

WILL THE REAL MAN STAND UP

Psalm I

INTRODUCTION:

Some one has said that clothes make the man. But do they? Do they make the inner man, the real man.

In the first Psalm we find the answer to the thing that makes the man. And every man and every individual, upon reading and studying this Psalm, will be able to stand up and declare his position.

There are really two portraits.

Jesus reached back into Psalm I for his text for the immortal sermon on the mount. In giving that message to the disciples, he preached an expository sermon, using the main outline of this ancient poem. In that sermon he pictured the ideal kingdom man, and developed four definite thoughts. His character, his influence, his conduct, and his destiny.

Jesus realized that the man who ignores God or shuts him out of his life, is on the road to ruin and eternal death. And Jesus longed to see men live the abundant life. And to drink in the riches of joy and to look to eternity. He said on one occasion, I have come that ye might have life. And might have it more abundantly.

We find in this Psalm the blessedness of a life wholly committed to God. We find also other destructions of those who leave God out.

The two pictures are painted before us. One of them is finished. Full and completed. One picture is exactly the opposite. In choice, in character, in influence, and in conduct, and destiny - these matters challenge the inner

man to stand up. The real man in you.

This Psalm leads us to believe that there are at least three things that threaten us today. The direction of life, the leisure time and how we spend it, and the company that we associate with. These perhaps are a part and yet, they seem to be definite.

As the Shepherd's Psalm - there are only six brief verses used here. It does not seem incomplete. But it gives you a feeling of beauty that the Psalmist was not in a hurry. And he begins with the word "blessed". The word which means happiness. The only way that a man can hope to have enduring happiness is to be found in fellowship with God.

God would speak to each of us daily if we would but do as the Psalmist did.

I. Would The Godly Man Stand Up

V. 1-3 - He gives us the invitation. You who are Godly, stand up. And lets see how you stand. Here is a parallelism which he lays out for us.

There are certain refusals - there are some things he simply cannot do. It is not that he is weak or that he is drifting, but it is clear that the things that characterizes his journey through life -- the courage, the determination, at every turn of the road, he is concentrating on the path. And he is estimating the dangers and the pitfalls. And he is sticking to the highway happiness - and he has deliberately set himself against doing certain things.

The Psalmist says there are three definite refusals. In the Godly man's life.

✓ First, he will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly - V. 1. He refuses to take his advice from evil men. He knows their way and he will not expose himself to their ideas and to their attitudes - who really have no place for God.

He avoids getting with these men because of their evil. They do not reverence God.

In the cities, we declare certain sections (out of bounds) for sailors, for soldiers. Now how many places do you know of that should be out of bounds for Godly people. Evil companions will start a young person on the road away from God. Unfortunately there are many who take particular delight in giving advice to immature youth and many youth will say and will do whatever worldly philosophy is given them. I listen to youth quite often and I can tell where their advice is coming from.

Happy is the man who avoids this atmosphere which is not conducive to wholesome thinking.

Not until you realize it - it may be too late. You may be in the grip of sinful harm.

Here is the picture of a man who has a resolute heart - set against the very beginning of such a course. He will not walk in this general direction of evil. He will not allow wicked companions to control the way of his life.

Now the word (council) here means a plan. As Micah 6:16 - he charged the people that they walked in the council of Ahab - you shall bear reproach.

Whatever blessedness that can be found in this life - will not be found in the direction that the evil give. And he gives this contradiction here -- to follow one's own council is a mistake. The world is wrong, the Psalmist said. There was a custom in central Africa. When a caravan mistakes its way, and is obliged to re-trace it's steps and return to a road from which it has deviated - a bow is thrown across the wrong path. And a furrow is scratched in the ground by means of the feet. So that no succeeding caravan may fall into the same error.

Thus, the generations which have gone astray have declared that the ways of ungodliness and sin are ways of bitterness and disappointment. They have left their mark with sorrow and testimonies. And we ought to be able to see the bows across these false ways.

Second, he will not stand in the way of sinners - V. 1. He will not hang around with sinners. He refuses to associate himself with rebellious offenders. Men who spend their time blocking the progress of the kingdom of God, cannot count on him.

He will not go to their houses. He will watch his leisure hours and be careful where he spends his time.

He realizes the deadly drag that can come to his spiritual convictions - and with high resolves, if he submits to the influence of such men.

He is aware and he knows how they can hurt him. So he must keep himself free from such influences. He deliberately avoids these men as he would a plague.

He does not want his moral life blunted and dulled.

The prophet Hosea describes this as sin cutting the optic nerve of the soul.

Sin and a pagan atmosphere can make the conscience flabby and weak. And render it ineffective. The powers of spiritual discernment are weakened. So that it is difficult to make moral distinctions.

How tragic it is to find men and women who will allow sin to rob them of the power of discernment. Once they were alert and sensitive to moral things, and now all of their powers for deciding ethical things have been disapated.

Perhaps you at one time as an ideal young man or young woman set out to avoid these places, that would hurt you. The places where men do not love God -- the saloons, the pool rooms, the dives. Even disrespectful Christians.

The Psalmist says he refuses to have anything to do with such individuals. To stand in the company of sinners.

To stand in the company of sinners, to hang around with sinners, would indicate that he had lost his sensitiveness to sin.

This is a downward step in his life. He first will not take their council. Second, he will not hang around with them. This is the idea with a bird that has been charmed by a snake. And the snake - or the bird gradually gets nearer to the mouth of the snake.

✓ Third, he will not sit in the seat of the scornful. He refuses to sit down with those who sneer and scoff at the truth, and at sacred things.

Deliberate association who openly mock at religion, and mock at the church, and make fun of sacred things. They are not worthy of his time or his attention.

He has not respect for anything that is of this nature. The scourner is one who does not respect holy or sacred things. He snaps, he growls, he bites like a dog. And I'll tell you wherever you find a group of such persons, you are in a dangerous group.

The godly man says I will not join such an unholy crowd.

Psalm 26:4, 5 says - I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers. And I will not sit with the wicked.

The root idea here is that of disturbance. It is that of restlessness. Isaiah 57:20 describes it - the wicked are like the troubled sea. When it cannot rest - whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

This is an impelling to continual fresh miss deeds, transgressions in act. One passes to the way of sinners. Leaving the straight course by error and estrangement of heart. And the crowning of his awful declension is sitting in one's habitual place among scorners.

2 Peter 3:3 - Scoffers walking after their own lusts.

A college student who had been a Christian since he was eleven, developed

the habit of telling stories and jokes that were ugly and suggestive. He wanted to fit into the gang and be friendly. One day a new student who had been listening in, asked him if he was a Christian?

This question was a real shock to him. He had not realized that his careless language might give the impression that he was not a Christian. He vowed that he would never again be guilty of telling off-color stories.

The kingdom man, the ideal man, the godly man refuses to walk by or to stand with in the company of, or to take his seat in the presence of those who will pull him down and make his influence of less value. These successive steps are good advice.

Now the foolish walk into questionable places, without any intention of going into sin. Just to see what it is like. Now the next step is to hang around long enough to let that evil get a grip on him. And before long he is sitting down with the enemy, by the enemies fire. He is learning to like the things he sees, the things he hears, and the experiences. And the next thing is that all the sacred things to him are questionable and he becomes a scorner. When a man begins a life of sin, he goes easily from bad to worse. The road is downhill all the way. The Godly man will set himself against these tendencies. And young people ought to be led to see that there are some definite refusals in their lives. Some backbone that will be useful. Not just wishbone - but this will avoid wrecks and tragedies.

Yield not to temptation - for yielding is sin.

Things The Godly Man Does!
The positive principles in this man's character - V. 2.

How can a man be strong enough to do what the Godly man has done. What is the secret. Is he a man that is woe'd by negatives. Is his success credited to a list of don'ts. What gives him the courage and the power to build such a life.

v.2
The Psalm reveals a secret. The man's heart and interest, and his affections are somewhere else. He is in love with one who is stronger. He will not let his soul be soiled or spoiled by the scornors in remarks of ungodly men. His delight is in the law of the Lord. His heart is elsewhere. God is not only the rule of his conduct - it is the delightful food of his soul and mind - and he enjoys the taste. It is food for the hungry soul. It enriches, it broadens, it nourishes, it quickens his capacity. He has learned to love what God says. There are some don'ts in his life because there are some other things that he would rather do. He recognizes that his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

He (meditates day and night.) This is a delight - that he has to learn what God's will is for his life. Meditate means in reading the Word - what digesting is to eating. The slow and lengthened process of digestion - food would not nourish the body without it. Without meditation, the Word read will not nourish the soul. The word of God is his council. He looks again and again - and God opens up unto him his glorious truth.

What are the consequences of this kind of life. What is the result - if a man refuses to take his place with the sinner. And makes his delight in the law of the Lord.

v.3
First, he is like a tree planted. The steadfastness, the security. The freshness of fruit. The unending prosperity. Because of his love of the Lord

and the divine will of God in his life - he is like a tree. His roots are deep in the earth. And it is fixed - it is anchored. And he rides out the storms unmoved. And he is fed and nourished from the rich treasures.

The prophet Jeremiah seals this inspiration of the Psalmist. Jer. 17:7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. V. 8. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh. And shall not be careful in the years of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. Here is a hopeful sign.

By the rivers of water. Watering trees in rows in the absence of rain. This stream of water satisfies the tree. As God's truth satisfies the righteous and Godly man.

There is the story of an outstanding vine at Hampton Court. For many years it had disappointed the gardeners hopes. It was healthy but few grapes. One year, unexpectedly it was laden with clusters of fine fruit. Seeking the cause, he layed bare some of its roots. And found they had suddenly gone through the bank, beneath the wall, into the river. And it never ceased yielding wonderful fruit. This is what the Psalmist had in mind. The fruit, proper fruit - the peculiar and beautiful in it's season.

V, 3, 13 - His leaf also shall not wither. Even the leaf has beauty. The minor exhibitions of his character are perfect. All of the things about this man's life are in good taste.

A 19 year old college girl asked Dr. Crane - don't you find that your

Dr. Geo. W. Crane's answer - Contrary to Linda's surprise, I not only don't know of a single instance where I have lost patience or professional prestige by abstaining from liquor and tobacco - but I know of countless instances where I have gained by being a tea tottler. Even chronic smokers and drinkers don't want a doctor to demonstrate such behavior. You timid young folks who still fear ridicule from the social group should cultivate a lion's personality and quit being silly sheep. Now that's good advice. Even the leaf, the minor exhibitions of his character, are beautiful.

And whatsoever he does will prosper. Here is a transition from the tree to him - who it represents. The image and the thing represented. He is not going to whither - he is going to bear fruit and he is going to prosper.

When our testimony loses it's freshness and power, we may be sure that something is wrong with the roots. I John 2:17. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

The righteous man is supported because God knows him. He is someone who has been chosen. He is God's special property. He is God's special assistant from the stream of water. He will support the truth. And that is why the righteous man brings forth his fruit in season.

This is the picture of the man that God knows. And he is like this stately evergreen tree. It may need pruning from time to time. But it receives assistance from God.

A little boy one evening sat listening as his father read from the Bible, during the family altar. The passage of Scripture that they read dealt with the

limitless power that was available to a righteous man. The family talked about God's power for awhile and what the power meant. Finally the little boy looked up and said, Dad, how big is God anyway?

The Dad thought for a moment and then answered, well son, he is always just a little bit bigger than your need.

The righteous man had found that out. Most people will agree. That here is a God that is always a little bigger than your need.

Horace Bushnell was camping once with a man and the man said the Bushnell led in prayer. They were sleeping under the stars and when that man prayed, as he did, he said you knew that he knew God. And he said that I was so impressed that I was afraid to reach out my hand - lest I should touch God. That is the kind of relationship that the man that the Psalmist speaks of - he knows God and he has the knowledge and intimate relationship with God. Is this a photograph of your own self. If this is the man, could you stand up. Are you anchored to the rock. Have you found in him the source that can face the storms of life with assurance. Are you in touch with the life-giving riches that he is able to give you.

II. Will The Ungodly Man Stand Up

In V. 4 and 5 we have the portrait of the ungodly. Our second picture uncovers the reverse side of the canvass. The character and the conduct. We see here the man that has chosen to keep God out of his life. And we see him as a bit of chaff.

V. 4. - Like Chaff, they are loose men. That is the man is loose from God. It speaks of the point of departure. He is driven by all kinds of opinions. And he is worthless and he is utterly helpless - in the same storm that comes upon the tree. The tree stands by the river. But he is dead, dry, and insecure and helpless. With no hope of permanence. Because he is godless.

Now this says more than a detailed description. It says he is not so in character. And it says he is not so in destiny. How true to life even in our day. How easy it is for men and women to live a godless life. To run after things that will pass away in the hour of deepest need. And it is tragic that men go on in useless pursuits.

The real character of the ungodly man would be manifest here in the hour of judgement. The wind drives it away. It is doom.

The house that is built on the sand has no foundation. No help when the storm comes. It does not have roots in the fountain of life.

This is pathetic. The man who has tried to get along through this world without God. Now finds that he has lost all of the treasures - in fact, the richest treasure which is eternity. He has put all of his treasures in one place. Where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

He has no anchor, no rock, no home, no God, no peace at evening time. And will not be able to stand the test of judgement.

Now this is the picture of every life that seeks to get along without God. Like chaff driven about.

A woman who was given to gossip had told a good many stories that were untrue. One day she was discussing this with the pastor. The pastor took a basket full of wheat, thorns, etc. He went out into the yard in the grass where it was deep and he scattered the whole basket full of seed. He said to the woman, go pick up each seed. Oh, she said, I can't. She got the truth that gossip travels over sour vines further and faster. And there is no way to collect it back again. The damage is done.

The ungodly, those who do not know God, do not have this deliverance. Their lives are worthless. They contribute nothing and they are easily destroyed. You notice now that the life that has been redeemed did not walk in the council of this group. Or stand with these sinners or sit with them. And the psalmist writing this more than 2000 years ago pictures something at the root upon which men have been traveling ever since. The gates of Hell is a gradual process. At first a man simply walks in the way of the unrighteous. He is disturbed. He is not at rest. As time passes, he chooses to take his stand with certain groups. Finally he has settled down and is comfortable in his lost position.

But the results are as certain as biological process. The embryo that is meant to become a man will become a human. And of course, you will become totally what you have decided to become. What God has intended you to be. You cannot upset God's plans. The prodigal son went his course - and this is possible and this is what happens.

Do you want to live - really live. Here is your opportunity - take your stand with the righteous.

V. 5 - The Psalmist says those that are not righteous do not have this security. They shall not stand in the judgement or in the congregation of the righteous. They shall not be there. He shall not be equipped. he shall not be

able to stand his ground. He does not have security that comes to the righteous man. He shall fall and not be able to hold his head up.

You know some ungodly people that seem to be standing pretty well in the world.

Perhaps you even know some ungodly church members. Spurgeon said in his work on the Psalms, that every church has at least one Devil in it. And you and I know that the tares grow along side the wheat. That there is no place where the chaff has been completely blown away. It does not make false the plain and simple teaching that someday the judgement will come. The tares and the wheat will be separated and carried away.

Ecc. 12:14 - God shall bring every work into judgement. With every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Shall not stand, rise up to partake of the resurrection with the righteous.

Mal. 3:2 - Who may abide the day of his coming and who shall stand when he appeareth. For he is like a refiner's fire and like Fuller's soap.

That is, he will not rise up and share with Christ. Or share with a congregation of the righteous. The true ideal is here excluded - the ungodly element is removed.

V. 6
The word "perish" - V. 6 - the pious and wicked may live together in this world. But separation is here indicated. Matt. 13:49, Matt. 3:12.

The real character of the ungodly man will be revealed in the hour of judgement.

The portion or lot results from the course of the ungodly and the godly.

God knows the way of both. Now blessing will attend the righteous and destruction the ungodly.

Things now today may seem contrary. God marks out special honors for his people.

And God knows the ungodly and shall judge accordingly. Isa. 3:10. Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him - for they shall eat the fruit of their doing., V. 11. Whoe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

In conclusion I would like to give you this jewel which I have discovered here this week in my study. V. 6 - for the Lord knoweth.

God knows me. That may sound rather obvious. Sure he does, God knows everyone you say. In our passage of Scripture that we have been studying, he is writing a lesson. Every line carries us one step higher in the lesson until we come to this central idea of the entire passage. The Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked shall perish.

That is saying two things at the same time. God knows the way of the righteous man. So important was that lesson that this Psalm was chosen to be number 1.

Now this is something that we teach our children at Christmas time. Parents will sing to a child - Santa Claus - he knows when you've been sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows when you've been bad or good - so be good for goodness sake.

Now on a much higher plain it is significant that God knows man.

The word know in Hebrew means much more than the word know in English. Our example, when we turn to the Bible and the writer wanted to refer to the most intimate relationship that a man could have with his wife. The writer would use this word know.

Therefore, Gen. 1:4, it is reported that Adam and Eve came together as man and wife and Genesis simply, frankly, plainly says - (and Adam knew Eve.)

The first Psalm tells us that the Lord is knowing the way of the righteous. That is he is constantly in this intimate relationship with the man who is righteous. That is what the Psalm is all about. And he teaches us the marvelous truths and urges us to take our stand with the righteous. Therefore, we suggest that the real man stand up.

Do you see your portrait. What about your character. What about your conduct. What about your destiny. That the Lord knows - the Psalmist says, and he rewards accordingly. Now this is divine standard and he is the perfect judge. How can any man neglect the preparation that will put him in this inward joy. Make the application. When the godly man is called - will you stand. Or when the ungodly man is called, will you have to stand at that point. Do you see your portrait. What of your life. Will you be honest and frank with yourself. And look at your character and think about your final destiny. So much depends

upon your choice right now. Your eternal destiny is at stake.

Have you chosen to let God rule your life. Have you given him your heart. Can you honestly say that you belong to him. Have you been taking your counsel from the ungodly. Have you been congregating with the sinners. Have you been taking your seat with the scornful. If you haven't made the right decision, why don't you do that right now. In the quiet place where you are. Make it a place of prayer, of surrender - everything to him knowing that nothing else matters unless that question is settled right.

Jesus Christ knows you. Now these refusals in life will not be easy. But if you delight in the natural delights, you will be swept away.

If you are vitally connected with him, you will say with Paul, and in all these things we are more than conquerors to him that loved us. You will remember that Jesus said, lo, I am with you always.

When the end of this brief bit of earthly existance comes to a close, you will find your life full and rich and satisfying. For he says, in my house are many mansions. Jesus will be your advocate. Therefore, will the real man stand.