

How to Read the Psalter, Psalm 1 - Doorway to the Psalms

by Michael Flowers

The sermon explores how to read the Psalms in light of the new covenant, emphasizing the importance of understanding Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised in the Old Testament.

Duration: 26:52

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:25-27, Luke 24:46, John 20:19-20

Topics: "Psalter"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the book 'Sit, Walk, Stand' and emphasizes that Christianity begins with a big done, not a big do. He explains that being seated with Christ in heavenly places is the starting point, where we receive lavish grace. The preacher highlights the importance of knowing our identity in Christ, as opposition and challenges arise when we engage in the Christian life and mission. He also addresses the issue of being connected to negative influences through the internet, particularly pornography, and encourages the audience to find delight in the law of the Lord. The sermon concludes with a reference to Jesus explaining the Scriptures to his disciples and the significance of word and sacrament in worship.

Transcript

I think we're all a little sleep deprived, those of us who have been coming back from Chicago at the Provincial Assembly. It was an amazing time. Thank you for your prayers.

They were answered. You know, we were worshiping in the midst of some 1,500 people, people from all over the world, bishops and archbishops from all over the world of every nation, kindred, tongue, and tribe. It was like worshiping around the throne of God.

Amen? That's the church that we will be with forever. One of my favorite times, an African-American choir came to sing. Over 100 folks in that choir, in the presence of the Lord, just filled the house.

And it wasn't just one or two songs. I mean, they played on and off for over an hour, hour and a half, with preaching that night and everything. It was an amazing time.

So God is doing something really beautiful in the Anglican Communion. Yes, connecting us with Global South leadership. And then our inner cities now, racial dividing walls are beginning to break down.

And so we want to contend for that here in Kansas City. But Chicago will provide for us, I believe, just a reference point. We need reference points.

We need to know that someone has really gone there. And then Hispanic worship the next night, Hispanic churches are being planted all over Chicago. God's doing some great stuff.

So I took all my books with me for this sermon today, backpack full. You know, the scriptures open your mouth and I will fill it. That's not always a good thing.

So pray it'll be a good thing this morning. Like Henry VIII said to his six wives, I won't keep you long. All right.

Sorry, it's really bad. OK, I can sit down now, right? That's good enough. You like that? All right.

All right. It's good. It's good.

OK, we're going to call this today how to read the Psalms. That's confusing to you, right? Because I said last week we don't read the Psalms. We sing them, we chant them, we meditate on them.

We have to read them as we're chanting, as we're meditating scriptures, not to just be merely read, but it's meant to be, as the colic says, inwardly digested to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the word. That's one of my favorite colleagues. Remember last week we said that the news in the old concealed.

The new covenant is in the old covenant, concealed, hidden, and the old, the old covenant is in the new, the new covenant revealed. And then ultimately we said that the new covenant isn't a book. This is my new covenant in my blood.

And so the new covenant is the Eucharist, the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless you drink my blood and eat my flesh, you will have no life in you. So thank God for the new covenant.

John 5, I'm going to read verses 39 through 41st, just to sort of provide some background. After the healing at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus was questioned by the Jewish leaders and they began to persecute him because he was healing on the Sabbath. This is right in the middle of his discourse, says in verse 39, you study the scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life.

These are the very scriptures that testify about me. And yet you refuse to come to me to have that life. The new covenant is about the me, it's the word made flesh.

Becoming the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That's the new covenant. Crucified, died and risen and ascended to the throne of God.

OK, so verse 46, he says, if you believed Moses, you would have believed me for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe in what I say? So the scriptures and let's be clear, this is not the New Testament he's talking about. This is the old covenant he's talking about.

Let's go to Luke 24, it's going to jump in the middle of the road to Emmaus and just point out what Jesus said about himself in the scriptures. Luke 24, beginning with verse 25 through 27, he said to them, and these were two disciples walking out of Jerusalem, going home completely disillusioned because they had seen Christ crucified, but not risen. And so Jesus, in another form, it says he appeared to them in another form.

Just starts walking along the road, just kind of chatting, how was your day? How was my day? Haven't you heard what happened in Jerusalem? Yeah, no, tell me. Jesus is sort of just agging them on. It's a beautiful thing.

And then after they pour their hearts out about their disillusionment about his crucifixion, he said to them, how foolish you are in verse 25 and how slow to believe all the prophets have spoken. Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, I wish I could have been in that seminary class. He explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

Once again, this is the Old Testament. And when he was at the table with them, he took bread, here it is, new covenant, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them word in sacrament right here. This is the way our worship time this morning is being constructed.

He's proclaiming the word and then he sits down, goes to the table, he breaks bread and he began to give it to them. Their eyes were opened in the sacrament of his body and blood. Their eyes were open and they recognized him for the first time.

Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness. This is the Lord.

And then he disappeared. He just disappeared. Jesus, stop playing with our heads.

He disappeared from their sight. You know, that is so abrupt, but it's just such a teaching moment, you know, that Jesus is giving in his disappearance. Right.

Word sacrament. Go do it. I'll be with you always.

You just won't always see me. And they ask each other, we're not our hearts burning. This is something that we all want to pray for churches, burning hearts at the word of the word, burning hearts.

We're not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us. Oh, we need burning hearts. I need a burning heart.

Sometimes I feel like my heart is so cold, damp, chilly, the licey. You know, you need an ice pick to yeah, burning hearts just to melt away that iciness, that coldness, that sense of alienation, sometimes that our flesh communicates to us, that old nature of us communicates. We are not alienated from God at all.

He sent the spirit to us and he is with us always, even until the end of the age. OK, one more scripture before we jump into Psalm 1, Hebrews 12, beginning with verse 18, it's talking about two mountains. And the reason why I do this is because this is going to be all applicable to Psalm 1 and the rest of the Psalter and the rest of the Old Testament.

The writer of Hebrews is telling us, you church have not come to Mount Sinai. What does it look like? You've not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire to darkness, gloom and storm, to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them because they could not bear what was commanded. If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.

Thank God we've not come to that mountain. The site was so terrifying that Moses said, I'm trembling with fear, verse 22, but you have come to another mountain, Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the

heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly right now.

That's where we're at right now, right now, we enter into that realm by faith. Where we're seated with Christ in heavenly places right now, you have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, verse 23, to the church, to the church of the firstborn, those who have gone before us, to the church of the firstborn, not speaking like they're down there in the grave, their bodies are to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

And those are the prayer warriors around the throne of God, the spirits of the righteous, the church of the firstborn continues to pray and we join in that holy communion of the saints. This is where we get the communion of the saints. This is one massive biblical passage.

We're in communion with heaven because Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the father, fully God and fully man, a human being is in heaven and his flesh is there, his risen flesh is there, his risen body is in heaven. The only one we're all awaiting, those who have gone on before us, they're all awaiting the resurrection of the body and that will be the completed state. But Jesus has the prototype of what we're all waiting on.

And we're in him right now in the spirit, we're in Jesus Christ at the throne of grace and because we're in him and because he has communion, that is, he is one. He's united with all of the church. There's only one church, one body in heaven and on earth to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, come to God, the judge of all to the spirits of the righteous made perfect to Jesus, the mediator.

Here it is to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkle blood of Jesus Christ that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Mind blowing, isn't it? That's where we've come now with all of that in mind. When we start reading the Psalms, we have to remember all of that.

When you start reading the judgment Psalms, when you start reading the Psalms about obeying the law. We have to think about how to read the Old Testament now through the lens of Jesus, or we can end up in some big time condemnation, you know, because there's no way we're going to be able to keep the law. And when we read this first song.

We have to understand, blessed is the man, NIV says, blessed is the one. It's literally blessed is the man, the human being. Psalm one.

Let's go to that. Blessed is the man who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand. Notice these three postures.

Who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit, does not walk, stand or sit in the company of mockers. But whose delight is in the law of the Lord. And who meditates on his law day and night, that man, that person, that one is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.

Whatever they do. Prosperous. Bears fruit, right, fruit bearing, not so with the wicked.

They're like chaff that the wind blows away, therefore, the wicked will not stand. Here's a posture again, will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous, for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous. But the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

You know, you have to raise your hand on this. Just think about this. I just want to ask you the question.

How many have read that before, thinking that that is a psalm calling you to this ethical life, this moral life, this perfect life, who meditates on the law day and night, not so with the wicked. I'm over here with the righteous. You have some dissonance in reading it that way because you want to be the one that the psalm is talking about.

You want to be like that. I want to be like that, but nobody's like that except Jesus. Who does not walk in step with the wicked.

Gosh, you guys, I mean. I can't put this thing down, how about you? I mean, there's all kinds of trash on this thing, right? And I'm not coming against iPhones, I love my iPhone, but we're in the world and we're trying to be not of it. And we use these these are tools, right? But I'm just saying that we're connected to so much trash through the digital medium of the Internet.

And most of the guys in church statistics say are hooked on pornography. So when you read Psalm one, how do you feel like if you're struggling with anything like pornography, it doesn't have to be pornography, it can be a lot of things, but pornography is a big one because it's so accessible. So blessed is the one who does not walk in the step of the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers.

Here's the next step. This person that it's talking about is not doing any of this. They're not walking in step with the wicked, they don't stand in the way of sinners, they don't sit in the company of mockers, but their delight, you see, is in the law of the Lord.

Their delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on his law day and night. That person will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither, whatever they do prospers. OK, who could this be talking about? Do you think who is the man that this could be talking about? If if we can't fully fulfill this and there's so much more we can say about this, but I don't have time if we can't fulfill this, who did fulfill this was pilot that said, behold, the man was a pilot that was prophesying and he did not know it.

Behold, the Anthropos. Behold, the human being. Behold, the second Adam.

Behold, the man happy is the man blessed is the man. Jesus is the man. Jesus is the man referred to through all of the Old Testament.

He is the second Adam. He is the fulfillment of all that was promised. And the scriptures speak of him, we have to read through the lens of the new covenant.

And so when I read this as Jesus. You're going like, OK, well, Jesus did it, but where does that leave me? Right. Where does that leave me? Well, through your baptism, what happens? You're united to Christ, right through your baptism.

You're united to the Anthropos, the human being. You're united to Jesus Christ and you he shares all of his benefits with his people who are in communion with him and in union with him. Yeah, because on the cross, he took the judgment that we deserve.

And that we could never stand. In the assembly of the righteous, without that, he made sure that we could stand in the assembly of the righteous because we stand in Christ, we stand in him. There is now, Romans eight says.

No more condemnation, now that's a legal term before the throne of God, we do not bear legal condemnation, separation from God any longer because we've been adopted and we're sons and daughters. And so God has a lot of kids now through Jesus's son, we've all been adopted and we can all be blessed, we can be blessed are the company of the righteous who have their union in Jesus Christ because they shall trust in the Lord and be like a tree planted by streams of living water, blessed, but blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, Jeremiah says. So goes with someone blessed is that the one who trusts in the Lord.

Our righteousness is by faith, our holiness is by faith in the one who is the faithful one. We trust in his faithfulness to share his faithfulness with us, but blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. My confidence is not in the flesh.

My confidence is not in my ability to keep the law. My confidence is in Jesus, who will give me grace to say no to sin. The grace of God, you says is the grace of God has appeared to everybody.

I love that to all men, to everybody. The grace of God appeared to everybody. And it teaches us to say no.

Grace is not just some sort of concept, it's not a theological proposition. Grace is God himself, the Holy Spirit, the spirit of grace, the spirit of grace, the Holy Spirit. He mediates the grace of God through us because Jesus is at the right hand of the father and Jesus says, it's really good that I go away because when I send the spirit, I'm going to mediate grace to you.

The grace of God has appeared in Jesus grace upon grace upon grace and he pours it out through his spirit. So grace is the power of God. To say no to sin.

That's what grace is, grace is the power, the enabling power for us to live uprightly, but not perfectly right. We don't do this because we're still in the wilderness, you know, depending on the manna of Jesus, the body and blood of the Lord, because we've gone through the Red Sea, the waters of baptism, and now we're in the wilderness of this life awaiting to go into the land, the promised land where the kingdom of God will come on Earth as it is in heaven. And it's coming in.

The kingdom of God is kind of coming in spurts on Earth as it is in heaven. But we all know this is not it. I mean, you know, I just read the news this morning.

It's not it yet. It's not happening. I just I just got my iPhone and read it's not on Earth as it is in heaven yet.

Darn it. We're supposed to pray it and call it in. Psalm one and two are called the gateway Psalms into the Psalter.

If you get Psalm one and Psalm two, you'll get the rest of the Psalms. It's like Jesus said about the parable of the sower. Unless you get the parable, the sower, you won't get any of the other parables.

The parable of the sower is foundational in understanding everything that Jesus said, he said. Some of the scholars that I was reading pairs, not so with the wicked, with Psalm two, who are railing against the Lord and his anointed, and they're like chaffed. Now, you know, about five years ago, my daughter and my son

bought me a coffee roaster and you have to go outside because it really it either stinks up the house or it makes the house smell good.

You know, I'm saying it depends on if you're a coffee drinker or not. I'm a coffee drinker, but, you know, so I take my little coffee roaster out and I put my beans in there and I turn it on and, you know, it's an air roaster. And so it starts popping those beans up.

And then all of a sudden this stuff starts flying, you know, because I dropped it a couple of times and there's a hole here. And so that the chaff of the beans kind of just starts flying out. And so when the coffee is roasted, the beans are heavier, right, than the chaff.

So I take the top off, I take it outside and I blow on the beans and all of that chaff that starts blowing all over the backyard. And that's the way of the wicked. That's what he's talking about here, not so with the wicked, they're like chaff that the wind blows away.

Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment and nor will we if we're not in Jesus Christ, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. At this point, we're both saints and sinners, y'all. We're being sanctified, we're being saved past, present and future.

Encourage one another to love and good deeds. So therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. When I was 16, I read a book called Sit, Walk, Stand.

Has anybody ever read that? Yeah. Yeah. Tracy, watch me.

And he starts out with this. Christianity begins not with a big do. It begins with a big done.

Christianity begins not with a big do. You can read this song like, man, there's a lot of stuff I need to start doing. It begins with a big done in Jesus Christ.

Now, there's a lot to do after the big done, but if you try to do the big do without the big done, you will big burnout. OK, so sit, it begins with being seated with Christ, right, in Ephesians 3, Ephesians 1 and 2, it's all about, you know, the lavish grace in Jesus Christ upon his church. And we've been recipients of this grace and we're seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Colossians 3 as well. We're seated with him. We're seated, we're sitting in the righteous place.

Who does not sit in the company of mockers, but sits on the throne of grace with Christ. That's how we have to read that. And who does not walk the sitting is the indicative in grammar, if you want to look at the Greek grammar, it's all that Jesus is and done for us and offers to us and gives to us in the gospel.

It's a big done. He's done it. It's indicative.

You're in Christ. You're a new creation. And it's indicative of who you are and your new nature.

You have a new nature, new creation, and that's indicative of who you are. And then there's some imperatives in the book of Ephesians and that's Ephesians four and five. Walk, don't walk according to the course of this world, it says.

But walk according to the kingdom of God. OK, now that I know who I am and Jesus, now I can live righteously with a lot of repentance before him and I can go on and do mission for him and I can do all of this. And then Ephesians 6:10 and following says, stand, therefore, sit, walk, stand, stand, therefore, and gird your loins with all of this amazing armor, which is all Jesus Christ putting on Jesus Christ and standing against the wiles of the devil.

So there's a parallel here between Ephesians and Psalm one. I see it because we have to be in that place of the indicative of union with Christ in the imperative of living that out as a community and serving the city and doing mission and planting churches and all of that stuff that can wear us out if we don't know who we are and Jesus. But we go and do all of this, knowing who we are and Jesus in the power of the spirit.

And then when we start doing all of this warfare starts to happen and we have to stand Ephesians six, we have to stand against resistance because, oh, OK, now I'm going to have to, like, attack these people because they're really living the Christian life. Satan will not attack a Christian who's not living the Christian life, who's not seated and walking in their identity. There is no warfare.

We have to know who we are, because when we start really living the Christian life and really start engaging with Jesus and doing mission, then it gets hard. The opposition comes and we have to learn how to stand, sit, walk, stand. OK, that's Psalm one in a nutshell.

Amen. Father, I thank you so much. I just pray now that this word would captivate and motivate and and change our lives.

In thy light we see.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28624.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/michael-flowers/how-to-read-the-psalter-psalm-1-doorway-to-the-psalms/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net