

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

1:3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

1:4 The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

1:5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

1:6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

3:17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

3:20 "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

3:21 "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

January 4, 2026 Luke 2:22-40

Sermon Title: "That Which Was Done in God Is Revealed"

[From Today's Sermon]

Psalms 1 and John 3. Both depict the contrast between the wicked and the righteous.

In the Psalm, the righteous are those who consider God's counsel, admonition, and purpose as happiness, joy, and blessing. They do not stand in the way of the wicked, nor dwell in it; they do not sit in the seat of scoffers or dwell among the arrogant. For the law of the Lord is their delight, and their meditation is by night and day. The original language uses the word "groan."

What does it mean that remembering and murmuring the Word is not always a joyful, light murmur, but sometimes a groan?

Not standing in the way of the wicked, nor dwelling there, nor sitting down to dwell there. This expression indicates being thoroughly entrenched in that way. It suggests that even those

who trust in the Lord can unwittingly cross into danger or tread upon that land. There is groaning. There is chaos and confusion. Yet even while groaning, we murmur the Word. In places of confusion, of failure, of doubt—salvation remains there too. That is our joy. Meanwhile, the wicked drift along without confusion. Their path is destruction. But God, through Jesus, has given us salvation from the path of destruction. Let us always move toward the light.

Greetings to all for the New Year. The cold wave of the New Year has returned, bringing chilly days. I hope you have been keeping well.

This year too, I pray we will worship the Lord together, love His Word, and listen and obey. I long to taste again at year's end how wonderful that outcome truly is.

Today we opened Psalm 1 and John 3.

Their common theme is the righteous and the sinful. This year, we pray that God will correct our paths, which may seem like death, and lead us on the righteous and peaceful way.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

1:2 But their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.

In the Psalms, the righteous are those who consider God's counsel, admonition, and purpose to be happiness, joy, and blessing. They do not stand in the way of the wicked, nor do they dwell among those who mock and speak arrogantly. For to them, the Lord's teaching, guidance, and instruction are joy and the desire of their heart. He meditates on God's teaching day and night, murmuring it. The original language uses the word “groan.”

What does it mean to meditate on and murmur the Word? It is not always a joyful, light murmur, but sometimes a groan.

They do not stand in the way of the wicked, nor dwell there, nor sit and remain, nor dwell there. This expression signifies being thoroughly entrenched in that path. It suggests that even those who trust in the Lord may unwittingly cross into danger or tread upon that ground. There is groaning. There is chaos and confusion. Yet even while groaning, we murmur the Word. Places of confusion, sites of failure, lands of doubt. Yet salvation remains there too. That is our joy. Meanwhile, the wicked drift along without hesitation. Their path leads to destruction.

The way of the wicked. Mocking others, thinking highly of oneself, being self-centered, acting arrogantly. This is found in the whole human heart. Do such thoughts not occasionally cross even our saved hearts?

Luther said that while we cannot prevent birds from flying over our heads, we can prevent them from building nests there. The unceasing battle against the sinful heart. This is the path of life prepared for us.

There are times when we groan. There may be times when it is not a matter of merely humming a tune. There may be times when the Lord's teaching cannot be summed up as simply the joy of my heart. Yet even groaning, we take refuge in His Word. Sometimes we barely escape to the Word, dragging our feet. Our bodies may be covered in the blood of sin, filthy and muddy. But even so, even groaning, the way remains for us to flee to the Word. And that is ultimately our joy.

1:3 Such a 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 prospers.

A tree planted by streams of water. We are accustomed to seeing trees growing along the banks of gently flowing streams, blossoming and bearing fruit. But the setting of Scripture is not always so. Sometimes the waterway lies deep underground, its source invisible from the surface. The tree sends its roots deep, deep down, seeking the water of life, stretching its roots until it reaches that source. Even when grace seems absent, even when answers don't come immediately, even while groaning, lamenting one's own inadequacy, groaning and writhing, reaching out and praying, the Word is given where it is sought. Even in difficult circumstances, a way out opens up with the Word. The Lord is with those who seek Him. He makes us well in the stream of His grace, nurtures us, brings us to fruition, and does not let us wither away. He protects our leaves, our countenance, our heart, and causes everything we do to flourish.

1:4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

1:5 Therefore the wicked cannot stand in the judgment; sinners cannot take their stand in the assembly of the righteous.

1:6 The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Those who press forward without hesitation, without relying on the Word, and without self-

examination may appear to be resolute and unwavering. Yet they are like rootless grass, destined to wither and die.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned. Whoever does not believe has already been judged, because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

The sinner perishes. That is the natural consequence. The Bible states this unequivocally. But the Bible does not end there.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The Bible is a book written so that the world would not perish.

God loved the world, loved you and me, so much that He gave His beloved Son. This is so that whoever believes in the Son will not perish but have eternal life.

A lifeline for salvation has been opened for us. Surely, we wouldn't choose not to take it? Yet, in reality, there are people who refuse to enter this path of grace.

3:19 The light has come into the world, but people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. This is already judgment.

3:20 For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

The fear of having their dark deeds exposed is terrifying. This is true for everyone. The innermost part of the human heart is filled with impurity.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can understand it?

(New Common Translation) 17:9 The human heart is more difficult to grasp and more diseased than anything else; who can understand it?

(New Revised Version) 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all else and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Matthew 23:24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

23:25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

23:26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, and then the outside also will be clean.

23:27 You hypocritical teachers of the law and Pharisees, you are wretched! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

23:28 In the same way, you appear righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Luke 5:29 Then Levi hosted a large banquet for Jesus at his house, and tax collectors and many others were dining with them.

5:30 But the Pharisees and their scribes began to grumble to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

5:31 Jesus answered, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

5:32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

We know this: even while we were still sinners, the Lord saved us in His mercy.

Romans 5:6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

5:7 For one might scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die.

5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

3:21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

It is entirely by the grace of our Lord God that we have been saved, born again, and enabled

to do good works. This year too, let us give thanks for this, not dwelling too much on our own weaknesses, but looking upward and pressing on.

◇Prayer; Heavenly Father God, we give thanks for today's worship. We thank You for Your protection throughout the past year. We thank You, God, that no matter what our circumstances may be this year, You will make our path sure and richly blessed. Please lead all those who suffer into Your salvation and peace. Bless our families and our neighbors. Use us for Your purposes. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.