

Psalm 1:1-3

The Bible's Place In Every Christian's Life

I've got a riddle for you. It comes from an ad promoting the use of a special book, a special book which every person has at least one of at home. The ad reads like this:

Open it every day!
Circle and underline all the important things in it.
Don't be afraid to write notes in the margins.
Feel free to turn down page corners.
The more you use it, the more valuable it becomes.
Yes, the best _____ is a used _____.

Did you figure out what special book that ad was telling about? How many of you guessed the Bible? If you guessed the Bible, I want you to know that you are absolutely and positively dead wrong. You see, that little ad was promoting the use of the yellow pages of the phone book.

That advertisement sure could have been used for the Bible, couldn't it? For what might be true of the yellow pages is most certainly true of this Book. Christians open up their Bibles every day. Christians hear, read, learn, and study what's in this book. Christians will circle and underline all the important things in this Book, write notes in the margins of it and turn down the page corners. The more a Christian uses it in his or her life, the more valuable this Book becomes. Yes, the best Bible is a used Bible. Yet, how many of us open up our yellow pages a whole lot more than we open up the pages of our Bible?

Every Sunday we sing from book that is sixteen years old. We call it "the new hymnal." The "old hymnal" otherwise known as the Lutheran Hymnal came out in 1941. This morning you and I are going to use the oldest of hymnals called the book of Psalms. And it is in the first song of Israel's Spirit-breathed hymnal that you and I will learn again about: The Bible's place in every Christian's life.

I. Christians are to live in this Book

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night." My friends, those two verses in the first song of Israel's hymnal teach us what it means to live in God's Word. But at the same time these two verses also teach us what can prevent us from living in God's Word.

"His delight is in the law of the Lord." That word, "law" is a Hebrew word which means the whole instruction of God's Word—Law and Gospel. The law of the Lord includes the "You shalls" and the "You shall nots" of God's Ten Commandments, but it also includes the message of God's unfailing mercy in his Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. *"The law of the Lord"* is God's instruction of how Jesus has kept the law for all; died as the sacrifice for the sins of all, and won forgiveness of sins for all. *"His delight is in the law of the Lord."* Living in God's Word is having a delight in every page, every sentence, every chapter, every word, and every thought in this Book.

"Delight!" Think of how a young man in love will delight in his sweetheart. She's constantly on his mind. He'll move mountains to spend time with her. He loves to listen to her voice. He'll do everything he possibly can to please her. More than any sweetheart,
Sermon notes by Pastor Engel from February 17, 2019

Christians delight in their Lord. Our Savior will constantly be on our mind. We will want to spend time with him. We will love to listen to his voice; we will set our priorities so that we can place him and his Word first on our list. *“His delight is in the Law of the Lord.”* That’s what it means to live in God’s Word.

It also says here: *“On his law he meditates day and night.”* Not too long ago a couple of fellows spent months compiling an impressive list of statistics about the Holy Scriptures. In that list it said that the Old Testament contains 929 chapters, 23,214 verses, 529,439 words, and 2,738,100 letters. In that list it said that the New Testament contains 260 chapters, 7,931 verses, 132,253 words, and 933,380 letters. A lot of work put into gathering a lot of interesting facts, but that’s not what it means to meditate on God’s Word. There are a lot of people who know lots of Bible stories and the people in them and they may even be able to recite parts of the Bible from memory, but all by itself, that’s not meditating on God’s Word either. To meditate on God’s Word means to hear it and to study it and to think about it over and over again; all the while looking for Jesus in every verse. To meditate upon God’s Word means taking each verse of it and asking ourselves: “What is my Lord Jesus saying to me here? What command and direction is he giving me here for my life?” To meditate on God’s Word means after we go home on Sunday and after we close our Bibles at home in the morning and the evening Monday through Saturday, we then carry those thoughts and sentences of the Word into our day to day living, applying them to each and every circumstance and situation of life. *“On his law he meditates day and night.”*

But the psalmist gives us the other side of the coin too. He writes: *“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”* *“Blessed!”* What a word that is. It means deep, real, lasting happiness. Everybody wants to be happy and yet how many times in our lives have you and I tried to find our happiness by being a copy cat of what the rest of the world is doing. But that’s not the way to be happy. The very first song in Israel’s Spirit-breathed hymnal says that the truly happy person is the one who does not follow the accepted wisdom of godless people, does not participate in their sinful life-style, and does not make himself comfortable with the scoffer’s mocking of what is sacred. What we are reading here is a real tragedy, a tragedy that can happen to you and to me. That tragedy is called living away from the Word of God. Please notice that this doesn’t happen suddenly. When a person starts to lose their delight in the Word, when a person gets away from meditating upon the Word day and night, then little by little that person will start walking in the counsel of the wicked and then that person will start standing in the way of sinners and pretty soon, that person will sit in the seat of mockers. Do you see the pattern in those three verbs? *“Walking, standing, sitting.”* Less and less room for Jesus in life, less and less time for his Word each day, and ultimately that person cuts himself off from the Lord and comes under Satan’s control so that he or she becomes preoccupied with this sinful world. Someone told me awhile back about how they go to an ear, nose, and throat specialist every 6 months. As part of the check-up, the doctor cleaned out their ears by using a powerful water pressure pump to blow out all the wax that’s been collected in there. When this person saw all the stuff that came out of his ear he told the doctor, “It’s amazing that I can hear anything at all with all that junk in the way.” Wax has a way of collecting little by little until that miracle of hearing can almost completely disappear. The junk of this world can clog up our lives much the same way wax builds up in our ears, little by little, until this miracle we call faith has almost completely disappeared. I have a very personal question for you today. Here it is. What kind of relationship do you have right now with your Lord and Savior, Jesus? Is there maybe some junk piling up in our lives which is putting a strain

on that relationship? There is only one way to “clean out” any and all obstructions to our faith in Jesus and that’s by surrounding ourselves with his Word and being influenced by his Word. You see, all that junk the world would offer us is going to disappear. The prophet Isaiah says: *“All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.”*

II. Christians are blessed by this Book

Our text tells us that the Christian who lives in the Word will be blessed by the Word. Such a Christian, it says *“Is like a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”* A living tree planted by the Lord Jesus Christ himself beside a deep river of unending grace flowing from the cross of Calvary. A living tree that is evergreen; a living tree that can withstand even the worst of weather conditions imaginable; a living tree that bears beautiful fruit at just the right time—all because the roots of these trees are sunk down deep into the living waters of God’s Word. That is the way the Bible describes any person, young or old, male or female, who lives in the Savior’s Word.

Jesus Christ will always bless someone like that. *“Whatever he does prospers,”* it says. Friends, our Bible is the only book there is where the author is present every time the book is opened and read. You see, this Book is not just about the Savior who loved us, died for us, and conquered death for us. When we open this book he is there. When we live in this book, he will live in us. When we know this book, we will know him better and better. When this Book is close to us, we always become closer to him and he becomes closer to us. Through it, Jesus Christ will personally counsel us through every trial, every hardship, every situation of every day we walk on this earth. Through it, Jesus Christ will personally carry us through life and into eternity. This is the book where he is.

Can anyone of us here today really turn down such a blessing? St. Paul says to you and to me: *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”* How is it with us? Does the Word of Christ dwell in us richly or does it, a good share of the time, dwell in us poorly? Just maybe that’s why some of the things in our lives are the way they are today? You see, we aren’t going to find the courage we need for fighting against Satan by watching game shows. We aren’t going to find the guidance we need for day to day living from reading the National Enquirer. And meaning for life and strength for dark days isn’t going to come from listening to Oprah or from reading the Wall Street Journal. No, real courage, real guidance, real meaning and real strength for life is here in the Jesus Book. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”* Do just that with your Bible, my friend, and Jesus will bless you today, tomorrow, and for all eternity. Amen.

Hymns: