

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

MOTIVATIONAL LESSONS

“The Blessed Life”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

Are you living the blessed life? Is your life as happy and joyous as it could be? Does your life have real meaning and purpose? If not, it may be because you are not following the biblical standard for the blessed life. Psalm 1 gives us a pattern for the blessed life. It gives us a valuable set of guidelines that we can follow in order to have real meaning to our lives. Psalm 1 says,

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; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. 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. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous (vss. 1-5).

Here we are given a clear pattern and plan to ensure that we can have the blessed life. What, then, must we do in order to have a life of divine happiness? That is the idea of “blessed.” The idea behind this word, as it is used in Matthew 5 in the Beatitudes, and as it is used throughout the Book of Psalms, carries with it not just happiness or joy, but a **divine** happiness—a happiness that transcends this world and is based upon the principles of God, Christianity, and all that we hold dear to our soul.

To have the blessed life, we first must avoid certain things. If we are really going to live a life that has meaning and joy—a life where we can have a divine happiness—then we are going to have to avoid certain things in this life. This is how Psalm 1:1 begins—“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.” That teaches us that we must avoid ungodly advice. Listen to this statement again: “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.” This idea of “walks not in the counsel of the ungodly” carries with it the idea of not participating in things in which ungodly people take part or abiding by principles by which they live their lives. Thus, we must avoid living our lives according to ungodly advice. This is a practical lesson that applies to our everyday living. If we hope to be truly blessed, we must avoid the advice of wicked, ungodly people. The world, of course, would like to convince us to live our lives in certain ways—ways that are not right with God, ways that are immoral, and ways that we might think will bring us happiness in the here and now. But these are ways that ultimately will not be pleasing to God. We do not need to follow the advice of ungodly people as it relates to morals and morality (what is right and what is wrong). Our world sometimes has a skewed view of the line between right and wrong as it relates to such things as lying versus telling the truth. Some people in the world today would say that at certain times it might be acceptable to tell a lie as long as it benefits those around you. But the Bible does not say that at all. Revelation 21:8 teaches us that all liars will have a part “in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.” Did you notice what John said? Liars will have their part “in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the

second death.” So, no, it is not right to lie. We cannot have a blessed life and live correctly if we tell lies. The Bible says that we are to “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). It is not right for us to steal things that are not ours, whether it is stealing cable from the cable company or whether it is stealing a service from some provider. As a child of God who wants to live the blessed life, we must have a high standard of morals regarding what is right and what is wrong in God’s sight.

We also do not need to be taking advice from the ungodly regarding the purpose of life. If we were to ask ungodly and wicked people what the meaning of life is, we would receive a plethora of different answers. Some would say that we are here to satisfy our lusts and desires. Others might say that we are here just to be happy and to ensure that this life is the very best life we can live. Such attitudes are ungodly and wicked. The Bible teaches us exactly why we are here. We are here in this short span of life to make sure that we get to Heaven. That is what life is really about. We are here to give God the glory and to live life in such a way that when we die we can go to be with the Lord. Isaiah 43:7 says, “Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” That not only is a wonderful text about creation, but it also tells us why we were created. We were created for God’s glory. The text of 1 Corinthians 10:31 offers a similar assessment when it says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” No, life is not just about us, or what we want, or what we think, or what we feel, or how to please the majority. Rather, we must do everything in this life to the glory of God. That means that we must do God’s will. We must live according to His teaching. Solomon searched for the real meaning of life. He found that most things in life were “vanity.” He liked them to chasing after the wind—something that is impossible to do. Thus, he said in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.” Thus, we are here to live our lives according to God’s will so that we can please Him.

We also do not need to follow the advice of ungodly people as it relates to their thinking about God. Many people view God as vindictive. They perceive Him as just waiting to banish people to Hell. But that is not at all true. Others believe that there is no God. That also is untrue. The psalmist said in Psalm 14:1, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” But the God we serve, and Who created the heavens and the Earth, is not a cruel, evil God. We serve a God of love. Consider what John said in 1 John 4:8 where he taught us about the nature of God. John said, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” What is love all about? God is the epitome—the very meaning and ideal—of love. He is not an evil God Who wants to send people to Hell. If He were, then He never would have made a plan of salvation for us. The God we serve is the God Who, before time began, set a plan in motion, knowing that we would sin and fall short. He made it possible for us to have eternal life. To have the blessed life, we first must avoid ungodly advice. We must avoid teaching from those who are ungodly or evil.

Another step that we must avoid is the influence of sinners. If we are really going to have a life that has divine happiness, then we cannot allow sinners to influence us regarding what we think, say, or do in this life. Listen again to Psalm 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.” This idea of standing in the path of sinners means that we are around them, we are with them, and we have an association and a relationship with them. We are standing in their path because they are influencing us in this life. Christians do not need to be influenced by ungodly people. In fact, we are the ones who are to be the influence on the world around us. As we think about how ungodly people can influence us, young

people especially need to realize that as a young person they may have many friends, some of whom may be ungodly and who do not follow the teachings of the Bible. What should be a young person's relationship with such friends? Listen well. Young people do not need to let those types of friends influence them regarding how to live their lives. Think about what Paul said as he spoke of evil influences. In 1 Corinthians 15:33 Paul said, "Evil companions corrupt good morals." Why must we not stand in the path of sinners? It is because if we stand there long enough, we might become numb, or the principles and ideas of those sinners might "rub off on us" and thereby influence us. Think about the first time you ever heard a curse word. You might have been very offended by that. But what about the second time or the third time? Did it affect you as much then? Over time, we can become numb to the impact that ungodly people have on us. Therefore, we need to be sure that if we are going to live the blessed life, we cannot allow ungodly people to influence us in this life. We are to be the ones who influence the world around us. Christians are to be **in** the world, but not **of** the world. We are to have an impact on those who do not know God so that they can see our Christian life and want to come to Jesus. Christ taught us this very principle in Matthew 5:16 when He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." We are to be the light. We are to be the one who rubs off on others. We are to be the good example so that people can see us and want to come to Christ. We are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21). Thus, we must all live our lives according to the principle set forth in 1 Corinthians 11:1 where Paul said, "Imitate me as I also imitate Christ." Are you living the blessed life? Not only must you avoid evil advice in order to have the blessed life, but you also must not let sinners influence you.

Then the psalmist said in Psalm 1 that we have to avoid the lifestyle of ungodliness. If we truly expect to have a life of divine blessing, then we cannot follow the lifestyle of ungodly people. Think for just a moment about the latter part of Psalm 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." The idea of "the scornful" is the idea of those who are not right with God. Notice the progression. First we are **standing** in the path of sinners. Then we are **walking** in the counsel of the ungodly. Finally, we are **sitting** with them—indicating full-fledged acceptance of their ideas. If we are going to have a happy life, then we cannot allow ungodly people to bring us into their lifestyles. We cannot live a life, as so many today do, that is based upon sex. Life is about helping others. It is not just about "me." Think about the Pharisee described in Luke 18. Two men came up to the temple to offer sacrifices. One of them (a Pharisee) thought he was righteous. He approached the temple with his sacrifice and began his prayer by saying, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." The man's point was, "God, aren't You glad that I am your child?" This was a very selfish man. Much of our world is about selfishness. The attitude seems to be that "might makes right." People seem to want to get the most out of this life while they can. This is the idea that many people today have. Christians do not live their lives like that. We must avoid becoming selfish and self-centered. We must look beyond ourselves in order to try to help others in this life.

We must avoid the lifestyle of ungodly people as it relates to worldliness. Life is not about us amassing "things." It is not about us gaining worldly possessions. The Bible teaches us that worldliness and godliness cannot go hand in hand. James said in James 4:4, "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." We do not need to get caught up in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life because they are not from the Father (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

We also need to avoid the lifestyle of ungodly people as it relates to greed. Oh, how our world today is driven by the almighty dollar. Greed is so often the motivation for the way that people live. Christians are taught not to be greedy. Paul taught in 1 Timothy 6:10 that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and that it “drowns men in destruction and perdition” (vs. 9). When we have a desire to love money, then it becomes a root for all types of evil. If our goal is just to amass money and things in this life, then we will never have God as our true treasure. Jesus taught us in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Is our treasure in seeking first the kingdom of God?

We do not need to allow the world to influence us with its lifestyle as it relates to the lust of the flesh. Television today tends to draw us in by the lust of the flesh. Much of the advertising that we see is oriented toward the lust of the flesh. As God’s children, we do not need to be drawn into that lusty desire. We need to be sure that we live a life that is disciplined. Peter said in 1 Peter 2:11, “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” We as God’s children must live a life that is truly disciplined by the Word of God. We must not give in to the lust of the flesh.

So what must we avoid in order to have the blessed life? We must avoid ungodly counsel. We must not let those people who are not Christians tell us how to live our lives. We must avoid being influenced by people who we know are worldly and by people who do not follow the standards of the Bible. We must avoid the lifestyle of the sinful and the ungodly.

But then, on the positive side, in order to live the blessed life we must accept certain things. Not only do we have to avoid certain things, but we must accept certain other things and bring those things into our lives so that we can have true happiness and joy. One of the greatest things that we need to accept and make a part of our life is a love for the Word of God. The psalmist made it very clear that if we want to live the blessed life, then we must have a love for God’s Word and for all the beauty and richness that it gives to our lives. Listen to Psalm 1:2—“His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” What must we accept in order to really have divine happiness in this life? We must have a love for God’s Word. Nothing will make our lives richer, or give us greater happiness, than to have a genuine love for the Word of God. The psalmist said in Psalm 119:97, “Oh how I love Your law; it is my meditation day and night.” Jesus was One Who had a true dedication to the Word of God. When faced with temptation at the hands of Satan in Matthew 4, He quoted three times, “It is written...,” “It is written...,” “It is written...” We need to love the Word of God because it is inspired by the Creator of the Universe, and because it gives us everything we need to live the blessed life. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Not only is it inspired, but it gives us everything we need to know God and to have the best life in the here and now. Peter said in 2 Peter 1:3 that God has given to us “all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us.” How do we get the knowledge that we need for “life and godliness”? We get it through the Word of God. We must follow, accept, and love the Word of God.

Then, as the psalmist said in Psalm 1:2, we must be people who are ready to study God’s Word. What must we accept? We must have an acceptance in our lives of not only loving the Word of God, but also being ready to study it. The psalmist continued in Psalm 1:2 when he said, “His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” Not only must we be people who state verbally, and show through our lifestyles, that we love the Word of God, but we also must be people who are ready to study the Scriptures to see what is right in God’s Word. I think of the statement made by Paul to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 where he said, “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a

worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” God has always taught His people to be good students of His Word and to follow His precepts carefully. Isaiah said in Isaiah 34:16, “Search from the book of the Lord” to see what is right. We need to be the same kind of people today. We need to be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11 by searching the Scriptures daily to see if what we are being told is true to the Word of God. One of the most encouraging passages is found in Job 23:12 where Job said in the midst of suffering and trial, “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.” Do we really love the Word of God enough to study it—and not just to study it to gain knowledge, but to study it with the view of applying its precepts to our lives? That is what we must do if we are going to live the blessed life.

Living the blessed life carries with it great benefits. If we live the blessed life, then we are going to reap the benefits of having lived such a life. Living the blessed life is right because it is what God tells us to do. But there are benefits, both in the here and now and in eternity, if we are willing to follow God’s teaching. Psalm 1:3 teaches us this principle. The psalmist wrote, “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.” Who is the “he” of this sentence? It is the person who follows God’s Word. As we think about the blessed life and its benefits, there are four that are specifically mentioned in Psalm 1:3. Those who live the blessed life are going to be “rooted” in this life. So many people have no purpose or meaning in their lives. They go through life without any real guidance. Christians are not people who are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Rather, we are to be “rooted and grounded” in the Word of God just like a tree that is planted by a river so that we have sustenance and have good roots in the Word of God that can give us guidance in this life. Not only are we rooted, but Christians are also to be people who are fruitful. Jesus taught us in John 15 that we need to bear “good fruit.” Fruit bearing is something in which Christians are to take part in this life. We need to have the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-23) in our lives. We need to follow God’s teaching, and show by our lifestyle that this is the fruit that we are following God. Another blessing is that we will be faithful. The psalmist refers to the person whose “leaf also shall not wither.” That represents the idea of endurance and remaining faithful. How can we stay true to God? How can we live the blessed life and know that we are going to be right with God? We can remain faithful by following the guidelines that we have discussed in this lesson. Also, the blessed individual will be one who is prosperous. Ephesians 1:3 teaches us that “all spiritual blessings” are ours “in Christ Jesus.” We will be given all the blessings that the child of God is afforded in this life when we follow the teachings of Jesus.

Are you living the blessed life? Does your life have real meaning and happiness? Does it have joy that transcends this world? When bad things happen, can you still find joy? James teaches us that we should be able to do so. James said, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (Jas. 1:2-3). Not all people can have happiness in the midst of trials. But the child of God can because he knows that even if his life comes to an end, he is still going to be with God in Heaven. Paul said in Romans 8:18, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” You will find no greater life than living the Christian life. If you want to live with God in eternity in Heaven, then you must follow the teaching found within the Word of God. Are you a child of God? If not, you can become one by believing in Jesus as the Son of God. Then you must be willing to repent of your past sins, confess Him as the Son of God, and be immersed in water as Jesus taught in Mark 16:16. Our prayer for you today is that you will follow the teaching found in Psalm 1:1 and have the blessed life.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE BLESSED LIFE”

1. What is “divine” happiness, according to this lesson?
2. In Psalm 1:1, what does the phrase, “walks not in the counsel of the ungodly” mean?
3. What does Revelation 21:8 have to say about liars?
4. What does Ephesians 4:15 admonish us to do?
5. Why should Christians not take advice from the ungodly regarding the purpose of life?
6. What is the point of Isaiah 43:7?
7. What did Paul mean when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:3, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”?
8. According to Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, what is the purpose of our life on Earth?
9. What was the attitude of the Pharisee described in Luke 18?
10. What was wrong with the attitude of the Pharisee described in Luke 18?
11. In Matthew 5:16, what did Jesus urge Christians to do?
12. In 1 Peter 2:21, what did Peter tell Christians to do?
13. In James 4:4, what did James have to say about friendship with the world?
14. What three things did John list in 1 John 2:16 that Christians must avoid?
15. In 1 Timothy 6:10, what did Paul have to say about the love of money?
16. According to Christ’s teaching in Matthew 6:21, what relationship exists between “our treasure” and “our heart”?
17. In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter discussed something that “wars against the soul.” What was Peter warning against?
18. According to Psalm 1:2, where should our delight be?
19. What great truth is found in Isaiah 34:16?
20. What did Paul tell Timothy to do in 2 Timothy 2:15?
21. According to Ephesians 1:3, what do Christians have that other people do not?
22. What did the Bereans (of Acts 17:11) do that caused them to draw an apostolic commendation?