

GOD LOVES FRESH STARTS TOO!

Studies from the Psalms: Psalm 1

THEME: Happy New Year! The first four Sundays of 2015 at Grace Chapel will focus on key *fresh-start ideas* from the Psalms. The same themes that encouraged Israel in its songs and prayers across the centuries are still relevant for believers in the twenty-first century. New alignment of ministries, new personnel joining us, new opportunities for outreach with the gospel – 2015 will be filled with opportunities. We must be prepared and willing to join God in his work to redeem and to renew his creation.

ICE BREAKER

1. As you look back over 2014, what are some of the best memories you cherish? Some of the greatest challenges you faced?
2. What did you learn about God in 2014? About yourself?
3. Are there any key resolutions you have made for 2015?

THINK

1. Psalm 1 is a *wisdom psalm* that many think was written as a preface to the collection of 149 songs and prayers to follow.
2. What is the *theme* of Psalm 1?
3. Why does it make sense to read it as a preface to the entire collection to follow?
4. Does your edition of the Bible give a “title” to Psalm 1? What title would you suggest for it?

EXAMINE

Read [Psalm 1](#) aloud and expressively as background to the following questions:

1. Verses 1-3 describe the life orientation and behaviors of a *righteous* soul. Why do you think it begins with “negatives” (i.e., things a righteous person rejects and refuses to do)?
2. Do you see a progression (i.e., listening, standing, sitting) at work in verse 1? How might this represent the deceptive nature of evil?
3. What is the “positive” alternative for the righteous person who refuses to listen to the counsel of the wicked? What does verse 2 identify as the heart-focus of a righteous man or woman?
4. Verse 3 focuses on the outcome of a righteous person’s devotion to the instruction of the Lord. What imagery is used? What does it imply about godly character and lifestyle?
5. Verses 4-6 turn to the contrast of a *wicked* soul. What is the single most critical feature of the contrast?
6. Explain the imagery of a well-watered and fruitful tree for the righteous (v.3) as opposed to “chaff” for the wicked (v.4).

7. What is the “judgment” in view at verse 5? Clearly, it is not the Final Judgment the New Testament describes. Name some of the “judgment” moments life brings to all of us.
8. If you have access to a copy, read Psalm 1 from *The Message* and briefly revisit the ideas in questions 1 – 7.

Read [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#) and as background for the following questions:

1. This is one of many New Testament texts that describe the *fresh-start option* for those who know Christ. What do you know about Corinth? The backgrounds of Christians there? Why would this imagery be important to believers in such a context?
2. Identify at least a half-dozen images from the New Testament that call attention to the motif of new beginnings. (Hint: new birth, etc.)
3. Explain how the Psalm 1 challenge to choose between two paths for life is so obviously linked to the desire of so many for a fresh start in their experience. *Which comes first?*
4. Can you imagine some Corinth-type settings in which the theme of a fresh start for one’s life would have particular appeal?
5. Was this theme important to your own conversion to Christ?

THIS WEEK: Close this week’s study by thinking of and praying about specific goals you may need to set for your spiritual life in the coming year. You’ve probably given some serious thought to health, money management, and work for 2015. Have you given equal attention to deciding how you will prioritize the Kingdom of God in your life?