

# Psalm 1: Praying our Inattention

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# Psalms are...

- Prayers & hymns of the Jews
  - Used personally and together, e.g. at the temple
- Poems
  - Songs!
  - => memorable, communal
  - => From the heart...
- Prayers
  - => from people to God



**Psalm 1, Praying our inattention**  
Psalm 2, Praying our intimidation  
Psalm 3, Praying our Trouble  
Psalm 8, Praying our Creation  
Psalm 51, Praying our Sin  
Psalm 103, Praying our salvation  
Psalm 23, Praying our fear  
Psalm 137, Praying our Hate  
Psalm 6, Praying our tears  
Psalm 73, Praying our Doubt  
Psalm 90, Praying our Death  
Psalm 150 (& Psalm 22?!)  
Praying our Praise (& Easter)  
(and practicing)



# Structure of the book of Psalms

- Written by different people at different times
  - c.1400 – 430BC
- Arranged in 5 collections
  - To mirror the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy)?
  - Book I: Psalm 1-41
  - Book II: Psalm 42-72
    - Pre-exile
  - Book III: Psalm 73-89
  - Book IV: Psalm 90-106
  - Book V: Psalm 107-150
    - Post-exile?!



# Poetry, e.g. lyrics

- Meaning
  - **Emotion**
  - Word pictures
  - Simile and metaphor
- Structure
  - Pattern & length
  - Rhythm
  - Repetition (e.g. refrain)
- Sound
  - Emphasis
  - Rhyme & Alliteration
  - (tune)



# E.g. rhythm & rhyme

There was a young man from Peru

Who dreamt he was eating a **shoe**

He woke in the night

To find with a fright

His dream had been perfectly true!



There was a young man from Peru  
Whose limericks stopped at line two

# As Kingfishers Catch Fire

By Gerard Manley Hopkins

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;

As tumbled over rim in roundy wells

Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung  
bell's

Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:

Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;

Selves — goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,

Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*





I say **móre**: the **just** man **justices**;  
Keeps **grace**: **thát** keeps all his goings **graces**;  
Acts in **God's eye** what in **God's eye** he is —  
**Chríst** — for **Christ** plays in **ten thousand places**,  
**Lovely** in **limbs**, and **lovely** in **eyes** not his  
To the **Father** through the **features** of **men's faces**.



# Hebrew poetry

- Emotion
  - Simile & metaphor
- Structure & meaning
  - **Repetition**
  - **Variation**
  - **Elaboration**
  - **Contrast**
- (Acrostics, alliteration, rhythm)
- => works in translation!



# Psalm 1 & 2 = Preface




# Psalm 1 (NIVUK)

Blessed is the one

who does not **walk** in step with the wicked  
or **stand** in the way that sinners take  
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.



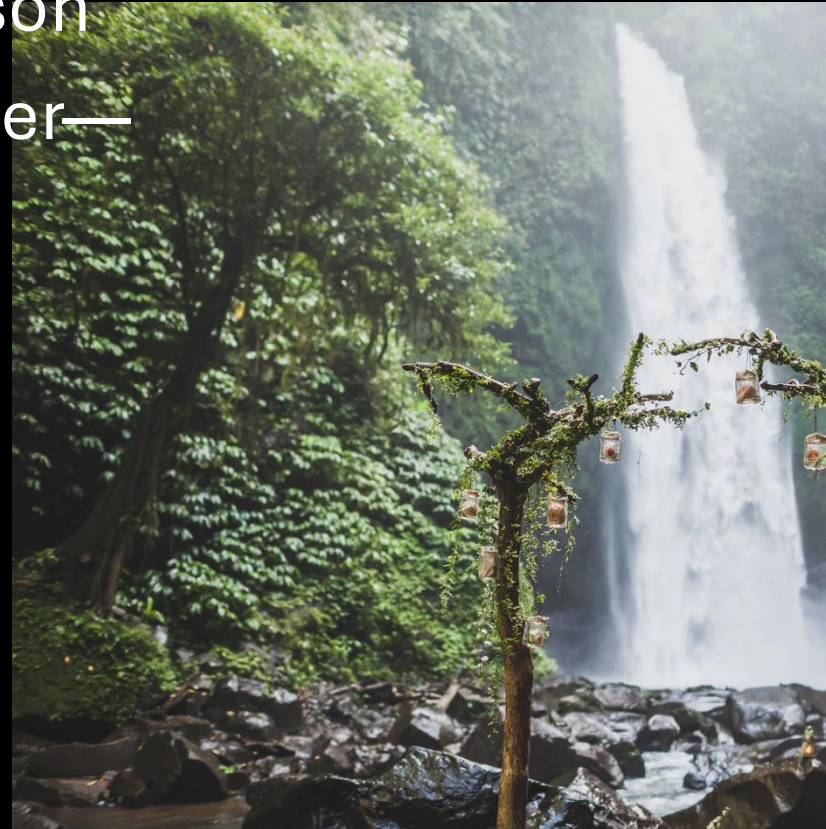
Opp. “wicked”  
=> righteous

That person is like a **tree** planted by streams of water,

which yields its **fruit** in season

and whose **leaf** does not wither—

whatever they do **prosper**.





Not so the wicked!

They are like **chaff**

that the wind **blows away**.






Therefore the **wicked** will not stand in the  
**judgment,**  
nor **sinner**s 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.



# Righteous / Blessed

- Tree
- Fruitful
- Prospers



# Wicked

- Chaff
- Useless
- Blown away



# The righteous...

## Don't

- walk in step with the wicked
- stand in the way that sinners take
- sit in the company of mockers



## Do

- Delight in the law of the Lord
- meditate on his law day and night.



# “wicked”?

**Verse for 2025**

**“If my people,  
who are called by my name,  
will humble themselves  
and pray and seek my face  
and turn from their wicked ways,  
then I will hear from heaven,  
and I will forgive their sin  
and will heal their land.”**

**2 Chronicles 7:14**



**RUDDINGTON**  
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# Wicked...??

- "Evil"?!
- Violent, harmful, destructive?!
- Ill-intentioned, malicious?!
- Clearly wrong?!
- Without remorse?!
- (Much worse than me!)



# (Recap: Romans 3) Sin:

**A matter of law?**



**A matter of relationship!**



**Who/what  
is God?**



Thoughts  
& feelings



Behaviour

Reference



Values &  
principles



Rules

Compass



Map



Direction &  
Warning Signs



# “Distracting Ourselves to Death”?

- *Rehan Khan*

- Inattention...
- God-less?
- Distracted?
- Busy?
- Indifferent?
- Consumer?
- Self-righteous?
- Self-sufficient?





# How do we live in right relation to God?



# “meditate on his law day and night.”?



- “Law”?
  - 10 Commandments? Pentateuch? Old testament? **Psalms?**
  - God’s nature? God’s self-revelation? Jesus? Godself?
- “meditate”?
  - Read? Reflect? Mull over? Debate? Sing? Listen?
  - “**Taste and see that the Lord is good**” - Psalm 34:8a
- “day and night”?!
  - Practice :-)
  - E.g. Brother Laurence, Frank Laubach, Brian Draper, ...



“Blessed is the one... whose **delight** is in the law of the Lord”

- “**Taste and see that the Lord is good**” -  
Psalm 34:8a



# “VIM”

– *Dallas Willard (Renovation of the Heart)*

- Vision

- The God exists, God cares, and we can live lives continually anchored in God’s reality and love

- Intention

- We commit ourselves to the attempt

- Means

- Paying attention to God – repeatedly!
- “Meditating” on God’s words and nature
- Practicing dependence on God
- ...





# The Vision of Psalm 1



# The Means (practices) of Psalm 1



Brian Draper (What Matters Most):  
**“are you awake?”**  
to God’s reality here and now...

