

The Fortunate Life. Psalm 1

Today we start a three week series which looks at Psalm 1, Psalm 23, and Proverbs 3.

You may be wondering what they have in common and in this case the connecting thread is not some biblical theme but the role they have played in my life. I have lived with each of these passages for a long time and found them to be wonderfully true.

I first heard Psalm 23 sung by my mother as we travelled as a family to my father's new position in Ceduna where he was to be the doctor at what was then the BCA hospital. Proverbs 3:5-6 was inscribed on a book the teacher overseeing the school Christian group gave me when I finished year 12, or sixth form as it was then. And Psalm 1, the Psalm we are looking at today, speaks of the choice that has been foundational to my life, and choice that is foundational to every believer's life, and was impressed on my memory through a book of modern Psalm settings, Psalm praise, which we sung in my youth.

Alongside the end of Matthew 7 which speaks to two gates, two builders Psalm 1 tells us very clearly that there are only two ways to live. One way leads to a life that in the end doesn't count and ends in ruin, the other to an enduringly fruitful life and continuing amongst the Lord's people forever, and I have chosen Psalm 1 because, knowing the truth of it myself, I want to encourage you to choose and keep on choosing the way of life Psalm 1 presents to us, to choose the life it pronounces as blessed.

*¹How happy/ Blessed is the one who does not
walk in the advice of the wicked
or stand in the pathway with sinners
or sit in the company of mockers!*

*²Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction,
and he meditates on it day and night.*

What is it to be blessed?

And who is described as blessed?

I know the CSB starts with 'How happy', whereas the ESV and NIV have 'blessed'.

But Happy is not a happy translation of the Hebrew word translated by others as blessed

Happy can make it sound like the Psalmist is making an observation of someone's subjective state – look at that person, don't they look happy.

But the Psalmist is doing much more than that.

He is making an objective statement, an objective statement about a person's standing in God's eyes

The blessed are the people who enjoy God's favour in God's world and as such

They really are the fortunate ones, the ones whose life we should envy and want to possess for ourselves

For in God's world the best thing is to be amongst those who enjoy the favour of the living God, by Israel's God. He is the almighty Creator who rules over all things, who governs the details of all our lives, who determines their eternal outcome, who is active to save and rescue. If He is for you, no one and nothing can prevent His good plans for you from being realised.

But who is blessed, who is the person who enjoys God's favour?

We are given a double sided description of the blessed person.

We are told on one hand what they reject, on the other what they embrace.

The blessed person chooses on the one hand not to put their trust in and take their direction from a certain group of people – described here as the wicked, sinners, mockers. Saying yes to God is always saying no to those who reject God

*¹ How happy is the one who does not
walk in the advice of the wicked
or stand in the pathway with sinners
or sit in the company of mockers!*

Walk is a metaphor for life, the sense that life is a journey and we are progressing through life by continuous activity to a destination

In this journey the blessed don't take guidance from the wicked, don't conform their behaviour to that of sinners, and don't share in the company of mockers, sit in their seat repeating their views

Sounds pretty general, but can we identify those whose views we are to avoid any further, know more about their attitudes and conversation?

That would be helpful for us – to be able to recognise those we shouldn't listen to if we want to be blessed. The first step in avoiding getting scammed is learning to recognise the scammer, isn't it.

And we can, for there are a number of descriptions of the wicked and their attitudes in the book of Psalms.

Listen to Psalm 10:

*Psalm 10: ³For the wicked one boasts about his own cravings;
the one who is greedy curses and despises the Lord.*

*⁴In all his scheming,
the wicked person arrogantly thinks,
"There's no accountability,
since there's no God."*

*⁵His ways are always secure;
your lofty judgments have no effect on him;
he scoffs at all his adversaries.*

*⁶He says to himself, "I will never be moved—
from generation to generation I will be without calamity."*

*⁷Cursing, deceit, and violence fill his mouth;
trouble and malice are under his tongue.*

*⁸He waits in ambush near settlements;
he kills the innocent in secret places.
His eyes are on the lookout for the helpless;*

*⁹he lurks in secret like a lion in a thicket.
He lurks in order to seize a victim;
he seizes a victim and drags him in his net.*

*¹⁰So he is oppressed and beaten down;
helpless people fall because of the wicked one's strength.*

*¹¹He says to himself, "God has forgotten;
he hides his face and will never see."*

¹² Rise up, Lord God! Lift up your hand.

Do not forget the oppressed.

¹³ Why has the wicked person despised God?

He says to himself, "You will not demand an account."

The wicked v.3 are directed by their appetites, that is what they take pride in and give themselves to satisfy – by any, including violent, means vv. 8-9

And they feel quite confident and secure in that v. 5 because they despise the LORD. Hear what they say about God

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the wicked person arrogantly thinks,

"There's no accountability,

since there's no God."

¹¹ He says to himself, "God has forgotten;

he hides his face and will never see."

¹³ Why has the wicked person despised God?

He says to himself, "You will not demand an account."

Whatever their outward religious practice, the wicked are practical atheists. They deny God – that He is present and active, that He is living, and openly proclaim his absence and disinterest

And so they are confident there will be no judgement, that they will never have to give account.

Their confidence, their trust, is in themselves, including 36:2 a confidence in their own goodness

Psalm 36: ¹ An oracle within my heart

concerning the transgression of the wicked person:

Dread of God has no effect on him.

² For with his flattering opinion of himself,

he does not discover and hate his iniquity.

³ The words from his mouth are malicious and deceptive;

he has stopped acting wisely and doing good.

⁴ Even on his bed he makes malicious plans.

He sets himself on a path that is not good,

and he does not reject evil.

Whatever they do is justified in their own sight

But their words are untrustworthy

And they are determined to do the evil they have set their hearts on, planned v. 4

And from another description of the wicked, Psalm 73, we learn that they often enjoy prosperity vv. 3-7, v. 12

Psalm 73: ³ For I envied the arrogant;

I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

⁴ They have an easy time until they die,

and their bodies are well fed.

⁵ They are not in trouble like others;

they are not afflicted like most people.

⁶Therefore, pride is their necklace,
and violence covers them like a garment.

⁷Their eyes bulge out from fatness;
the imaginations of their hearts run wild.

⁸They mock, and they speak maliciously;
they arrogantly threaten oppression.

⁹They set their mouths against heaven,
and their tongues strut across the earth.

¹⁰Therefore his people turn to them
and drink in their overflowing words.

¹¹The wicked say, "How can God know?
Does the Most High know everything?"

¹²Look at them—the wicked!
They are always at ease,
and they increase their wealth.

And again we see in their words their defiance of and despising of God

⁸They mock, and they speak maliciously;
they arrogantly threaten oppression.

⁹They set their mouths against heaven,
and their tongues strut across the earth.

¹¹The wicked say, "How can God know?
Does the Most High know everything?"

¹²Look at them—the wicked!

And in all this they enjoy public approval and admiration v. 10, even when they are bullying others to get their own way

As Psalm 94 reminds us that even as they oppress those the LORD has commanded we take especial care of – the widow, the alien, the fatherless – they have no fear, for they say v. 7

*Psalm 94: Lord, how long will the wicked—
how long will the wicked celebrate?*

⁴They pour out arrogant words;
all the evildoers boast.

⁵Lord, they crush your people;
they oppress your heritage.

⁶They kill the widow and the resident alien
and murder the fatherless.

⁷They say, "The Lord doesn't see it.
The God of Jacob doesn't pay attention."

That is the wicked Psalm 1 speaks of

Loud in their denial of God, confident that they will never be called to account

[cf. Prov. 21:4, 10; 29:7]

And ‘Sinners’ and ‘scoffers’ are ways of speaking of the same group of people, that highlight other aspects of their behaviour.

Sinners are people who do wrong, offend, miss the mark of the behaviour God commands, and so their way, their practices and standards, can never be followed by believers as examples of how to live, no matter how widely accepted in society. [e.g. living together before you marry]

And scoffers are people who scorn and ridicule, particularly scorn and deride God, people who will not listen to rebuke but continue their mocking chatter [Prov. 3:34, 9:8, 13:1, 15:12, 21:24, 22:10] regardless

The wicked, sinners, scoffers offer an alternate way of life, based on their rejection and exclusion of God, their pursuit of the satisfaction of their own appetites and desires, and their confidence in themselves and their own judgments.

And they are still very much with us, relying on the power of their words both to justify and win approval for their behaviour

Words which are now Amplified in the media and online as they claim our attention and acceptance.

Think, say, of the academic atheist like Peter Singer, who will prioritise the wishes of competent adults while rejecting the sanctity of human life, and so will justify adults getting what they want, whether that is destroying the inconvenient unborn, or having others help in taking their own life.

Or those who promote sexual freedom and reject any constraints on sexual expression, claiming it is the path human liberation, to human flourishing

Or those who would promote the unrestrained right to make money

Or just the person, maybe your workmate, who claims the right to live as they please – whether that is drugs or drink or driving – or speak as they please with no regard for others

Or maybe the cool kids at your school who mock any authority except their own

We are not short of people who confidently say live my way, do whatever you please, because
*“There’s no accountability,
 since there’s no God.”*

*“God has forgotten;
 he hides his face and will never see.”*

*“The Lord doesn’t see it.
 The God of Jacob doesn’t pay attention.”*

But the blessed person does not listen to them, does not take guidance and direction from them, never shares in their shameless scoffing at what is sacred and right

Because he or she is characterised by an attitude – delight in God’s instruction or law, and an activity – meditating on the LORD’s instruction, or law.

*² Instead, his delight is in the LORD’s instruction,
 and he meditates on it day and night.*

*² but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.*

Now I could at this point just jump to applying this to Scriptures we know today, talk about loving the Bible.

Instead, we are going to spend a little time trying to hear what the first hearers of the Psalm heard when the Psalm speaks of delighting in the law of the LORD, for that is how we hear what God, who chooses His words carefully, is saying to us.

To not work at hearing what the first hearers heard is to impoverish ourselves, miss all that God is saying in His word, and risks developing the bad habit of reading back into God's word what we expect or want to hear as modern people.

What is the Psalmist speaking about when he is speaking of the LORD's instruction or law?

When the English versions translate a key Hebrew word differently it is probably because there is no perfect English equivalent, and that is the case here.

The Hebrew word is Torah – his delight is in the LORD's Torah, and on the His Torah he meditates night and day.

Torah is a word that can be translated in different contexts by the English words direction, instruction, law, teaching

But in this context the Psalmist is probably thinking of something quite specific – either the Book of Deuteronomy, of the first five books of the Bible, Genesis to Deuteronomy, the books called the Torah by the Jews of Jesus' day and since.

Let's consider Deuteronomy as Torah, for that is the way it speaks of itself

Deuteronomy is introduced in this way, as Moses explaining the Torah of the Lord

Deut. 1: 5 Across the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law [TORAH], saying:

What Moses says he is doing is setting before them this TORAH

Deut 4: 8 And what great nation has righteous statutes and ordinances like this entire law [Torah] I set before you today?

The King is to write his own copy of this TORAH

Deut 17: 18 When he is seated on his royal throne, he is to write a copy of this instruction [Torah] for himself on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.

And it was Written by Moses to be read every seven years

Deut. 31: 9 Moses wrote down this law [Torah] and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the Lord's covenant, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of debt cancellation, during the Festival of Shelters, 11 when all Israel assembles in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he chooses, you are to read this law [Torah] aloud before all Israel.

, and placed beside the ark

Deut 31: 24 When Moses had finished writing down on a scroll every single word of this law [Torah], 25 he commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the Lord's covenant, 26 "Take this book of the law [book of Torah] and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God so that it may remain there as a witness against you.

It is this book of Torah that Joshua is then told, in words repeated in Psalms, to meditate on day and night and carefully observe as he is about to enter the promised land

Joshua 1: 8 This book of instruction [book of Torah] must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.

Deuteronomy is pre-eminently the book of Torah

And Torah is more than laws.

What do we find in Deuteronomy? Laws – yes, which tell the people how they can live in relationship with God and enjoy the blessing of the good land He is giving them.

But much more

Deuteronomy starts with a summary of how the LORD has brought them from Mt Sinai to the border of the promised land and is a record of how God drew Israel into relationship with Himself and made Himself known to them on the mountain [Deut. 4],

It speaks of God's electing love [7:7-9], grace and faithfulness in bringing them into the land [e.g. 9:1-6] and makes provision for Israel's flourishing when they come into the promised land [Deut. 6-11], focusing on the love and fear of the LORD [e.g. 6:4-6, Deut. 10:12-22.]

As well as laws it also contains prophecy [Deut 32] and promises of restoration [Deut 30].

Deuteronomy is God's provision for His people to continue to live as His people in covenant with Him, loving God and neighbour.

And what do we find in the rest of the larger Torah, the first five books of our Bibles?

They are not just a collection of laws, of legal prescriptions.

They are a record of God's saving action, of gracious promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, mighty rescue from Egypt, the amazing patience and steadfast love of God as He brings them through the wilderness to the Promised Land, as well as containing God's provision in sacrifice, priesthood, and tabernacle for the people to keep living in His presence, and in the ten commandments and their expansion in case law for His people to live as His holy people.

The content of the TORAH the Psalmist speaks of is God, His saving actions, and what it is to live in relationship with the living God as His saved people, His covenant people

Who would delight in this?

Note, it is delight

Delight is a strong word.

The person who is blessed doesn't just acknowledge the existence of the Torah, doesn't find it a burden

He or she takes delight in it, finds it a pleasure to be in its company

is glad to know it and spend time with it for it brings joy to the heart, refreshment to the soul

Who would delight in Torah? Believers, those who confess its truth and believe in the God who gave it

Delight in Torah is an expression of grateful faith

Delighting in this torah is delighting in the salvation of God, in being drawn into relationship with Him and made His people by God's grace. It is delighting in the God who has made Himself known in saving, in Him being your God, and delighting in the provision He has given to live as His person, in continuing relationship with Him.

Delighting in Torah is the grateful response of those who know it is an extraordinary privilege to belong to God's covenant people, to call the LORD your God

Delight in Torah is an expression of grateful faith that sustains the life of faith, for the faith that delights in Torah meditates on it day and night.

What does it mean to meditate on the Torah day and night.

When you hear 'meditate' perhaps you are think of silent deep reflection, or of opening your bible and pondering it.

But that is not what meditate means here.

Two things to note when we think of what is being commended here.

First, most people would not have had access to a Torah scroll. They were heavy and expensive

The King was commanded, remember, to make his own copy.

Most people could not have a quiet time with a text.

They heard the Torah being read, as Moses commanded it to be read every seven years.

And secondly, the verb translated meditate can also, in other contexts, be translated as moan, growl, utter, speak. It has to do with making noise, not being silent

It is probably more likely refers to speaking the Torah to oneself, reciting it to oneself as a way of keeping it accurately in your memory, so you are conscious of it to do it.

Listen again to the command the LORD gave Joshua

Joshua 1: ⁷Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. ⁸This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.

Moses doesn't say this book of instruction must not depart from your eyes. The book was placed beside the ark.

It was not to depart from his mouth – he is to meditate on it, keep repeating it to himself

The purpose of that – so that he may be careful to do what Moses has written.

And Joshua's meditation, as in the Psalm, was to be day and night.

Day and night – Joshua had many other responsibilities.

What is being asked of him, and of all who delight in the Torah?

Day and night speaks of the Torah being present on his lips at any and every time, at every opportunity, in all circumstances, so that it is remembered accurately and is always there to guide.

When there were other voices, the voices of the wicked and scoffers, being heard around them, the person who delighted in the Torah and meditated on it would hear another voice, the voice of His God spoken in His Torah –

not just an impression of its truth, but the actual words for the meditation spoken of here is just that, keeping the actual words in your mouth and consciousness.

Meditation involved effort, and delighting in Torah would give you a very different life to the wicked, the sinners, the scoffers you were living amongst, a life that singled you out.

But the Psalmist insists, God insists, that delighting in Torah and meditating on is the blessing God gives to grateful faith for it leads to such good outcomes, outcomes incomparably better than the outcomes for the wicked.

But before we look at that – how do we apply what is said of the Torah to ourselves, who have all the Scriptures?

We should delight in all the Scriptures, and for the same reason – because their content, read as believers in Jesus, is, like the Torah, our God's saving actions, and what it is to live in relationship with the living God as His saved people, all the Scriptures are the means of continuing to live as His covenant people.

That is way Paul says we should read the Scriptures

He says to Timothy

2 Timothy 3: ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, ¹⁵and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

We read them to be included by faith in what they say in those saved by Jesus, and to continue to be equipped to live as God's people, doing His will.

And not just the Old Testament Scriptures, which is what Paul is speaking of in 2 Tim 3, but the gospel of our Lord Jesus that fulfills them, and which the Old Testament Scriptures, especially the Torah, pointed to.

[Consider Romans 4 and Abraham as the model of faith, or Romans 10:1-13 where Paul teaches us that Moses words in Deut. 30 about the Torah are fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus.]

Grateful faith will delight in all the Scripture, Old and New Testament, for all the Scripture speaks of our Saviour, of His gracious electing love and the greatness of the salvation He brings, and what it is to live as His people. From all the Scripture we learn to do all that the Lord Jesus has commanded us and so continue as His disciples, as His new covenant people.

And how do we keep it in our heads to do it, so that we also will be reckoned blessed?

Not just in our heads, but prominent in our thinking, not drowned out, marginalised, by the many voices around us, the loud voices of the wicked and scoffers?

This is the calling of all who believe, all who want to be those reckoned blessed by God.

Not just for scholars or pastors

Meditating on the Torah involved effort, a constant effort to keep them in the believer's consciousness

And our delight in God's word should show in our effort to keep them at the forefront of our thinking

But we have additional means to do that

We can read the Scriptures – why we developed the daily devotions, to get that habit of daily reading

Those of us with bible apps can Listen. In stead of listening to the radio I have started listening in the morning to my bible app when I shave

And remembering is helped by understanding, and we have lots of opportunity – books, podcasts, growth groups, conferences to grow in Understanding

And embracing repetition. Ours is a culture that loves novelty, that wants to move on to the next thing, but repeating, reading the same Scriptures over and over again through the years, enriches us

And straight out memorisation. Intentionally setting yourself to memorise portions of Scripture so you can call the words of God to mind

All that is effort, but effort that springs from delight in our saving God and gratitude at belonging to His people

And Effort that will make us different

If God's word as God's word is at the forefront of your mind when someone says 'watch this porn, or sexually explicit movie'

You will hear Jesus saying "I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away, for it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body that for your whole body to be thrown into hell." [Matt. 5:28-29]

And you won't walk in the way of the wicked

When those you are with are gossiping about someone, you will remember that the LORD says 'you shall not bear false witness', and that we must love our neighbours as ourselves', and you won't share in the gossip

When your peers are telling you it is ok to move in with your boy or girlfriend, you will remember that Scripture teaches all sex outside marriage, that public commitment to permanent union between a man and a woman, is sin, and you won't be found in the way of sinners

When you are being enticed by gambling adds, you will remember Scripture says thou shalt not steal, and that gambling is consenting to being robbed, and robbing others who might be benefited by the money the Lord has entrusted to you.

Being the blessed believer of Psalm one takes effort, and it will make you different

But worth it, for it leads to a present and a future that is very different from the wicked, those who dismiss God and deny His judgement, and in considering the different present and future we see how great a blessing it is to delight in and meditate on God's word, His saving word that has drawn us into relationship with Himself.

vv. 3-4 – His or her experience in this life, in contrast with the wicked

Firstly the Psalmist says the person who delights in God's law

*³He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams
that bears its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.*

*⁴The wicked are not like this;
instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.*

The tree planted by the waters is in a dry climate a powerful and attractive picture of enduring soundness and fruitfulness of life through dry and testing times,

And it creates a Powerful contrast with the wicked. In an agricultural community it is hard to think of a greater contrast than that between the enduring tree and its precious and useful fruit and the worthless chaff, that outer covering of the grain that is good for nothing, that gets blown away in the winnowing of the grain, and is gone, unlamented

But what does it mean when it says “In all he does he prospers,” or ‘whatever he does prospers”

Do you believe that? Does it mean that being blessed by delighting in God’s saving word and setting your heart to know and do it, you will never know a set back or difficulty?

A phrase like “In all he does he prospers,” Takes some thinking about, especially where we have learnt in Psalm 73 that it often looks as though it is the wicked who are prospering.

And we know believers can have a hard time just for being believers, and that we aren’t spared the trials of this life – the sicknesses, the economic shocks, the grief – we live, as it were, through the same hard seasons as our non-believing neighbours

Can we believe that the believer who delights in and conforms his or her life to God’s word prospers in all he or she does?

Yes

Take three examples

Joshua, who was told to *meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.*

Did Joshua never know difficulty? He did – the defeat at Ai, being tricked by the men of Gibeah, and the burdensome responsibility of occupying the promised land. But God brought Joshua to the successful completion of the task God has entrusted to him.

Take David, the Old Testament believer most associated with the Psalms. He knew much trial and uncertainty being chased around the wilderness by Saul for years, yet God prospered him and brought him to his throne, and established his kingdom

And Jesus, the one who lived perfectly by God’s word. He knew hardship – opposition, betrayal, suffering and death

But in all He did He prospered. He came to reign over all and saved His people.

For the one who delights in God’s saving word and guides his or her life by it, who lives faithfully in relationship to God, God works all the believer does to the good end God purposes. All – no experience will rob her or him of God’s favour, derail God’s good purpose for them

That is not the case with the wicked, those who dismiss God and His judgements to trust themselves and follow their own desires

They are like the chaff which the wind blows away.

A life that in the end is of no account, no permanent value, useless for any good purpose.

Sounds hard, doesn’t it, but it is no more harsh that Jesus’ description of the work of the foolish builder, the one who hears and does not do, whose labour is lost in the flood.

Two very different lives

But the psalmists description is true, more true than we often recognise

We often see only a glimpse of people's lives, don't often live to see the full outcome of their choices.

As you sow, so you reap, the scripture says – but we can't wait to see the harvest of people's actions, and our attention moves on

And our public media presents us with a highly selective picture of reality, selected on the basis of what will sell, not on the basis of what will instruct

We are not often shown the consequences of sexual immorality, or of greed, or of nursing hatred and resentment, or the grief of wasting your life pursuing what is worthless

And we are actively discouraged from drawing lessons from life – from saying this person has a lonely old age because of the sexual immorality that destroyed their marriage, or this person died because they did not listen to the warnings about drinking and driving, or taking drugs

Or this family fractured because of selfish greed

And I can think of believers I have known who through all kinds of trials persisted in delighting in and living by God's saving word, and have endured, fruitful and sound in soul [John Chapman, Bruce Smith, parents]

The Longer I live, the more I see this Psalm proved true, the more I see the growing difference between those who choose to delight in and be guided by God's word, and those who don't.

And Delighting in God's law doesn't just lead to a different present from the wicked, it also leads to a different future

For denying the judgement, as the wicked do, does not remove the reality of judgement

Because they live worthless, wasted lives,

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

*⁶For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.*

They will have no place amongst God's people at the end, excluded forever

But the one who delights in God's Torah, who delights in the word that reveals God's saving acts in Jesus and the way of life for those saved by Jesus, who keeps it always before them to do it

The righteous, who conform their life to the response called for from God's covenant people, the response that starts with the faith that obeys [Romans 1:5, 16:26]

God ensures that their path will bring them to the promised goal and they will continue amongst His people for ever

But the wicked – their way leads to ruin, eternal ruin

The ruin they claimed would never overtake them

Excluded forever from God's people

And that outcome is certain, for the God they despise and dismiss will do it

How do we know?

From the Scriptures themselves which show us the saving work of God

His defeat of Pharoah, his bringing his people into the promised land, his judgement on Jerusalem, and his bringing his people back from exile

And show us the saving work of God in Christ – and that the Lord Jesus is now exalted with all authority

Both his promise, and his judgements, are sure

Don't have a life that counts for nothing in the end, and leads only to ruin

Have a life that is fruitful and sound through all the up and downs, the dry and the good times, and which will continue amongst the Lord's people

Delight in God's word, because you know it for what it is.

The word of your saving God, true, the word that He has given to let you live in relationship with Him, to live as His child

And because of that consciously make the effort to know it to do it, to be guided through life by what God says, not the voices of those who trust themselves and dismiss Him

Make the effort to keep it consciously at the forefront of your thinking so that in a world of competing voices you hear the voice of your God, who has rescued you to make you His own, guiding you in the way of life, of blessing now and forever