

Homiletics
Exercises, Class
Introductions to Addresses
Sermon on the 1st. Psalm

Manuscript

-1-

Text: Psalm 1:1a: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."

This is wartime. We face problems today which we didn't face a year ago, and yet we face problems which are of the same type that we faced last year. War serves to intensify the problems which we face at all times.

This isn't a message telling you to choose war or to choose peace. This isn't a message advocating either of these courses. There are those within and without the military who are living by both the "godly" and the "ungodly" ways of life. Our country's government recognizes the individual right to decide conscientiously whether to follow active war duty or peaceful civilian duty in time of war. Those who choose war on a conscientious basis do so because they think that war is now the only way, or the quickest way, of preserving a better way of life, the way to preserve the right to live the lives of their choice. Those who refuse military duty on conscientious grounds do so because they feel that only by methods of peace can the free way of life be preserved. There are those within the country, and there are millions of them, who follow the trend of greatest external pressure; who yield to that pressure

~~Homiletics~~
~~Exercises, Class~~
~~Introductions to Addresses~~
Sermon on the 1st. Psalm

Manuscript

-2-

because they have no definite convictions on which to base their actions. They hardly know where to go, what to do, what path to take, so they take the easiest one, that of the majority (for it is always easier to do what the majority is doing than to be "different").

Did you see the motion picture "This Above All"? Remember the scene in which the British soldier, hiding from arrest as a deserter from the army, was momentarily given shelter by a young but physically disabled clergyman? In a discussion as to the reason for his desertion it came out that the soldier couldn't reason out why it was necessary or worth the cost to fight the war. He couldn't rationalize the action of war so that he could accept it. His main trouble was that he had dependence on no other authority than himself. Do you remember the words of the clergyman, "Faith begins where reason ends?" Faith in a higher authority than oneself; faith in a higher purpose than personal happiness and content. We must all have faith in some power greater than man or his works, or we are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Faith in a higher power assumes a higher, better way of life. If that higher power is God, the way of life will be godly, for true faith automatically produces works in accordance with that faith.

The First Psalm sets the key note for the Psalms, belief in God, faith in God, trust in God. We lean on religion, or on God, now as did the ancient Hebrews, because we can find nothing else that can adequately support us. According to the 1st. Psalm, there can only be two ways of life, the godly and the ungodly.

The particular problems we're interested in here are those of our way of life, our philosophy of life, our attitude toward life. We must choose either the godly or the ungodly way of life. We must make our own decisions. Each of us must decide whether he is capable of being his own authority or whether he will turn to faith in some higher-than-man power. Let us together consider the requirements and the results of both the godly and the ungodly ways of life. As we must make a choice, it is well that we are familiar with the alternatives, that we understand fully the consequences of our choices.

Development of the sermon from here:

~~I. The godly "bringeth forth his fruit in his season."~~

~~II. The ungodly are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away."~~

~~Conclusion: "The Lord knoweth (recognizes as valid) the way of the~~

The first Psalm teaches its lesson not from some philosophical outlook which it would be hard for you and I to ask, but from life itself. The preliminary statement of the Psalm is indicative of the whole strain of the rest of this beautiful passage of Scripture. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." This verse is self-explanatory, as is indeed the rest of the Psalm. It gives a description of the things which the godly man does not do. It describes for us the image of the Godly man as the psalmist had him in mind. Having said what a godly man is, the psalm goes on to give an idea of the characteristics and rewards of a godly man, turning in the latter part of the passage to a contrast with the ungodly.

~~For me, the idea presented that the Godly is fruitful is the most beautiful idea in the two verses devoted to the godly man. He "bringeth forth his fruit in his season." But there are other thoughts which we can gather from these two verses as well.~~

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law does he meditate day and night." The psalmist probably had in mind when he spoke of the "law of the lord" the Mosaic law as presented chiefly in the Ten Commandments. For the ancient

Israelites this was the divine Law, and indeed it was the most progressive law of which they knew; the nearest to the divine that they had yet come in their struggle for religious insight. But Christians today who delight in the Law of the Lord must have and do have these plus a much greater law, an all-inclusive law. The founder of the Christian movement gave ~~his~~ this law to us. In the 12th. chapter of Mark in the 30th. and 31st. verses we hear Jesus say: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like ~~xxxxxx~~, namely, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." In short, the great law which Jesus gave was the much-proclaimed, much-preached law of Love. Many words are ~~xxxxxxx~~ said about this law, but it must be treated like any other law. Until the law of love is practiced the rule of love can never come. ~~For~~ the godly man "his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." That law of the Lord is the Law of love. It includes the old Mosaic law, the Ten Commandments, which in themselves are not enough.

The godly man is like a tree. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." No more a beautiful comparison could have been used. For man a tree is perhaps the most useful plant, considering the term tree to include all varieties, of course. A tree planted. The godly man is permanent. He has his life rooted in something substantial, in more than himself. Even as the roots of the tree reach down into the soil for the waters and the food there, for the best of plant nourishment, so the godly man reaches out to the great eternal ~~far~~ with a faith that he will there receive the light, the spiritual refreshment that is necessary for his life to really have significance.

A tree is a living thing. Its life is usually a period of several years. Especially if it is planted in favorable conditions is it long-lived. Compared to the life-span of most plants, a tree lives an exceedingly long life. It is living and it is long-lived. A godly man lives, and his life is apt to be long, if not in years at least in the time of usefulness which he yields.

And he shall be like a tree that "bringeth forth his fruit in his season." A tree, any tree well-planted, is fruitful. Some bear fruit which can be used by men and animals for food. All bear some sort of fruit which can serve to reproduce themselves.

Many are used by man as lumber for building homes and useful objects, and in this respect they are fruitful. The ones whose fruits man can neither eat nor use for creating things are even fruitful in that they produce oxygen which is necessary that men and animals might live. A tree is fruitful both to itself and to others. Likewise, says the psalmist is a godly man fruitful. His life bears fruit for himself, for God, and for others.

"His leaf also shall not wither." Herein is hidden a hint of, a thought of and a promise of eternal life. No one wants to think of himself as just completely "blacking out" after this life is over. The godly man is given assurance, long before the time of Christ that he "shall not wither".

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Perhaps the godly man shall not prosper materially. Many people whom we consider the most godly are materially poor. But isn't that the case most often because it is of their own choosing? Don't they remain that way because they insist on sharing with others that which they have rather than hoarding it for themselves? The godly man probably will not prosper materially, but he will prosper - spiritually.

— But what about the ungodly? "The ungodly are not so." They are not like the godly, in permanentcy, life, fruit, or other characteristics. ~~They are~~ "They are not so", may be interpreted "They are not as the godly."

— They are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Every farmer knows that chaff is a dead thing. In thrashing in the old days, when the psalmist was writing, the grain was trampled out of the ear. Then it was thrown into the air so that the wind might blow the chaff away and leave the grain. Anyone who has helped thrash wheat on a farm in this dayx knows that the chaff is easily carried by the wind. Scientifically, the chaff has no life. It is light and unstable, can be moved by the slightest breeze. Unlike the tree, it is not rooted to anything but moves with the first wind. It is not necessarily harmful, but it is useless, and, as every farmer knows, it can often be quite irritating to tender skins. Like the chaff are the ungodly, says our psalmist. They are not rooted to any principles of life, and are free to drift among various philosophies and attitudes. The ungodly man looks to no greater thing than man and chance for his attitude of life. His whole outlook on the things of worth in life, such as morals, social conduct, and mental attitude,

are subject to change, usually at the first hint of opposition. Public opinion, like the wind to the chaff, is apt to move him from outlook to outlook on life.

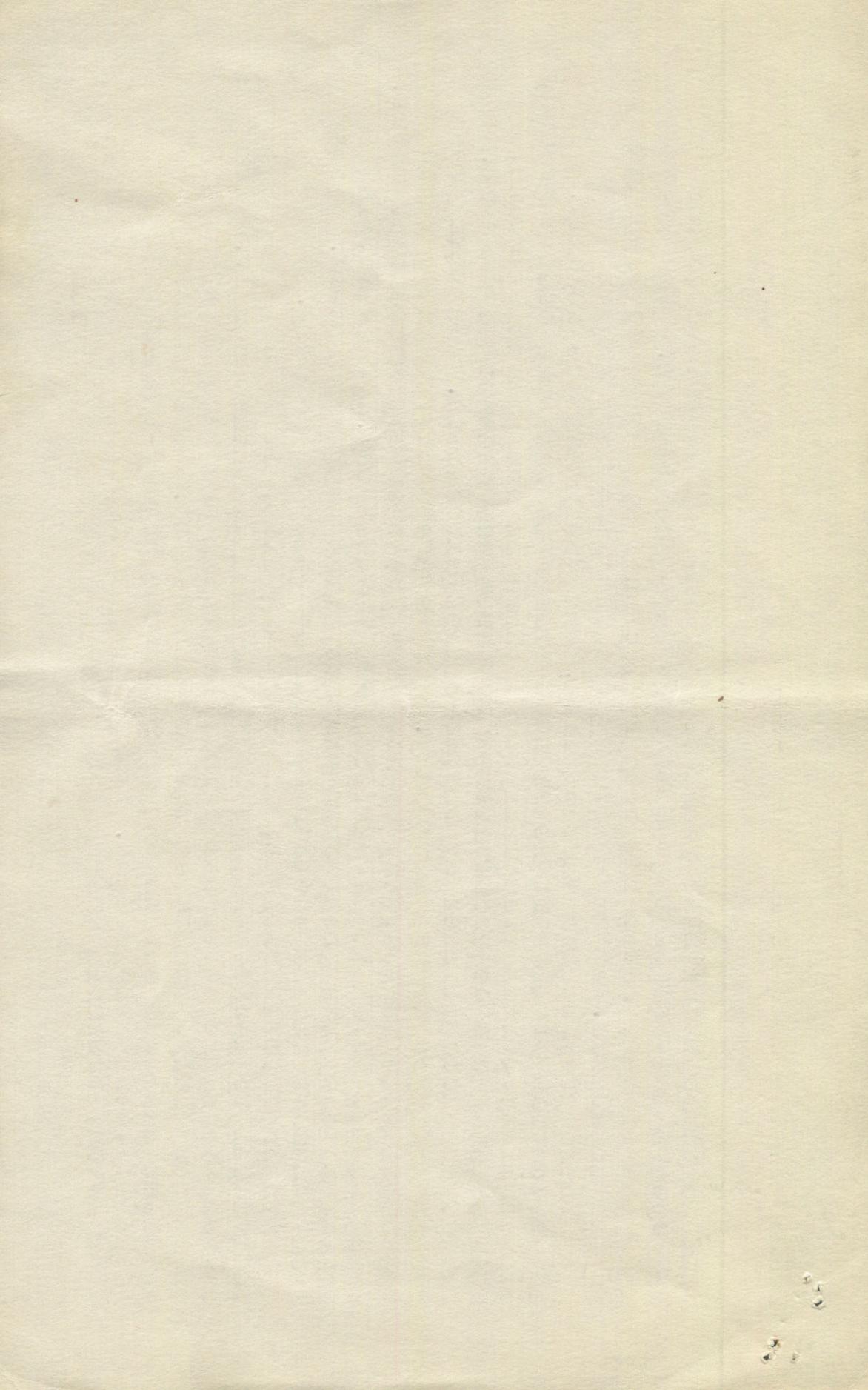
"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement." Having chosen to be like the chaff, moved by every wind the ungodly man cannot stand close examination. The gale of searching for lasting qualities of the soul ~~blows~~ blows him away, for he has nothing but himself, nothing upon which he can lean for support, while the godly man can grasp the hand of God.

"Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." The ungodly man can't expect to share the joys that come from seeing the fruits of hard striving, from the knowledge of having done that which one thinks best. He is not prepared to share the final blessings of ones who have achieved something. A musician who has mastered his instrument has spent years of heart-breaking work in mastering that instrument. A novice cannot be expected to pick up the same instrument and draw from it the beautiful strains that seemingly flow from the soul of the maestro. A craftsman or laborer, carpenter, bricklayer, mechanic, painter, sculptor, farmer, merchant, or what not, has developed his skill by years of practice, study and concentration. A "greenhorn" to ~~any~~ any of these fields

must go through the same years of training and experience before he can obtain the fruits that come from such occupations. The ungodly man, the sinner, not being prepared, cannot stand in the congregation of the righteous.

— There are but two ways of life, the godly and the ungodly. In any situation of life it is so much easier to take the middle ground, but we always find eventually that there is not a middle ground, that nothing can be accomplished by those who attempt to take it. Things are accomplished by the so-called extremists. We ~~must~~ are either godly or we are not godly. If we are godly, we have faith and confidence in God, try to obey the greatest commandment of Jesus. Being human, we can't be perfect, but we must try. Therein, in trying to obey the great commandments, lies man's godliness. Each man must choose whether he will be godly or ungodly.

In practical problems, in every day life, it is up to the individual to decide what is the godly and what the ungodly. Of course there are universal principles which are recognized as right, as godly, and these must be adhered to. But in knotty problems man must obtain the help of some higher-than-himself authority, the help of god. In seeking that help, through prayer, meditation, observing, or however it is done, the individual is



becoming even more godly.

We have with the writer of the 1st. Psalm considered the distinctive aspects of the godly and the ungodly man. We have tried to translate the thoughts of the psalmist into words which we can understand in our everyday language. We have seen the characteristics of and results of the godly and ungodly ways of life. We have observed that each man must choose. In choosing it is well to remember the last verse of the Psalm, a verse which promises the godly man the highest reward that he could ask, yet which promises nothing but that which man dreads worst to the ungodly man. "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

Preacher at

5 term

State Mem - N.C. MSN
conf

E. Waynesville

Balsam

Independence 12-5-43

Leitchfield "

Providence 12-12-43

Mt. Herib "

Palmas "

[Faint, illegible handwritten text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

