

# Preliminary Sermon SCRIPT

**Name:** Christoph Lameter  
**Date:** Preaching Practicum (Shuster) on November 14th, 2nd Sermon  
**Title:** The Source of Happiness  
**Text:** Psalm 1  
**Theme:** The reward of following God  
**Purpose:** Happiness / Blessedness is gained by following God

## I. Text preached

### A. *Introduction: The Search for happiness*

**Question** What are we all striving for? Is it not happiness, a purpose in our lives? Have we ever asked ourselves **what happiness is?** How can our lives be satisfying? Everybody is looking for some kind of happiness, something that gives satisfaction to one's life.

**Intro Example** Before I got heavily involved in studying Theology here at Fuller, I used to be in the computer business. Over the years I attended a lot of **computer software and hardware exhibitions** in different parts of Germany. On occasion I had to stay for days at such an exhibition. It was quite impressive. You would stay in a great luxurious hotel. Excellent meals, expensive dinners, great festivities in the evenings! Ten-thousands of capable highly talented people from the same area of business herded together. What a great event!

**Personal Story** The attendance at the **evening festivities** was kind of mandatory. This was the occasion to make professional contacts. Beer and Wine were available for free in quantity and loosened the tongue. No reason to fear any problems, we were all far away from home. Everybody could loosen up and show their real nature here. We would in all probability rarely see each other again. I must confess that I like to observe people. This was a rare occasion. The chance to see special kinds of people and the different ways they acted in their life. A chance to see different lifestyles and what priorities people have in their lives.

**Three kinds of people** First there was the average guy. Those for whom having a good time, having **a lot of friends** and the appreciation of others was most important. They would get drunk in a group. The next morning they would exchange memories and tell fairy tales about the previous night. They would try to boast how bad the headache from last night was. They had to show what a tough guy was and that they could keep up with the others. The happiness here was found by being accepted. Being one of them.

Others had a different agenda. Some were on the lookout for an **sexual adventure**. They would be gone pretty soon to their hotel rooms. They would stay the time required by decency and then take off after making contact with the available womenfolk. Some of whom - by the way - were apparently taken to the occasion for this purpose since they had almost no knowledge of the field or office skills. But they looked great! Wow! Their source of happiness was clear! Sex!

Again others were mostly concerned with contacts. They would seek out **influential people**. People with power positions. They would get drunk with them for the purposes of enhancing business. Some even were so bold as to make business deals in this time. Power, Money and influence was their game. Happiness is being powerful, being rich. Making a profit.

Restate  
Question

What is your **source of happiness**? How and what are the means to make you happy? Are the aim of the people at the exhibition friends, sex, influence true ways to gain happiness? Psalm 1 talks about how the believer can be happy. It is a **different happiness**. It is true happiness of a person who follows God. Happiness that is durable much more durable than all the fun things going on at the exhibition before.

### **B. Reading of Psalm 1**

Hear the word of God from the first Psalm:

- 1 Happy are those who do *not* follow the advice of the wicked,  
or take the path that sinners tread,  
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
- 2 but their delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law they meditate day and night.
- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season,  
and their leaves do not wither.  
In all that *they* do, they *prosper*.
- 4 The wicked are *not so*, but are like *chaff* that the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- 6 for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will *perish*.

### **C. The Link between worship and happiness**

Psalm 1

You have heard the first psalm in the Bible. The fact that this is the very first one is important for our understanding! The book of psalms is a collection of songs and prayers. It is the first songbook of believers! Many of the psalms were even sung accompanied by some kind of instrument. They usually have an author or a source given. But not here the first one. This one seems to be a special one for **introducing the whole book of Psalms**. Often scripture teaches us indirectly by example, the first Psalm here is directly teaching us, giving us instruction for living. It is introducing the way to worship God.

Define  
Worship

You have certainly already heard the popular **definition of worship**:  
Worship is considering that which is worshipped as worthy, as desirable.  
That which you worship is so worthy that you adore it, you are focusing your life on it.  
The worship of God is seeing God as the highest value, that what we desire beyond everything else, in our lives. Worship is giving to something the highest value above everything else. We worship God, so God is of the highest value for in our lives. God we adore, God we serve.

Transition  
to  
Happiness

Strange as it might seem: Worship is strongly **bound up with happiness**.

If you worship something, that means you strive to enjoy it more and more. The more you are connected with the object of worship the happier you are. You are coming near to that what has the most value in your life. Getting near to God means enjoying the worship of Him who is of utmost value to us. Gaining his favor and his blessing brings happiness to our lives. True happiness is living in worship to God.

Drawing  
on Intro.  
to  
illustrate

If you know what someone worships, then **you know what makes them happy**, what causes happiness is that one's life. Think back to the people at the computer exhibition:

Some were seeking appreciation of others. The others are what they worship. They are happy if they are accepted by them.

Some were seeking sexual experiences. Sex is the highest thing. They worship sex. Sex will make them happy.

Some were seeking power, influence, wealth. If they just have control, have money then they are happy.

Connect  
Happiness  
and  
Blessing

The word translated here in psalm 1 is not only meaning happiness as something that we gain by hard work, but it could also be translated as "Blessing". **God blesses us**, he bestows good things on us, he gives our life purpose and sense. God's grace will be at work in us should we follow him! All the good things of life will come through Him and through following him. The words used here are similar to those used by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount when he pronounced the famous blessings!

How does a believer **act to be happy**, to be blessed by God? That is a foundational question that is handled right at the beginning of the book of Psalms.

#### **D. Positive: Worship is realizing God's purposes**

Verse 2 mentions one thing that persons seeking happiness from God do:

Their delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law they meditate day and night.

God's  
guidance

The "law of the LORD". A strange term here. What is the law of the Lord here?

The law in the sense often used in the Old Testament is not a strict legal code but refers **to the guidance and to the instruction** of God. They delight in following God to find out God's guidance and God's instruction for their life. Because they know that God's purposes will come true, God's blessing will come true and it will bring the presence of God nearer to them. These persons do think day and night nothing else than to find out what exactly God's will is.

Attitude  
rather than  
legal matters

Verse 2 shows us therefore the **attitude of the mind** of those following God instead of people following just a legal code. These people like God, love God and therefore their delight is finding out God's purposes and caring that they become a reality.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once expressed it: *It is God's **grace to know the commandments of God**. They free us from self-made plans and self-made conflict. They make our steps in faith secure and our way full of joy.* Bonhoeffer feared most that he would be unable at some point in his life to know God's commands, then he would lose the knowledge of the will of God.

Obedience

God gave the knowledge of his will of his purpose to us. For what purpose? **To obey them** of course! Obedience to God is a delight for one following God, it is the purpose of life the foundation of life for a believer. God's will comes true in the life of a believer. Therefore the Psalm continues with verse 3:

Result of obeying

They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that *they* do, they *prosper*.

They are like a tree because their foundations will be deep in the word of God, connected with the source of life that comes from God. Their delight in thinking and doing God's work makes them grow deeper and deeper to find the guidance of the Lord. They **dig deep to access the water of life** from God. God blesses them and what they do will be successful. Their life will be full of purpose and riches of God's gifts to them.

### **E. Negative: The perishing godless people.**

Negative Attitudes

But the Psalm is complete. It not only speak about the blessedness of those following God but also about those that despise God. It again talks about **attitudes that are contrary to the mindset** of someone searching God's blessing or someone worshipping God. These are warnings for us. Things that we should avoid. The psalm begins with telling us in verse 1:

Happy are those who do *not* follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;

Three unhappy things

Here we have a list of three things that will **not bring us happiness**:

1. Do not follow the advice of the wicked. If you are loving God then take advice from people who also love God and not from those who practice cunning and deceit!
2. Do not lead our life the same way as the sinners do! If you do the same thing that others are doing who hate God, what a sign of life is that?
3. Do not join with those cynical to God. This would mean rejecting God!

Verse 4 gives further details about how the people are that do not worship God but something else:

**The wicked are *not so*, but are like *chaff* that the wind drives away.**

Explain chaff

The wicked are like what? Another strange thing, at least it was to me. Chaff? Chaff would be easy to understand if we would be living on the fields, working the soil each day. Fieldwork was common in the days of the writing of the Psalms.

The **chaff is the husk of grain**. The kernel is the part of grain that is usually used for human consumption. The husk, the chaff, is thrown away. It is worthless. Chaff is a symbol of something expendable, something that is just waste.

The ancient way to process raw grain without any tools was to beat bushels of grain on the earth until the kernels and the husks separated from the stems. Chaff and kernel would then be gathered on the ground in heaps. Chaff and kernel would be separated by throwing the mix in the air. The wind would take the chaff away since it is extremely light but the kernels would fall to the ground since they are heavy.

Interpret  
Chaff

Those that do not worship God, they that follow sin are **lightweights**. They do not count anything. They do not have strong roots like the believer. They are tossed back and forth by some influence and suddenly they are gone. They do not have any real substance. God does not regard them as worth something. Sinners perish, they do not last. They are lightweights without real substance.

Remember again those people at the exhibition. People seeking their happiness in being accepted by others in sex and in power. Can they **really reach their goals of happiness**? The acceptance of others is a thing that is gone fast, gone as fast as the exhibition is over. Sex is also just a short experience. What is durable? Only power and wealth. But even they are subject to the whims of time. And you cannot take it with you when you leave this existence here.

There is **only one true happiness**, one true blessedness. That blessedness comes from following the purposes and the intentions of God. The results will be not bound to this world since God is not from this world.

**F. Conclusion: Happiness is when God is our joy and our hope**

Happiness is the result of a **lifestyle of worship to God**. Delight in God's purposes in his will for you life. Be concerned about God and your life will be fulfilled and have purpose. The Lord will bless you richly with bringing a lot of fruit in this life. And you can count on it: Read verse 6

The LORD watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will *perish*.

The Lord watches over you and will not let you perish.

Such is the result of the Christian lifestyle.

## II. Commentaries:

**Laymon, Charles M.** The Interpreters One Volume Commentary on the Bible

**Craigie, Peter C.** Word Biblical Commentary: Psalms 1-50, Word Books, Texas: Waco, 1983

**Bonhoeffer, Dietrich** Das Gebetbuch der Bibel Stuttgart, Germany: Haenssler Verlag, 1982 (in German)

**Anderson, Bernhard W.** Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today, Westminster Press Philadelphia, 1983

**La Sor, William + David Allan Hubbard + Frederic William Bush** Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testsmrny, Eerdmans, 1982

Central sentence ideas:

Happiness is when our minds track the will of God.

Blessedness is when our hearts delight is to find and do the will of God.

Happiness is having joy discovering God's purposes.

Ideas:

3 kinds of evil people? Weave throughtout the sermon??

Explain Chaff! Kernel inside!

Draw on contrast!

A tree at the water has deep roots.

Bonhoeffer:

The blessing of the Law is the direction for our life.

Joy in the Laws of God is there when Jesus gave the great change in our life.

It is grace to know the commands of God.

They make our way secure.

God give his commandments for us to fulfill them!

We like to follow the commands of God.

Not in our power but in the power of Jesus.

Anderson:

Torah rich meaning could refer to Yahwehs actions of guiding his people through the future (220

Beatitudes: Blessed .....

Psalmist contrasts primarily attitudes not our actions.

Person who do not care about religious tradition. -> Sinners. Characterized.

BHS

Psalm 1 is a wisdom psalm. Teaches by direct instruction.