

Studies in the Psalms 01 Four Psalms and Four Men

by Neil Fraser

The sermon explores the significance of the Psalms in the Christian faith, highlighting the presentation of the perfect man in Psalm 1, the fool in Psalm 14, and the forsaken man in Psalm 22, and ultimately leading to the forgiveness and salvation offered through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 38:44

Topics: "Psalms Study", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing a small island with a population of 1,000 people, including 200 off-mobiles and 300 motorbikes. The speaker then mentions that they recently visited this island and had a joyful experience there. They express their intention to bring messages from the Book of Psalms, focusing on finding consolation, encouragement, and the presence of the Lord in the Psalms. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having Christ in one's heart in order to truly understand and see Him in the Psalms. The sermon concludes with a reading and brief commentary on Psalm 1, highlighting the characteristics of a blessed and successful person, ultimately identifying this person as Jesus.

Transcript

Thank you for that good singing. There might be one place that might rival your singing here, if I dare say it, and I'll tell you what to do to prove it. You can go down to Miami and get an Air Bahama line and a ticket to Eleuthera in the northern Bahamas, and take a taxi cab to the other side and a little ferry boat over to an island called Spanish Wells.

An island which is only two miles long and a half a mile broad, where there are a thousand people living, two hundred automobiles and three hundred motorbikes. And then go and listen to the two hundred and fifty people gathered to hear the Word. And when you come back, you'll sing even better.

It's a wonderful place to be and we have just come from there. Now it's a great joy to be here with you. And I made up my mind, in the fear of the Lord, that I'm going to bring all my messages from the Psalms, from the Book of Psalms, morning and evening.

Now people go to the Book of Psalms, and particularly when they are older, I think, for consolation in their sorrow, for encouragement even in their defeat, for the different men who wrote the Psalms, Moses and

David and Asaph, tell out of their deepest humiliations, their deepest defeats, as well as their triumphs, what the Lord has meant to them. And I think as we grow older, and as we too have come through many a valley, as we too have had our distresses and our disappointments, our defeats, our bereavements, we too may come to the Book of Psalms and receive that which we need. Now at the same time, when we come to the Psalms, we must remember that they are also written about the Messiah, about Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have you noticed that on the Day of Resurrection, when our Lord Jesus overtook the two disciples, going back to Emmaus, he spoke to them in Moses and the prophets, things concerning himself. But later on that evening, in the gathered company of the disciples, we read that he spoke to them from Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, the things concerning himself. He included the Psalms that evening when the disciples were gathered together.

So as we study the Psalms together, we shall see ourselves to be sure. But then at the same time, we shall be looking for our Lord Jesus Christ. I heard once about a great naturalist who was invited by a lady to visit in her lovely home in the forest.

He was sitting on the porch on the first morning of his arrival, and the lady came out and said to him, I'm sorry to say that there are so few birds in our woods somehow. He said, on the contrary, madam, I have counted more than a score of different birds since I've been sitting here. Well, she said, I've never seen them.

Well, he says, with a twinkle in his eye, you have to have a bird in your heart before you see one with your eye. Now when you come to the book of Psalms, you have to have Christ in your heart before you see him with your eye. Now the Lord give us the anointed eye and the sanctified heart to see our Lord Jesus Christ in the Psalms so that every evening and every morning, in the will of the Lord, we shall be bringing some message from the Psalms.

Now I think it is therefore proper that we begin in Psalm number one. And shall we read together a portion of four Psalms this morning? Psalms number one. Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Let's read in Psalms number 14. Psalms number 14. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

They are corrupt. They have done abominable works. There is none that doeth good.

The Lord looketh down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside. They are all together become filthy.

There is none that doeth good. No, not one. And thirdly please, in Psalms number 22, which was quoted this morning quite freely in our thanksgivings to God.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy. O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Our fathers trusted in thee. They trusted and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee and were delivered.

They trusted in thee and were not confounded. But I am a worm among men, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn.

They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him. Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. Let's pass down to verse 16, to where we identify the speaker.

For dogs encompassed me. The assembly of the wicked hath enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet.

I may tell all my bones. They look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my flesh.

Now finally, please, in Psalms number 32. Psalms number 32. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no God. When I kept silent, my bones waxed all through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.

My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid.

I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. Verse 7. Thou art my hiding place.

Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Verse 11. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, be righteous and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart. May God bless you as he were.

Now you'll recall what I have said, that as we approach the Psalms, we shall be looking for pictures of ourselves in all our need, in all our trouble, and in all our deliverance. And we shall at the same time be looking for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, our Savior, and our Redeemer, and our Deliverer. Now I'm going to show you this morning, I trust, that the Psalms begins as we would expect them to begin with a presentation of the perfect man who is none other than Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And in the second Psalm I read to you, we shall see a picture of ourselves in all our foolishness, in all our filthiness, in all our need. Now then we shall pass from there to the third Psalm, and we shall see once more our Lord Jesus Christ in his supreme agony, in his supreme sufferings, in his supreme forsakenness. Now then we shall go to the fourth Psalm, and we shall see ourselves again, a different self from the self of Psalm 14.

And so we're going to think of four Psalms, I, XIV, XXII, and XXXII. Now, in Psalm I we have a fruitful man. He bringeth forth his fruit in his faith.

In Psalms 14 we have a filthy man. In Psalm XXII we have a forsaken man. And in Psalm XXXII we have a forgiven man.

A fruitful man, a filthy man. A forsaken man, a forgiven man. Let us think of those Psalms this morning.

So the Psalter begins like this. Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord.

And in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his feet. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth so doth.

Would it not just be like our God to present at once the perfect man? If I were to say to you what Psalm 1 is about, you would say, well, that's the perfect man. It used to say in the old country that man hath perfect breathedness who walketh not astray, nor standeth in the sinner's step, nor sitteth in his way, and so on. But who is the perfect man? Well, the perfect man, of course, is Jesus Christ our Lord.

You'll notice it says here, his leaf also shall not wither. But that's not true of you. And it's not true of me.

In fact, the prophet Isaiah says, we all do fade as a leaf. We all do fade as a leaf. Byron the poet was a young man when he said, my days are in the yellow leaf.

The flowers and fruits of life are gone. The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone. We all do fade as a leaf, dear friends.

You and I are showing, in a more or less degree, the fact that we are getting older, our leaf is withering. But this man here in Psalm 1, thought of three things about him. First, he's a separated man.

It says here that he walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor does he stand in the way of sinners, nor does he sit in the seat of the scornful. He is a man separated in his way. Not only that, but he's a man studious, separated in his walk.

He's a man studious in his way. It says, his delight is in the law of the law, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And thirdly, he is successful in his work.

For you'll notice it says here, and he'll bring forth, he shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Whatever he puts his hand to, prospers. This man is successful in his work.

So here is an amazing man, a wonderful man, the perfect man. He is separated in his walk. He is studious in his way, and he is successful in his work.

Now who's that? My friends, that's Jesus, blessed be his name. That's the Lord Jesus Christ, separated in his walk. You know the separation of Jesus Christ was not the separation of a recluse, or a monk in a cell.

It was not the separation of a cloister, or a cell, or a cave. The church wasn't very old until men began to conceive that the best way they could be separated to God was to be separate from all society, to shun the society, to dwell in a cave, or a cloister, to be living in semi-starvation. They felt that the neglect of the body would enable them to crucify the flesh, and was a token of spirituality.

So they were living in caves, in dirt, in filth, and in starvation, and came out of those caves to advise people how to live in a wicked world. But the separation of Jesus Christ was not that kind of a separation. He was a man who moved in and out amongst men.

A man of whom they said he was a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners. The separation of Jesus Christ, our Lord, was not isolation. It was dedication to God in every department of His being.

And I like, dear friends, what people conspire to say, whether friend or foe, concerning Jesus Christ, our Lord. You find in the Gospels, I was going to say friend and foe, heaven and hell combining for once, when it begins to speak about the sinlessness, the impeccability of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Looking down, God says, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

On the human level, friends and foes unite to speak well of Him. Have thou nothing to do with that just man. I find no fault in him.

Never man spake like this man. Truly this was a righteous man and his friend. And you know, those who know us best have least to say about our sinlessness.

Those who know you best have least to say about your holiness. But those who knew Jesus best had most to say about his holiness. Peter, who was essentially a man of deeds, said he did no sin.

John, who leaned on Jesus' breast, said in him is no sin. And Paul, the learned intellectual, said he knew no sin. And even from beneath, the demon said, what have we to do with thee? What have I to do with thee, thou holy one? That was the separation of Jesus Christ, separate in his walk.

But then he was studious in his ways. In God's law, he meditated day and night. Jesus Christ, in that humanity which he assumed, did not know the word of God because he was God.

But he learned the word of God in that voluntary limitation which was imposed upon him. Because we read, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue and stood up for to read. He learned the word of God, dear friends, as you and I must learn the word of God.

He was studious in his ways. And then he was successful in his work. Whatsoever he did, prospered under the hand of God.

And so I want to say to you then, that this book of Psalms begins as we should expect it to begin, with the presentation of the perfect man, the most perfect man that ever lived. And now, let us go to the next, Psalm 14. Notice how it begins.

The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Who's that man? Well, the word fool in the Hebrew language is N-A-B-A-L, Nabal. And there's a man by that name in the Bible.

And his own wife said about him, Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. And folly is with him. She said he's lived up to his name all our lives.

Pity that woman who was married to a man like Nabal. A churlish man. A drunkard.

Selfish to the core. Everything was for the pleasure of Nabal. And he had no love for the Redeemer, David.

David one time said to his young men, go to Nabal and greet him in my name. In my name. And so the young men came and said to Nabal, greetings in the name of David.

And Nabal said, and who is David? I'd like to know. There are many young men that run away from their masters these days. That's one of them.

Well, the young men said, David suggested that you'd like to give us some food. You know, we are short of food. Would you like in the name of David to give us some of your provision? I'll give them nothing.

Well, the young men told, in fact, Nabal's own servants said, now, Nabal, we owe a lot to David. They were a wall to us on either side. They protected your flocks, Nabal.

You wouldn't be as rich today and well off if it hadn't been for David. The name of David ought to mean something to you. And Nabal says, the name of David means nothing to me.

Nabal had said in his heart, there is no God. He didn't say it with his mouth, there's no David, but he had no heart for David. His name means nothing to me.

On the full of Psalm 14, there's a man who may not say with his lips, there's no God, but in his heart he says it. And he's got nothing for our David, Jesus Christ our Lord. And the name of Jesus Christ means nothing to him.

Now, if you're a Christian, the name of Jesus Christ means something to you, doesn't it? My! When you're in a train or a plane or someplace, and maybe somebody behind you starts talking, not in blasphemy, but in reverence and in joy about the name of Jesus, it gives you a thrill all up and down your spine, doesn't it? It surely does. Somebody's talking about your faith. Somebody's talking about the one you love.

And it gives you a thrill. It gives you a thrill. But this man here in Psalm 14, three things about him.

He's a fool. It says he's a fallen man because he does abominable works. And he's a filthy man.

For it says they're all together become filthy. So here's a man in Psalm 14. A foolish man.

A fallen man. A filthy man. Say, who's that man? Jesus? Never.

Who is that man? My friend, that man is you. That man is me. We've denied the Lord.

The name of Jesus means nothing to us, perhaps. And we've never done or given anything really in the name of Jesus Christ in our lives. We have denied Him in our living.

Let's turn to Psalm 22. Who's this man? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me? And from the words of my glory. There's a man, dear friends, in anguish.

There's a man in anguish. If ever there was a man in anguish, here's one. You know, David said, when my mother and father forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

For the Lord has forsaken this man. David says, was it not, I have been young and now I am old, but I've never seen the righteous forsaken. I've never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread.

But David, if you had lived a thousand years later, you'd have seen the righteous forsaken. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? The thing that kept the apostle Paul going, I was going to say, in the midst of his troubles, was this, persecuted, but not forsaken. Here's a man in anguish because he's forsaken of God.

Here's a man who says, Oh my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not. And in the night season, and I'm not silent. But thou art holy.

O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Because you haven't changed fundamentally in your character, O God. You're holy.

And I'm forsaken. You inhabit the praises of Israel. The tabernacle was made by the praises of Israel.

It was made by the free gifts of the people of God. And when it was built, God dwelt in it, and the glory of the Lord filled it. But everything in that tabernacle told out the holiness of God.

I'm forsaken not because you're unholy, O God, but because I have become as unholy. Why? Now who is the speaker? The one who says further down in the psalm, They pierced my hands and my feet. And when that psalm was written, crucifixion was unknown as a form of punishment, as a form for a felon's death.

Crucifixion was a Roman form of death and punishment for criminals. And yet here is David writing a thousand years before Christ, and five or six, seven hundred years before the rise of the Roman Empire. And he says, They pierced my hands and my feet, and they have stripped me.

I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me. And they part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast blocks. And we see him in the midst of three vicious circles.

And he calls one the dogs, and he calls the other the ravaging bulls of Bashan, and he calls the other the assembly of the wicked ones. And he's in the midst of those three circles. And according to Amos, the bulls of Bashan are the fanatical Jewish religious leaders.

And the dogs of the Gentiles and the assembly of the wicked ones are the host of hell. And he's in the midst of all three. You say, who's that? Why, that's Jesus, dear friends.

But you said the first man was Jesus. Separated in his walk, studious in his ways, successful in his work? Yes. And you tell me that this is the one in Psalm 22? Yes.

Why? Because there came a man in between. A filthy man. A fallen man.

A foolish man. And in order to save that man, the fruitful man, of someone became the forsaken man of Psalm 22. Now let's turn to 32 in conclusion.

My, here's a man. This is not the man of Psalm 14, I assure you. This is a different man.

Blessed is the man whose transgression, so he was a sinner. Oh yes. Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. Notice, dear friends, he is a pardoned man at the beginning of this psalm. And in verse 7, he's a protected man.

He says, Thou art my hiding place. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

And in verse 11, he's a praising man. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy. All ye are upright in heart.

Say, who's that man? Who's this forgiven man? Oh you see, it can't be, it can't be the filthy man, the fallen man, the foolish man. It can't be that man, can it? Yes. Yes.

But what made the difference? Because of the man in between. The man of Psalm 22. Blessed be his name.

And now I want you to say something after me this morning. I want you to repeat something after me. Now listen very carefully.

The fruitful man of Psalm's number one became the forsaken man of Psalm 22 in order that the filthy man of Psalm 14 might become the forgiven man of Psalm 32. Amen? Would you like to say it with me? Are you ready? The fruitful man of Psalm number one became the forsaken man of Psalm number 22 in order that the filthy man of Psalm 14 might become the forgiven man of Psalm 32. And I say friends, ten thousand hell years.

Amen? Now I want you to say it once more and just make a slight change. I want you to say this. The fruitful man of Psalm's number one became the forsaken man of Psalm 22 that I, the filthy man, or woman if you like, if you're a woman, that I, the filthy one of Psalm 14 might become the forgiven one of Psalm 32.

Are you ready? The man, together, the fruitful man of Psalm one became the forsaken man of Psalm 22 in order that I, the filthy one of Psalm 14 might become the forgiven man of Psalm 32. Praise God. That's what breaks your heart, isn't it? That's what brings you to Christ.

And maybe some of you have made a confession like that for the first time. Maybe for the first time. If you have, tell me about it when you go out.

A markless day, if never before, as the day when in the healing of God you declared publicly your faith in Jesus Christ. May God bless His Word. Nothing will get close in prayer and our service will be over.

Gracious God, our Father, we thank Thee this morning for the perfect man who was treated as if he were imperfect because he was bearing sins not his own. Now the utter forsakenness of God was a penalty that sin had incurred. Now we thank Thee, Father, He went into the darkness that we might have the light.

He went into the forsakenness that we might have the fellowship. He went into hell that we might have heaven. And we thank Thee for it today.

And we pray that Christ may be in our hearts forever. Sanctify the message to our highest good, we pray. And may great mercy and peace from God our Father, God our Savior, and God the Holy Ghost abide with us all.

Amen.

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