“How To Live Happily Ever After”
Psalm 1:1-6
(Message 2 in Psalms For Everyday Living Sermon Series)

If you were with us last LORD’S day evening you know we began a series from the Book of Psalms entitled: Psalms For Everyday Living. Hopefully you remember some of the things we learned in the INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE last week that will help you better understand and appreciate this wonderful Old Testament book.

As we continue with this series, I would like for you to turn in your BIBLES to the very first PSALM and let’s read tonight’s scripture text:

Read: Psalm 1:1-6

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

“And so they lived happily ever after.”

So ends most of the beloved fairy tales we heard when we were children. But when we grew up we came to realize that real life isn’t like that.

Real life is complex.......Real life is full of problems.......In real life nobody lives “happily ever after”........OR DO THEY?
As Americans we live in a nation that was founded on the inalienable right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Ask almost anyone, “what do you want most out of life” and they will tell you, “I just want to be happy.”

And yet for a people that seems so bent on being happy, many of us seem to be failing miserably in the “happiness” department.

......Many try to find HAPPINESS in love and marriage, but the 50% divorce rate shows that at least half of the people who get married don’t find the happiness they were looking for. And many more who stay together aren’t truly happy either.

......Couples hope that having children will bring them happiness, and yet so often their children cause them more pain and heartache than happiness.

......Others try to find happiness in a career or recreational activities and hobbies. While others try to find happiness in money and material things.

......Still others turn to alcohol or drugs, which is nothing more than “an anesthetic to deaden the pain of an unhappy, unfulfilling life.”

Is it really possible to find TRUE HAPPINESS in this life?

Is it really possible to “Live Happily Ever After?”

The Psalmist says, “Yes!” And in this very first Psalm he tells us how to do it.

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A Brief Overview of Psalm 1

Before we get into our text, let me give you just a brief overview of this first Psalm.

In this Psalm we learn there are only two kinds of people in this world:

- There are those who are **godly** and there are those who are **ungodly**.

- Or another way of looking at it, there are those who are **wise** and those who are **fools**.

- You are either numbered among those who are **with GOD** or you are numbered with those who are **against GOD**.

In this first Psalm we see the contrast between those two lifestyles.

**VERSES 1-3** The way of the **godly** man.

**VERSES 4,5** The way of the **ungodly** man.

**VERSE 6** The final word on the two **lifestyles**.

Well let’s get into our study and see what this first Psalm teaches us about “**How To Live Happily Ever After**.”

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TRUTH NUMBER ONE

“Lasting happiness can never be found in a life that leaves God out.” (vs. 1)

vs. 1. 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.

1. Notice that very first word “blessed.” That is a common theme that runs throughout the Book of Psalms.

   - There are 47 references to “Blessing the LORD” in Psalms.
   - And there are 57 references to GOD blessing man in Psalms.

2. We know the word “blessed” in the scriptures means happy.

   But actually Hebrew term that the Psalmist used here for blessed is a “plural of intensity.”

   In other words it would read: “How really, really happy is the man.” Or “How truly happy is the man.” Do you see the “double intensity?”

3. HAPPINESS is a choice. HAPPINESS is not something some people are blessed with while others are not. If you are not happy, don’t look at your circumstances, look at your choices.
4. **THE PSALMIST** is teaching us in this first verse that true, lasting happiness has as much to do with choosing **NOT** to do the **WRONG** thing as it does with choosing to do the **RIGHT** thing.

5. When one chooses to leave GOD out of his or life that is 100% guarantee they will never find true, lasting happiness.

6. In **verse 1** the Psalmist reveals THREE WAYS it is possible to leave God out of your life.

   (A) **You leave God out of your life when you** **CHOOSE TO WALK IN THE COUNSEL OF THE WICKED.** (v.1a)

   This refers to the person who chooses to live his/her life on the basis of **worldly wisdom** rather than **godly wisdom**.

   - The counsel of the wicked ignores the Bible as the solution to all of man’s **problems**.

   - The counsel of the wicked exalts man’s **wisdom** and **intellect**.

   - The counsel of the wicked encourages one to live his or her life by what “feels” **right** for them personally rather than what God’s word teaches is **right**.

   (B) **Next, you leave God out of your life when you** **CHOOSE TO STAND IN THE WAY OF SINNERS.** (v.1b)

   The “way of sinners” refers to the **lifestyle** one has chosen to live.

   To “stand in the way of sinners” means to **participate** or **join with** sinners in their sinful lifestyle.
ILLUSTRATION: Years ago I married a dear sweet Christian couple. And while they had their share of problems as all married couples do from time to time, they seemed fairly happy. But several years ago this Christian couple started running around with some other couples who were involved in a “swinger’s club” where couples got together and swapped mates for a night of sinful pleasure.

That choice to “walk in the way of sinners” became the undoing of that Christian couple and they ended up going through a bitter divorce and custody battle.

(C) Next, you leave GOD out of your life when you CHOOSE TO SIT IN THE SEAT OF MOCKERS. (v. 1c)

MOCKERS reject GOD and to justify their godlessness they scoff at anything or anyone that reminds them of the God they have rejected.

(In II PETER 3:3 Peter warns us that in the end of time we will see many “mockers” or “scoffers.”)

You may work with some “mockers.”

You may even be related to some “mockers.”

Hardly a week goes by but what we don’t see “mockers” on TV mocking God’s people as “right-wing, gun-toting, Bible-thumping rednecks.”

7. To summarize: The Psalmist is reminding us WE WILL NEVER FIND LASTING HAPPINESS IF WE CHOOSE TO “HANG OUT” WITH PEOPLE WHO LEAVE GOD OUT OF THEIR LIVES.
TRUTH NUMBER TWO

“Lasting happiness can only be found in a life that includes God.” (v. 2, 3)

1. You know some people take great pride in their moral living.

   - They don’t “walk in the counsel of the wicked.”
   - They don’t “stand in the way of sinners.”
   - And they don’t “sit in the way of mockers.”

And because they don’t do a lot of the bad things others do they see themselves as good, decent, moral people. But there’s one problem with that. Those kinds of people often fail to include God in their life. You see their PRIDE in their own goodness is actually a giant obstacle standing between them and the LORD.

And usually the good, decent, moral person is one of the hardest people to win to Christ.

2. The Psalmist is reminding us that to find “lasting happiness” one has to do more than living a good, decent moral life……one has to CHOOSE TO INCLUDE GOD IN HIS OR HER LIFE. And including God in our life basically comes down to what we choose to do with GOD’S WORD.

3. In VERSE 2 the Psalmist reminds us of our RESPONSIBILITY toward God’s Word. And in VERSE 3 the Psalmist reminds us of the RESULT of obeying God’s word.
(A) First let’s consider our RESPONSIBILITY toward God’s word:

- If we are to find lasting happiness in this life we must learn to DELIGHT in the word of God. (v. 2a)

Remember when you used to get “love letters” from the one you loved. You would read that love letter over and over again sentence by sentence phrase by phrase word by word making sure you didn’t miss a single thing. And chances are you probably sniffed that love letter or the envelope it came in to breathe in the sweet aroma of their perfume or cologne.

That’s what it means to DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF THE LORD. It means we “pour over” God’s word as though it is His “love letter” to us. And we go over it time and time again, book by book chapter by chapter verse by verse line by line because we don’t want to miss anything!

-But not only do we have a responsibility to DELIGHT in God’s word, if we are to find lasting happiness we must also learn to MEDITATE on God’s word.

What’s the difference between DELIGHTING in God’s word and MEDITATING on God’s word?

Quite simply, to DELIGHT in God’s word means you READ it... to MEDITATE on God’s word means you HEED it!

To MEDITATE on God’s word means we think about what we have read and then we put it into action.

So if you and I are to find lasting happiness in this life we must CHOOSE to DELIGHT in God’s word and MEDITATE on God’s word. That is our RESPONSIBILITY.
(B) Now notice four **RESULTS** of that choice in **verse 3.**

v.3a Our lives will be “like a **tree planted by water.**”

A tree planted by water has **roots** that run **deeply** giving it **stability** to withstand **draught** and **storms.** When our life is rooted in the **unchanging, indestructible word of God** God promises us a **stability** to withstand the “**storms**” and “**draughts**” of life.

v. 3b Our lives will be **“fruitful.”**

When a tree is planted by water it never stops giving fruit because it is continually drawing life and vitality from the water.

When our lives are rooted in the word there will be a continual evidence of **fruitfulness and vitality** because we are drawing life from **the Living Water, Jesus Christ.**

v. 3c Our lives will not “**wither.**”

When trials and troubles come into the lives of those who have left God out of their lives, **their happiness withers……it dries up!**

That is **not the case for the person who lives for GOD.** The **happiness of the Godly person never “withers” or “dries up”** even in the midst of life’s most difficult trials and troubles, because their happiness is not dependent upon the circumstances around them, but rather upon the **LORD who lives within them.**

The happiness of **the child of God is like an evergreen……it remains constant no matter what’s going on around it.**
v. 3d Our lives will “prosper.”

Proponents of the “health and wealth” gospel like to point to this verse to support their belief that God intends for us to prosper financially and materially. But that is NOT what the PSALMIST is teaching us here.

The “prosperity” God is promising is this: That no matter what happens to us we will find strength for today and hope for tomorrow in Him.

Even in the midst of life’s greatest difficulties the child of God will thrive and survive……..and that is TRUE PROSPERITY!

TRUTH NUMBER ONE: Lasting Happiness Can Never Be Found In A Life That Leaves God Out.

TRUTH NUMBER TWO: Lasting Happiness Can Only Be Found In A Life That Includes God.

Now let’s briefly consider the third and final truth...........

TRUTH NUMBER THREE

“Only those who live for God in this life will live happily ever after.” (vs. 4-6)

v. 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

v. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

v. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.
1. Those words “not so the wicked” (verse 4) is what’s called a “contrasting statement.”

   In other words, everything that is true about the righteous man (stable as a tree by living water......continual fruitfulness ......always alive and vibrant and prosperous no matter what the circumstances) is NOT SO regarding those who leave God out of their lives.

2. It may seem like ungodly people have all these things. And at times it may even seem as though they have them more than those of us who live for God. But the Psalmist says, “ITS NOT SO!

   Anything an ungodly person has is “fleeting” and if it is “fleeting” it means they really don’t have it do they?

3. And that will become “crystal clear” for the ungodly when this life is over. Verse 5 says, “The wicked will not stand in the judgment” nor will they ever live “in the assembly of the righteous.” (referring of course to heaven.)

   Simply put, “there will be NO HAPPILY EVER AFTER ENDING for those who left God out of their lives.”

4. Only those who LOVE GOD and LIVED FOR GOD in this life will live “Happily Ever After!”
CONCLUSION

As we conclude our study of this *first Psalm*, I would like to make a practical application we can all benefit from.

Think about all the people in the world who are caught up in life’s “rat race.” They are *going through life at a frantic pace, peddling just as fast as they can*, believing if they work hard enough, and make enough money, and accumulate enough possessions they will eventually find the HAPPINESS they are searching for. Those people rarely if ever “take time to smell the roses.” They miss out on the most important things in life because they are “chasing the wind.”

By contrast, the PSALMIST is inviting you and me to “slow down” 

........take time to DELIGHT in the WORD of GOD......take time to MEDITATE upon the word of GOD, *Instead of going through life at breakneck speed, learn to walk through life at God’s pace.*

And when we that, God will show us “How To Live Happily Ever After!”