

Theme: There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways.

Therefore **the wicked** will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of **the righteous**.⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of **the righteous**, but the way of **the wicked** will perish. Psalm 1:5–6

I. Intro - The Mandalorian “This is the way”

- A. Hugely popular Disney addition to Star Wars
- B. Mandalorian - mysterious masked warrior
- C. Lives by a creed; often against great odds; willing to die to live by the creed
- D. Creed summarized as “This is the way” - popular meme
- E. The Bible talked about “The Way” long before the Mandalorian!
- F. What is the way? How do we walk in it?
- G. Psalm 1&2 - introductory note
 - 1. They are meant to be read as a unit
 - 2. They introduce the whole book of Psalms
 - 3. They clearly show two ways or paths for humans
 - 4. We will do a meditation on them to learn the way

II. The Two Ways

- A. The two ways in Psalm 1 and 2
For the LORD watches over **the way of the righteous**, but **the way of the wicked** will perish. (Psalm 1:6)
 - 1. The way of the righteous and the way of the wicked
 - a. Both are listed in this final summary verse
 - b. The Psalm contrasts the righteous and the wicked

- 2. The way of blessing and the way of perishing
Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers...⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will **perish**. Psalm 1:1, 6
 - a. The first and last word of the Psalm
 - b. The LORD watches over the way of the righteous - this is blessing!
 - c. A description of the blessed life vs the perishing life occupy the heart of the Psalm (see below)
- 3. This is also central in Psalm 2
Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be **destroyed in your way**, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. **Blessed** are all who take refuge in him. Psalm 2:12
 - a. Note how Psalm 2 ends where Psalm 1 began - blessed
 - b. Destroyed is the same word as ‘perish’ in Psalm 1:6
 - c. You can either be destroyed in your way or blessed in your way

B. The two ways in Scripture

- 1. The Torah lays out two exclusive ways
This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you **life and death**, **blessings and curses**. Now choose **life**, so that you and your children may live Deut 30:19

2. The book of Proverbs calls these two ways the way of wisdom and righteousness and the way of the wicked fools

The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness. Prov 15:9

- a. The LORD detests the way of the wicked - and so it will perish
 - b. The LORD loves the way of the righteous - which is pursuing righteousness (parallelism)
3. The prophets call us to walk in the way of the LORD
Your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Isaiah 30:21
 4. Jesus clearly taught there were two ways with two very different ends
Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Matthew 7:13–14
 - a. Two paths with two very different destinations
 - b. The word for road is the same Greek word as in Psalm 1 - teaching the same idea as there
 5. Early Christians were called followers of the Way
Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. Acts 9:1–2

However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets Acts 24:14

- a. The Way was a name for Christians
 - b. This title is used 5x in Acts (9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22)
6. Didache 1:1 - There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways.
 7. Our culture hates the very notion of such a clear distinction between the two ways, but this is central in the teaching of Scripture.

III. Contrasting the Two Ways

- A. The way of blessing, the way of perishing
Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers... ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Psalm 1:1, 6

 1. Blessed and perish are obviously opposites!
 2. The first and last word of the Psalm - as far apart as possible
 3. Blessed begins with aleph (first letter of Hebrew alphabet), while 'will perish' begins with tav (last letter of Hebrew alphabet)
 4. These two ways are as far apart as A and Z!

- B. The way of righteousness, the way of wickedness

 1. The path of blessing is the path of the righteous
Blessed is the man ... ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Psalm 1:1, 6
 - a. The blessed man is watched over by the LORD

- b. The way of the blessed man is the way of righteousness

2. The blessed man avoids the path of the wicked

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. Psalm 1:1

- a. He does not walk, stand or sit in the way of the wicked
- b. A variety of descriptions to show the total distinction and avoidance
- c. Those who walk with Jesus can not walk with the world; they are two utterly different paths

C. The way of the few and the way of the many

Blessed is **the man** who does not walk in the counsel of **the wicked** or stand in the way of **sinners** or sit in the seat of **mockers**. Psalm 1:1

1. The man - the blessed individual walking the way of righteousness is singular thought the Psalm
2. The wicked, sinners, mockers - all plural
3. One term for the blessed individual (the righteous) but three different terms for the ones on the path of destruction (wicked, sinners, mockers)
4. This is the same thing Jesus taught in Matthew 7:13-14 - the way of the righteous is narrow and walked by few, while the way of wickedness is broad and full of people.
5. To walk the way of righteousness will require a willingness to walk apart from the crowd - but Jesus is better than thousands of companions.
6. Better to walk the path of righteousness, blessing, and life alone than to follow the crowd and perish!

D. The way of stability and fruitfulness, the way of instability and barrenness

He is **like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.** ⁴ **Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.** Psalm 1:3-4

1. A stable, rooted tree vs. chaff that blows away
2. A fruitful tree by abundant waters vs dry chaff
3. A fruitful tree vs chaff that is blown away
4. The way of godly prosperity vs the way of inconsequential results
5. True blessing is found in the way of the LORD, while the way of the wicked leads only to futility.
6. You can see this truth in the lives of individuals, families, and even cultures. Those who reject the ways of God become increasingly unstable and unfruitful over time.

E. The way of life and the way of death

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Psalm 1:5-6

1. The wicked have no place in the congregation of God's people
2. The wicked will not stand in the judgment - in this life and especially not at the judgment seat of God.
3. The way of the wicked leads only to eternal perishing and death.
4. Implicit here in Psalm 1; Jesus is explicit in Matthew 7:13-27; so is John the Baptist in Matthew 3:12

IV. Applying the Word

A. Do I see the reality of the two ways?

1. Our culture wants to deny such sharp distinctions as the two ways, but this is utter, deadly folly
2. This is really an extension of the previous series on the Freedom of Limits - there is a way that embraces the limits given by God and finds freedom and life, and there is a way that rejects them and embraces slavery and death.
3. In fact, our culture will excoriate, ridicule, and ostracize those who make such clear distinctions, but God Himself makes them over and over in Scripture!
4. Have I been brainwashed by our culture into so much nuance that I can't see these two irreconcilable ways?
5. Have I proclaimed myself to be wise but become a fool (by denying this clear distinction)?
6. Meditate on the two ways this week - it is a matter of life and death!

B. Am I walking the way of life or the way of death?

1. The two ways are NOT a description of how to be saved! We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!
2. We will also see how Jesus is THE WAY!
3. The two ways are a description of the Christian life and the life of those not in a relationship with God.

4. Those who are truly Christians will walk in the way, and those not walking in the way of God are NOT Christians - no matter how they identify on surveys!
5. Make no mistake, to be a Christian means we will say and live "This is the way" - even when it goes against the grain of culture!
6. Am I truly a follower of Jesus Christ, the Way?
7. Am I trying to be a follower of Jesus but walk the way of the world, the way of death?

C. The Lord's Table - Food for the Journey

1. Here we remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus
2. Here we look forward to the return of Christ, our resurrection, and the marriage supper of the Lamb!
3. Come and let your soul feast at the Table of Life!

The Two Ways

Psalm 1
April 11, 2021
Communion
1 Corinthians 15:58

Teaching keywords: Blessing; Christian Life; Godliness; sanctification; righteousness; salvation and deliverance

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. May God fill your life with blessing as you walk in His way. 1 Corinthians 15:58

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. ⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Psalm 1:1–6