because you will defend them. Let them also that love your name be joyful in thee (5:11).

I believe that a sour-faced Christian is probably one of the poorest witnesses in the world. There was a tragic period in church history, many tragic periods in church history; the whole history of the church is tragic. But there was that period when they had this idea that smiling made you suspect. Laughing was an outright sin. That as a Christian you should be very sober and very somber. No joviality at all. You had to be just very sober and they even got an effected voice. The hands folded and the sort of bent head and the sorrowful look. “Brother, I’ll pray for you.” There was no joy; there was no laughter. There was no excitement in the things of the Lord. They thought that the more sober and solemn you were, the more spiritual you were. And that was looked at as a mark of deep spirituality. To be very somber and all. It was a poor witness.

Let all those that love your name rejoice. Let them shout for joy. Let them also be joyful in thee. The Christian life is described as one of fullness of joy. You should be enjoying your walk and your relationship

with God. The strongest witness is when you can have that joy of the Lord in the midst of the most difficult situations. Remember that song, *"I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy Down in my Heart."* We used to have a verse to that, "I've got the happy hope that heckles heathens, down in my heart." And it really does bother people. If things are going horribly, you're facing bankruptcy. If people come around and say, "Oh, I hear what you're going through, brother. I feel so bad for you." And you say, "Oh, praise the Lord! You know the Lord will take care of it. The Lord is so good; I just love the Lord." They say, "Man, you don't understand what's happening. Don't you know that you're broke? What are you going to do about your bills?" And for you to be happy and have the joy of the Lord in those miserable conditions, it just heckles the heathens. They just can't handle it. But it's a real witness. My confidence is in God. The Lord is watching over me, the Lord is going to take care of me. The Lord is overseeing the circumstances of my life. That is what He has said; that is what He has promised. So whatever I am going through, I am going through because it's the Lord's will that I go through it. Because I've committed my ways unto Him. So you can live in that kind of confidence. The Lord knows all about it.

There were times as the church was experiencing the rapid growth and I didn't know what to do with it. I'd never pastored a large church in my life. Suddenly I was becoming the pastor of a large church. A lot of times when I'd look at what was happening, I would start really getting shook inside. Thinking, "What in the world are we going to do? What has the Lord gotten me into?" I wasn't prepared for this. I would say, "Lord, what are you doing? What if this should happen? What if that should happen?" And the Lord would speak to my heart and say, "Who's church is this?" I'd say, "It's Your church." He said, "Then why are you worried?" "I don't know." I would throw it over onto Him. I would quit worrying. I'd say, "Okay. Your church, your problem. You handle it." I don't think I could have survived had I not come to that. If I tried to carry the weight of all the problems and all of the things that were going on, if I tried to carry that, it would have wiped me out. The Lord taught me that it's His church. I could see all kinds of things happening, disasters and everything else. What will we do then? "It's your church. So you go bankrupt, Your problem. Go belly-up, Your problem." But He didn't. And He continues to be the head of the body, His church. And I've learned to just enjoy it. Not to worry, not to fret, not to get anxious. I say, "Hey, Lord, in Your time, in Your way go ahead. It's Your church." I would just trust in Him. I'm amazed at what a tremendous job He's done. I love it. Just watching the Lord build His church.

For thou Lord will bless the righteous with favor You will surround him as with a shield (5:12).

God just surrounds you with His love. Surrounds you with His favor. Surrounds you with His goodness. Thus, as we get into these Psalms, we see the benefits and the blessings of being a child of God. The blessings of serving the Lord. We also see the consequences of rebellion against God. The ungodly are not so, like the chaff driven by the wind.

So as we study the contrast, and we will get them all the way through the Psalms, the contrast of the righteous and the unrighteous. Surely there is great incentive for us to live righteously before God, a life pleasing to Him.

Next week we will look at the next five Psalms. The next Messianic Psalm that you get to is the eighth Psalm. That again is a Psalm that is referring to the Messiah and all the way through that David in the Psalms was a prophet and he did prophesy of many things concerning the Messiah.