

Psalm 1
“Choose Your Own Adventure”
6th Sunday af. Epiphany

February 17, 2019
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

Have any of you ever read one of the “Choose Your Own Adventure” books? I loved them when I was younger.

Each of these books tells a different story
and in each book the reader has a part in determining the outcome
by answering questions along the way.

Let me give you an example:

You’re sitting at home minding your own business
when there’s a knock on the door. What will you do?

Will you answer it ... or	run out the backdoor?
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Let’s pretend that you choose to
run out the back door.

Oh no, there are tigers in the backyard. Lots of them.

Will you sing them to sleep with a song	or ... charge them?
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You choose to sing to them.

Only knowing 2 songs, which song will you choose:

<i>My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean</i>	or ... <i>The Eye Of The Tiger?</i>
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And so the story goes.

These books constantly throw two choices in your way.

They keep asking, “Which path will you take? Which road will you follow?”

Choose your adventure!

[Lesson] *Choose your adventure!*

This is the lesson that’s taught in Psalm 1.

Psalm 1 opens the book of Psalms asking us a question:

Which path will you follow?

Will you follow the Psalms and the rest of the Bible?

Will you follow the Lord and His Word and live in fellowship with Him?”

– ***Or*** –

Will you walk on the *OTHER* path that leads to devastation — destruction?

It’s the the way of sinners.

Which path will you choose?

[The Way Of Life And Blessing]

This psalm starts by describing this first way – a way of life and blessing.

Blessing here does not have a North American, Western definition.

Blessing here does not mean a house, three stall garage, vacation trips to Disney,
2 ½ kids, and sports leagues on the weekend.

When this psalm talks about blessing it's using a Biblical definition.

It means wholeness, harmony, joy, and peace with God and others.

It's something much deeper.

First, the way of life and blessing is described *negatively*.

The blessed man does not walk, sit, or stand with the wicked.

The way of the wicked is tempting and alluring.

It's appealing.

It's the way of perceived pleasure

and sometimes acceptance with others.

But the blessed man does not order his life by this way.

He does not walk – stand – or sit in the way of sinners.

The blessed man avoids this.

He will not follow the progression into sin.

He doesn't want the devil to get even a foot hold in his life.

Positively,

“He delights in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.” (vs.2)

He finds joy in God's law.

He knows God's law has answers for life –

for marriage, for work,

for speech, for raising children,

for worry, for anger,

for how to handle temptation.

He delights in the law and meditates on it.

He reflects on it and mulls God's Word over in his mind.

He memorizes it.

He keeps thinking about it until it sinks into his heart and becomes part of him.

***“[The blessed man] is like a tree planted by streams of living water,
which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.***

Whatever he does prospers.” (vs.3)

Now, I must be clear. Psalm 1 is not a recipe to:

— a recession proof retirement package or

— a cancer free, cholesterol free life.

The prosperity described in Psalm 1 is not a health and wealth gospel.
Believers should expect hardship.

[*The Way Of The Wicked*]

There is a second way of life described in this Psalm
and it's completely opposite from the first – the way of the wicked.

If the first path in living is a way of life and blessing
for those who delight in God's Word and walk with Him,
this second path is a way of wicked living.

The wicked cannot stand in the judgment
nor will they stand up under God's judgment.

Jesus taught in Matthew 13 that judgment day is like a harvest.
The chaff will be blown away by the wind. The wicked will be dismissed.
Jesus will say, "***Depart from me, I never knew you.***" (Matthew 7)
They will have no place in the assembly of God's saved people.

[*Which Path*]

So there are two paths!

The important question that this psalm asks is, "***Which path will we walk on?***"

Choose your own adventure!

There are only two ways to live.

There are not three ways – there's not a fourth way.

We either are living on one path or the other.

It's a picture that Jesus picked up in the gospels.

He taught in Matthew 7, during the Sermon on the Mount,
that there are only two kinds of builders in life
and only two kinds of trees bearing fruit –
either good trees or bad trees.

He also taught that there are only two gates or two ways to live in life.

He said, "***Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.***" (Matthew 6:13-14)

Jesus is asking just as this psalm asks, "Which path will we choose?"

Choose your own adventure!

[Your Choice]

Which path will you walk on?

Will you walk closely to God? OR Will you choose the path of sin?

This is not a one-time choice. It is a daily, hourly, even minute by minute decision.

We have to repeatedly say “no” – no, no, no to sin.

Jesus by his Word is calling you to live for God — not for sin or yourself.

Let us make sure we’re clear. This is not a call to find blessing on your own.

You have been saved – justified – declared righteous – by Jesus.

Jesus set the choice of the two ways in the context of the gospel.

Jesus set the choice of the two ways in the context of sanctification.

And in case you had any doubts — Jesus is the way.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

We are blessed only for one reason

and that is because Jesus lived the life we could never live

and he paid sin’s price at the cross – a price we could never pay.

Jesus is the righteous man of Psalm 1. Jesus is the blessed man of Matthew 5

He never walked, stood, or sat with sinners.

Oh yes, He sat and ate with them

but He never compromised or sold out to their sin.

His delight was always in God’s law.

Obedience to the Father was His highest priority

and He never failed.

And He prospered.

He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

“He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped

but He made Himself nothing and became obedient unto death,

even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8)

Jesus was lifted high as He submitted Himself to the Father.

[Conclusion]

In Christ, you are blessed.

In Christ, you are righteous.

And... In Christ, you were chosen! And in response we choose.

Now which way – righteous or wicked – which way will you choose?

Choose your own adventure! Amen.

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)
