



Pastor Johnson Waterer
The Blessed Man

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Psalm 1

**BIG IDEA - THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORLDLY BLESSING AND
GOD'S BLESSING**

Happy New Year, Two Cities. My name is Johnson Waterer. I'm the director of family ministries here at the church; therefore, I bring you greetings from our kids' ministry. Guys, I have to say, it's nice being able to be here on a Sunday morning, teaching and preaching to a group, and you're sitting still for longer than 30 seconds. No, we are not handing out Goldfish at the end of this message.

Go ahead and turn with me to Psalm 1. It's the first psalm of the book of Psalms. As we know, the book of Psalms is a collection of songs and poems. We categorize these songs and poems. We categorize them based on genre. We have psalms of lament and psalms of praise.

This psalm, Psalm 1, is a wisdom psalm. It's good for breathing truth into our lives and showing us who we are as individuals and, most importantly, who God is in the way he has revealed himself in his Holy Word. It's a wisdom psalm. When it comes to wisdom, we ultimately have two options. There's the world's wisdom, and then there is God's wisdom as it's found in his Holy Word.

It's interesting because we seek wisdom during specific moments, during specific seasons, times, and events in our lives where we are seeking to achieve the best possible outcome, the most desired outcome. That's when we look for wisdom in our lives, but it doesn't take long to look over the course of human history to see that the world's wisdom is often wrong.

How many wars, how many instances of corruption, abuses of power, and failed governments does it take for us to see that when it comes to the world's conventional

wisdom in handling these moments in time we, as humans, are not exactly batting a thousand on how we deal with these events.

If you want an example of it... I said wisdom is something we look for during specific seasons. We're in one right now. It's the new year. What happens every year this time of year? The world comes with its wisdom in seeking to ingrain into the life of the individual certain truths that come in the form of, specifically, two mottos, two slogans.

First, "New year, new me." "I'm going to reflect over the course of my life this past year, and looking ahead to this upcoming year, I'm going to set goals. I'm going to seek to achieve successes." Ultimately, what this motto is founded on is the idea of "I'm going to transform myself into a new creation." From the surface, this is a pretty harmless ideology to have. It's good to set goals. It's good to want to achieve success. It's even good to seek to be transformed into a new creation.

You could even make the argument that's a biblical principle, but the key qualifying question for us, as we separate the world's wisdom and God's wisdom, is...*Whose standard are we seeking to be transformed into?* Because just like there's the world's wisdom and there's God's wisdom, there's also the world's standard and God's standard for our lives.

If you want a quick case study in this, go to a gym this time of year. I haven't been in a while, but I hear it's pretty packed. Why is that? Well, if it's by God's standard, it's to take care of heart health, to take care of your body that's the temple so that you can glorify and praise God for as long as you possibly can on this earth. That's a great reason to go.

If it's by the world's standard, you hit up the weight machines and whatever those cardio machines are called, and you are doing so because you're trying to fit into that peak mold the world has dictated is the pinnacle of the human condition and the human physique. "This is what beauty truly looks like." So, we see that's the first slogan, the first motto that the world shows up with their wisdom in the new year.

The second, the more dangerous, the more harmful motto the world brings around the new year is "This year is my year. This year belongs to me. My dreams, my desires, my will be done." This is the anthem of a lost society. Last I checked, we are now in the year AD 2023, Anno Domini (in the year of our Lord), which means this year and all of the years before and all of the years that will come after belong to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

He is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning, and the end. This year is not our year; this year belongs to the author of space, matter, and, yes, time itself. But it's our natural posture to try to take that which brings God glory and shine that glory on ourselves.

So, what do we do? How do we stop this? Enter Psalm 1. Here we're going to see several key insights that distinguish the Christian's worldview from that of the secular perspective in applying wisdom in our lives. Let's go ahead and read how God is speaking to us and how we are to conduct ourselves always in the name of Christ. Let's read Psalm 1 together.

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." Let's pray.

Our Father and our God, as we come before you this morning and dive into your Holy Word, I pray that it would indeed be your voice that is the loudest in this room. I pray that you would reveal to us the truths of your wisdom as you have revealed it to us in this first psalm. I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts would be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer, amen.

As I said, this psalm is the first psalm. It helps set the theme for the entire book of Psalms, and it's a wisdom psalm. It's helpful for breathing truth into our lives and also revealing who God is in the way he has revealed himself in his Word. I want us to look at this first line, how this psalm opens up. It says, ***"Blessed is the man..."***

I said that we, as humans, seek to apply wisdom to our lives in order to achieve the best possible outcome, the highest or most desired outcome. That can be summed up in a word: *blessing*. We seek to use wisdom in order to gain blessing, and the fullest extent of blessing is total satisfaction, which can be summarized in another word: *peace*.

So, we use wisdom to get to blessing, to be blessed, and that ultimately leads to true peace. We want to be blessed. We want to have an abundance of favor and joy that leads us to that place of peace, but we need to talk about this word *blessed*, because this is another one our society misuses a lot.

For instance, you go to a car dealership, you buy a new car, you FaceTime your parents, and you show them the new car, but you can't stop there. You take a picture of the car. You go on the Interwebs, the social media sites. You start writing a post. You put the picture up there, and you write a caption. "Just bought a new car."

But you can't stop it there at just the caption and the picture. No, you have to say, "Just bought a new car. #blessed." "Just bought a new house. #blessed." "I just went on vacation. I ate dinner. #blessed." "I have status. I have fame. I have popularity. I have fortune. I bought a cat. #blessed."

Now, all of those things, except the cat (I'm sorry), are blessings within themselves, of course. The issue is when we become so in love, so infatuated with the blessings we forget to acknowledge the one who gave us the blessing in the first place. That's when we run into that age-old idolatrous issue Paul writes about in Romans 1, where we exchange the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like us, material possessions, material wealth.

We seek to take worshiping the Creator and, instead, worship the creation, worship the things around us. Ultimately, this ideology is founded on this phrase: "Hey, everyone. Look at me and who I am." But the Christian says, "Hey, everyone. Look at me and what the Great I Am has done in my life. Look at how God has saved me. Look at how God has transformed me. He can do it for you."

So, that's my first claim about this opening line as we begin our study of Psalm 1. This phrase "Blessed is the man" is first an invitation. The invitation goes like this: "Do you want to be blessed, truly blessed? Then come closer. Listen up, because everything that is about to follow in this psalm is going to point directly to God's wisdom revealed in his Holy Word, specifically when it comes to being blessed in Christ Jesus."

It's an invitation, but we would be remiss if we just stopped it there and said it's only an invitation and only applies to our lives here and now, because here's my second claim about this opening line: it's not just an invitation; it's also revelation. It's also speaking of a specific person when it begins its opening line. It says, "**Blessed is the man...**" You can almost sense the gravity, the weight, speaking of the man of the moment.

I'm actually going to allow an unlikely character introduce who this blessed man is. If you were to go to John 19:5, you would read of how Pontius Pilate, as he's introducing Jesus Christ to the crowds... Psalm 1 begins by saying, "Blessed is the man," and in John 19:5, as Pontius Pilate is introducing Jesus Christ to the crowds, he says, "Behold the man!"

This is not just an invitation; it's revelation pointing directly to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the one who is the standard of all righteousness, the standard of all blessings, and also the one who fulfills all righteousness and gives all blessings that we are able to enjoy in this life. That is who, ultimately, we are talking about.

This is not an abstract concept as we seek to understand what it means to be blessed. We're talking about a person. We look to Jesus Christ as the author and perfecter of our faith, the one who is the blessed man. So, that's the theme for us here in this psalm. It's that we are invited to be *a* blessed man because of *the* blessed man, Jesus Christ.

All right. Let's keep going. The rest of verse 1 says, "***Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers...***" Here are a couple of things to note. Notice the digression of posture. If this is what the blessed man *doesn't* do, this is what the un-blessed man *does*. He goes from walking to standing to sitting. Also notice the company he keeps: the wicked, the sinner, the scoffer. We're going to talk about those in a minute.

What I want us to do now is actually go through a rhythm here where we take a look at each one of these postures, each one of the companies the un-blessed man keeps, and I want us to break it down, first defining our terms, just knowing what this psalm is actually pointing to and talking about if we are called to be *a* blessed man because of *the* blessed man, and also seeing how *the* blessed man, Jesus Christ, has set the standard for how we are to conduct ourselves in this life.

So, let's begin. It starts with that first posture. *The blessed man walks not in the counsel of the wicked*. What's the counsel of the wicked? In a word, *temptation*. It's the advice the wicked give to those who are seeking to walk on that narrow path that leads to righteousness and instead leads them onto that wide path that leads to destruction. It's temptation. How does Jesus set the standard for how we are to deal with temptation?

If you were to turn to Luke, chapter 4, you would see that Jesus has just been baptized. He has been led by the Holy Spirit out into the wilderness. He then fasts for 40 days and 40 nights, and then Satan comes to him and begins to tempt him in three ways: turning rocks into bread; taking him to a high place and having him bow the knee, if he would, and then he would give him the whole world; and then taking him to the top of the temple, throwing himself off, and the angels would catch him.

How does our Lord respond each and every time when temptation comes? He uses the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. He quotes Scripture again and again and again. This brings me to my first question for us this morning. What temptation

are you dealing with in your life? What temptation are you wrestling with? How do you sense the Enemy seeking to gain a foothold over you and in your life?

Some of you are here today, and you have been tempted with the exact same thing for years because the Enemy knows it works. Some of you may be here today, and just recently you've begun to be tempted with a new thing that you've never had to wrestle with before, but suddenly the Enemy is trying to deploy it against you in order to seek to bring you off that path that leads to righteousness and onto the path that leads to destruction.

Furthermore, what counsel are you taking? What company do you keep? Who do you hang out with outside of work, church, and family? Who's speaking into your life now? For us, temptation sounds the exact same that it always has since the fall in the garden. In Genesis 3, when Satan is tempting Eve, he first begins by saying, "Did God really say...?" Temptation begins by seeking to undermine the authority of God.

Next we see, right before Eve takes of the fruit and eats, Satan says to her, "Oh, you will not surely die." Temptation begins with seeking to undermine the authority of God. It then moves into downplaying the consequences if we do sin against God and what that means. How are we fighting temptation in our lives?

Next posture in verse 1: *the blessed man does not stand in the way of sinners*. What does it mean to stand in the way of a sinner? This is not a noble thing. Don't think about a train coming down the tracks, and there's a bridge behind you that has been taken out. You know the train is facing impending derailment, so you stand in its way, trying to flag it down and get it to stop. That's not what we're talking about here when we talk about standing in the way of sinners.

To stand in the way of sinners is like when you go to Krispy Kreme. Just bear with me. You walk in the door. You look through. There's that giant window, and what's on the other side of that window? A wonderful conveyor belt filled with delicious doughnuts going through a wall of glaze.

They're all moving in uniformity with one another. They're all moving in sync with one another. If you weren't tempted before, you are a little bit now. Here's the deal. That's what it means to stand in the way of a sinner. It's to stand in uniformity with sinners, like those doughnuts on the conveyor belt at Krispy Kreme.

Next question: How does Jesus set the standard? Paul writes in Hebrews, chapter 4, starting at verse 14, going into verse 15, ***"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our***

weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Christ Jesus was tempted in the exact same way we have been tempted in this life, yet he never sinned once. He lived the perfect life that we could not live. This brings me to my next question for us this morning: What sin are you wrestling with? What sin are you struggling to conquer? Some of you may be here, and you may have been battling addiction for years now because the Enemy has gained that foothold, and he keeps attacking you and seeking to make you stray off that path.

The good news is we can approach the throne of grace with confidence. How do I know that? Because Paul continues on in Hebrews 4:16. ***"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."***

We are called, for those who are in Christ Jesus, to remember the grace, to remember the mercy, to remember the love that is extended to us, not because of who we are, not because of what we have done, but because of who Christ Jesus is and what he has done for us.

There's also a command there. If y'all remember, when we were doing our book study in the gospel of Mark, Pastor Kyle would talk about how Jesus, when he was doing his healing ministries, would first seek to meet their felt needs in order to then meet their forever needs. So, Jesus in his healing ministry would begin by going up to the individual, healing them, then forgiving them of their sin, and then what was the next thing he would say to them? "Go and sin no more."

Folks, that's not a suggestion. That's a command, and that's the standard we are called to live into if we are to attain and if we are to seek to run after the author and perfecter of our faith, Jesus Christ. It's not going to earn our salvation (Christ has already done that for us), but it is the standard of righteousness we are called to live into as his followers.

The last part of verse 1: *the blessed man does not sit in the seat of a scoffer*. What is the seat of a scoffer? It's the ultimate place of digression into sin where one has delved so deep into the chasm of sin that they find themselves lost in the darkness and utterly hopeless. It's the place where the sinner has become so hardened in their heart, their heart is so calloused, so turned to stone, and the weightiness of sin has been plaguing them for so long that all they can do is just sit and scoff, sit and mock.

Why? Because sinners do not like to be left alone, because when sinners are left alone, they are forced to face their shame, guilt, iniquity, and unrighteousness that

have come by way of their sin. No, sinners do not like to be left alone. They like to be in good company, so they tempt others.

Essentially, to sit in the seat of a scoffer is to become the counsel of the wicked, to become the one who tempts others to stray off that path that leads to righteousness and onto that wide path of destruction, so that when you sit in your sin, you can look at the others around you to your left and to your right and say, "See? They did it too," and you can begin to feel better about your sin.

My question for you all this morning is, as you walk into this worship center, as you come through those doors, as you sit here in this seat, is yours not the seat in a sanctuary but the seat of a scoffer? Have you been dragged here by a loved one, by a spouse, by a friend, and you're sitting around during this time, and you're looking around going, "Are these people really taking this seriously? Are they really going to listen to this old book to find their source for truth?"

Friend, you can have peace. How do I know that? Because Christ has brought peace by the blood of his cross. Where do I know that? It's found in the same place that the blessed man finds his delight in his foundation. Verse 2: "**...but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.**"

I want to split up this verse into two parts. First part: *the blessed man's delight is in the law of the Lord*. What's the law of the Lord? The law of the Lord is *this*. It's the source of God's law. It's the source of God's commands. It's the source of God's instruction, and it's the place that he breathes truth and life to us. It is the eternal Word of God. It's the Bible in your lap. That's the law of the Lord.

We read of how the blessed man delights in it, another word we don't use very much in our society. *Happiness* doesn't quite capture it. *Joy* is getting much closer. To have delight in something is to have total satisfaction in the source itself. So, for the blessed man to find delight in the law of the Lord means his satisfaction is not found in anything in this world but is only found in the eternal Word of God.

The next part of verse 2 says that *on his law he meditates day and night*. What's one other thing we do day and night? No. It's not eating. I know it feels that way. We just got out of the holiday season. We breathe. We breathe day and night. We breathe in, we breathe out. That's how we, as Christians, are called to be with the Word of God. We breathe it in. We breathe it out. We consume this Word.

We read this Word, and when we're not reading this Word, we're thinking about this Word, and when we're not thinking about this Word, we study this Word, and when we're not studying this Word, we share this Word, and when we're not sharing this

Word, we apply it to our lives in how we conduct ourselves on a daily basis. That is how we are called, as followers of Jesus Christ, to interact with the Word of God.

Last year, I had the pleasure of sitting under the teaching of Brother Paul Washer at the G3 Conference. With regard to studying the Word of God, this is how he put it: "Throw yourself at the study of this Word until when they cut you, you bleed the Bible." That's the call of the Christian. That's the mandate we are given to commit ourselves to reading God's Word each and every day.

Do you want joy? Are you looking for happiness? It's in the Word of God. Do you want to be satisfied? Do you want to have peace? It's in the Word of God. Do you want to know truth, real truth? Do you want to know God's will for your life? It's in the Word of God.

Now we see in verse 3 the posture the blessed man *does* take. He doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked. He doesn't stand in the way of sinners. He doesn't sit in the seat of scoffers. Now in verse 3 we see what he *does* do. It says, "***He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.***"

You don't have to, but you could almost close your eyes and imagine this scene being played out before us. There's this wide, vast meadow, and in the still meadow is running this stream, this creek, a brook through the middle of the meadow. Just yards away from this stream of water is this grand, tall, mighty oak tree. This thing is not moving because its roots run deep into the fertile soil that is nourished by the streams of water.

This is the Christian who commits themselves to the study of the Word constantly. When the storms come and the gusts of wind blow and the bitter seasons begin to set into the valley, the tree does not move because its foundations are strong. When the storms in your life come... And they *will* come, because we're not promised an easy life, but we *are* promised a fulfilled one.

The Christian who finds themselves rooted and grounded in the Word of God will remain. The key is not to try to get out of the storm. That would be as ridiculous as a tree trying to uproot itself in the middle of a hurricane. It would just fall over. No, the key isn't to try to get out of the storm. The key is to try to remain and seek to remain strong and steadfast in the midst of the storm, knowing that your hope, your foundation, your peace, and your future are not found in anything in this world.

It's not found ultimately in this life. We are just pilgrims passing through. There is a light we look toward, and his name is Jesus Christ. He is the one who is the author and perfecter of our faith and the essence of our righteousness and our salvation.

That's how we are called to stay in the Word. Do you want a New Year's resolution? Read the Bible. Don't treat it like the gym memberships where you begin in January and February, and then you get to Leviticus and drop off in late February.

The storms come in March. The storms come the moment the Enemy senses that you are not grounded in the eternal Word of God, because the Enemy is roaring around like a hungry lion. He comes like a thief in the night, seeking to steal, kill, and destroy. It is only the individual whose life is informed only by God's Word who will be able to thwart the temptations the Enemy seeks to set in our lives. Read the Word.

The final part of verse 3, this last line, we have to talk about. We have to address it really quickly. It says, "***In all that he does, he prospers.***" We have to be careful here because we have to define what it means to prosper. Again, there's the world's standard and there's God standard.

The world's standard would seek to define prospering based on material wealth and possessions, but what are we talking about here? It's not measuring prosperity based on wealth and possessions. It's measuring prosperity based on God's definition of prospering.

Unfortunately, this ideology has seeped into the American church today, the idea of defining prosperity based on the world's standards. You know it under a different name. It's called the *prosperity gospel*, which dictates that health, wealth, and prosperity can be yours if you just believe enough.

"You can be healthy, wealthy, and prosperous if you just pray for the right things. If you're not healthy, if you're not wealthy, and you're not prosperous, it's because your faith isn't strong enough and you must not be praying for the right things." Evidently, the disciples of this false doctrine, this false gospel, have not spent a single minute in the New Testament.

I can't help but hearken back to the apostle Paul's second letter to his young protégé Timothy, in chapter 1, where he says, "Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, nor of me his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings."

This false doctrine of the prosperity gospel has allowed the American Christian to slip into a materialized coma that has left us dormant and hungry for more. So, our definition of *prosperity* is not based on the world's standards. It must be based on God's standards. What is God's standard for what it means to prosper? It's not in anything we find in this world, although we may enjoy its comforts.

Prospering, according to God's definition, is to dwell in Christ's righteousness, to bask in his righteousness, and to behold his glory in the way that he has revealed himself to each and every one of us who are in Christ. That's what it means to prosper. That's what it means when we speak of the blessed man prospering in all things. It's having that heavenly perspective rather than the worldly one.

All right. Verses 4-6 we're going to clump together for sake of time. Verse 4: **"The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away."** This raises a very important question. What is chaff? Guys, I Googled it. I looked it up. If you've read Ruth and Boaz, you know where I'm going with this. Chaff is the nubbins you don't want in Grandma's bread. It's the junk.

For those of you who don't fancy yourself a farmer, because we're all a bunch of city folk... A farmer around harvesttime would harvest the wheat crop. He would then bundle the wheat up and take it to what's known as the *winnowing barn*. He would take the crop of wheat into the winnowing barn and open the doors of the barn, and onto the threshing floor he would throw the wheat.

He would then take the winnowing fork. (Think *American Gothic*.) He would then take that wheat and throw it up into the air, and what would come down was the good stuff that you want in Grandma's bread. It would come down because of its weightiness, because it was heavy. It was grounded in something. So it would fall back down, the good stuff, but what would blow out was the chaff. The wind would drive the chaff out of the barn and blow it into oblivion.

Here in this psalm we are starting to get a sense of the eternal consequences this passage is talking about. If you were to continue on into verse 5, it says, **"Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous..."** What is this talking about? This verse is beginning to literally draw the dividing line between those who are in Christ Jesus and those who are outside of Christ Jesus.

What's it talking about? It's saying that those who are in Christ Jesus will have eternal life with him, dwelling in his presence, basking in his glory, able to be clothed in his righteousness. Those who are outside of Christ will not have such luxuries. They will be cast into the lake of fire where they will burn in hell, incurring the fullness of God's wrath forever.

That is what it means to be chaff, to be thrown out, cast out and into the fire. If that sounds severe, it's because it is. It speaks to the severity of committing one single sin against an all-holy, almighty, all-powerful God. That is the true consequence of sin. Moving on into verse 6, there's hope. It says, **"...for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."**

God knows the way of the righteous, not only because he's the standard of righteousness, but because he knows the individuals. He has foreknown the individuals he has set before the foundations of the world or even laid for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It's not an intellectual knowledge. It's not speaking to just head knowledge. This word *know* is speaking of an intimate knowledge, an intimate relationship that God has with those who are in Christ Jesus. That's what it's speaking to, but it also signifies how *we* are to conduct ourselves. We know that intellectual knowledge is not enough to save us.

Jesus himself actually speaks into this in Matthew, chapter 7, where he starts saying, "There will be some of you in the last days who will come to me and say, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy? Didn't we cast out demons in your name? Didn't we do mighty works?'" But what will Jesus say to them in that day, those who are outside of him? "Depart from me. I never knew you."

It's important for us to grasp and understand the intimacy that comes through relationship with Jesus Christ, as the one who has fulfilled all righteousness, the one who sets the standard of all righteousness, and...get this...the one who has secured all righteousness for his people. How do I know Christ has secured all righteousness? Because of Psalm 1:1.

It goes back to explain how Christ has done the work. It says, "***Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked...***" Indeed, Christ Jesus did not give in to temptation. He didn't walk in the counsel of the wicked, but he did walk as a result of it. What did the counsel of the wicked sound like that fateful day? "Crucify him. Crucify him. Crucify him." So he ascended up that holy hill.

Next it says the blessed man doesn't stand in the way of sinners, and, indeed, Christ never sinned. He doesn't stand in the *way* of sinners, but he does stand in the *place* of sinners. And how does he stand? Not like a tree by streams of water, but hanging on a tree from which streams of living water flow down that holy hill and clothe his people in pure grace and righteousness.

Finally, we read that the blessed man doesn't sit in the seat of a scoffer, and, indeed, Christ does not sit in the seat of a scoffer. While he hung on the cross, he heard the scoffers. He heard our mocking voice crying out among the scoffers, but Christ's seat is not the seat of a scoffer. No, his is the seat of an all-sufficient savior. His is the throne of a risen king.

Here's the summons. We each have an eternal court date where we will be called to stand before God and answer for everything we have done in this life. If we are only

relying on who we are and what we have done, none of us will be found righteous. Not one. But for those who are in Christ Jesus, for those who hold fast to the good news of the gospel message of his salvation, you will find a holy and eternal witness.

He will stand up as one who has taken our punishment, as one who has taken our sin, and as one who has paid our debt through the blood of his cross. Do you have an eternal witness in Christ? Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, chapter 6, "***Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***"

Is this the day of your salvation? As you sit here, do you sense the Holy Spirit renewing, regenerating, and revealing the biblical Jesus Christ to you as Lord and Savior? If so, would you fall on your knees, confess your sins, and profess Jesus Christ as Lord? This is the good news of the gospel: while we were yet still sinners, Christ died for us.

It is now the year 2023, and the church will continue to proclaim the same truths it has held to for millennia. Are you seeking blessing, true blessing? You're not seeking a possession. You're not seeking a process. You're seeking a person. His name is Jesus Christ. He is the blessed man. Do you know him? More importantly, does he know you? Let's pray.

Father, we come before you humbled by the grace you have extended to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who has lived the life we could not live, the one who has died the death we deserved, and the one who has raised to life so that we might live again in him.

I pray that you would continue to imprint these eternal truths onto our hearts as we head into this new year, that we would not be caught up or lose our focus on the things of this world, but rather we would only focus on you, only focus on the good news of the gospel, only focus on the righteousness you have given us through your Son Jesus Christ. Be with us, Lord, and let us never forget that wonderful message, that good news that is Christ. Amen.