

5/20/12 | Sermon | Ascension Batavia

“Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,” (2 Corinthians 9:10, NKJV) Amen.

Delight in “Right”eous Roots

“The purpose of our lives is to be happy.” – the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lamas are believed to be enlightened beings, a sort of god, who have postponed their own nirvana and chosen to take rebirth in order to serve humanity and enlighten others.

Is the purpose of our lives in this world to be happy? Is our fulfillment to be found in personal happiness? If so, where will we find this happiness?

The word “Blessed” comes from the Hebrew word which means most basically “happy.” In this sense, the psalm says, “Happy is the man who...” Here in the psalm lies the secret to true and lasting happiness. Here in lies an understanding of happiness quite different from what the Dalai Lama would teach. It centers not in my wants, rather we read ...

Psalm 1 (NKJV)

- 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;
- 2** But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.
- 3** 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.
- 4** The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.
- 5** Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- 6** For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

In Jesus name, who is God's first fruit from the dead, dear fellow redeemed,

1. Rooted in the “right” soil

The Dalai Lama says, “Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions.” In the Buddhist estimation, true happiness is something you need to make happen. It will not come to you. You have to accomplish it. Hence it all centers around humanity's doing, man's working.

On the contrary, God's definition of happiness and delight is never based on man's doing. Our delight comes from being rooted in the right soil.

(v.1) Notice the progression of thought as the psalmist describes the way of the ungodly. “The Ungodly” is the Hebrew opposite of “the righteous.” As we read in **v.6**.

The way of the ungodly is a progression from a walk, to a stand, to a sit. Blessed is the man who does not dwell in the seat of the scornful.

These are where the roots of the unrighteous are grounded... Rooted in sin. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. Perhaps you can think of times you have been in such counsel. As one pastor commented, this counsel describes a philosophy of life. We see this described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians, **1 Corinthians 15:32 (NKJV) — 32 If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”**

Without the truth of the resurrection of our Savior, there is nothing more for us. “Let us eat and drink...” The philosophies of this world all center around such thinking: this world, me, and now. The counsel of the ungodly says that the purpose of life is to find happiness in this world. It is a counsel into which we all have strayed.

Every time we try to find meaning for our life apart from the Word of God, we walk in this counsel. As we do or refuse to do something to our brother or sister or spouse in order to bring happiness to ourselves, we walk in this counsel.

I remember meeting some fellas in college who had just such a philosophy. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. With a rejection of the ways that our conscience and God’s word holds us accountable for our sins, we see walking in sin lead to standing in sin and eventually sitting; that is, dwelling in contentment with sin. **James 1:15 (NKJV) — 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.** These individuals had no problem talking about sin or making foul language, drinking, sex, and drugs their lifestyle. ... **Nor sits in the seat of the scornful.** These sort always want you to sit down with them. Whether it is drugs, or perhaps more subtly by encouraging revenge or suggesting other things you deserve for yourself – this path is quite tempting to our flesh. We think such things will make us happy ... at least for a while. The sinful world has taken root in this unrighteous soil.

Seeing as how we too have wandered into these paths, what is the difference between me and the ungodly. I too am a sinner. After reading v.5, how can I expect to stand in the congregation of the righteous? The difference dear righteous Christians is where your roots lie. The ungodly not only commit such sins, but they are also content with them. They are satisfied with the nourishment that the happiness of this world provides. **(v.4)**

However that is not where our roots lie. God has worked a transplant. **(v.2,3)** God has rescued us from the bad soil; He has yanked us out of our sinful contentment. He has planted us in good soil, the “right” soil.

God has rooted us in the righteous soil as He waters, gives His Son. He prunes us with love. True delight is in the Word. Keep in mind that in Old Testament writing, the word “law” was often used in a much broader sense than just the commands of God. It here includes the whole counsel of God. This sense is similar to how we speak of the “Word

of God.” **Psalm 119:1 (NKJV) — 1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the Lord!**

We are rooted not in the things of this world, but in the everlasting soil of God’s Word. We are righteous not because of anything we have done, but simply because we are rooted by faith in the gospel. We are rooting in the soil of Christ’s earned righteousness. In the word, God gives us forgiveness and counts us as righteous for Jesus sake. As Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, **John 4:13–14 (NKJV) — 13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”**

This is true and lasting happiness. v.2 **His delight is in the word of the LORD.** How precious it is indeed to stand in this soil. How delightful it is to make it apart of our everyday life. We need this grace not just on Sundays but as the psalmist says, “day and night.” Let us meditate. Let us stand in God’s grace. Let us sit in the seat of God’s righteous will. May our thoughts dwell not on sin, but on God’s grace and good blessings. We stand rooted in the right soil.

2. Producing the righteous fruit

We hear another of the Dalai Lama’s quotes, “It is very important to generate a good attitude, a good heart, as much as possible. From this, happiness in both the short term and the long term for both yourself and others will come.”

I guess to some degree we could agree with that. The question is, where is that good heart going to come from. Buddhism would have you establish your roots within the cultivated soil of humanity, by your own doing. This religion would seek to draw from the righteousness we are capable of producing by ourselves. But where will these roots leave us at the end of our days? As we stand before the judgement, will we expect our works to stand?

Romans 6:21–23 (NKJV) — 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am just about to start a garden out back. In fact I plan to go to the store today to buy seeds. I have had to spend a bit of time planning this garden including tilling and cultivating the soil. I will have to spend hours weeding and watering day by day, week by week. If we are merely the plants, what can we do to cause good fruit to about in our lives?

I recall one little boy describing what plants need to grow. He said, “they need water, sun, and love.” Isn’t that the truth? If you don’t care for your plants, attend to their needs, they will wither; they simply will not make it on their own. God has been planning, tilling, planting, watering, and above all loving. That is what the philosophies of this world are missing the most – love. Love cannot be generated out of thin air. Not real love. It has to be motivated. God has to cause it to blossom.

That is because the only truly righteous fruit has to be completely selfless. None of us could ever produce this. Our fruit withers with selfishness. Selfless fruits can only be produce by the selfless love of Christ. **John 15:5 (NKJV) — 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

After all, what happens when you follow the Buddhist way? What happens when you rely on yourself? It all becomes based on this world. We end up looking for fruit that we can see with out eyes. For instance, say we show compassion and invite in the homeless man to give shelter and food. He then turns around and robs us and runs. We get bitter, we resent the good that we tried to do.

The roots that hold fast when those winds blow must be deep. Far worse things than being robbed may come in the winds of this sinful world. Root yourself in real compassion: **John 3:16 (NKJV) — 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

By not being rooted in ourself but rather in the soil of Christ’s righteousness we can bring forth lasting fruit. In the midst of the droughts of this world were man cannot make any sense of God, we are nourished. (v.3) What ever you do in Christ will prosper. As you continue to ground your faith in the study of the Word your life will blossom into acts of love for others. This happiness will last because you are finally not doing it for yourself. You finally are doing something not looking for something in return. You will find Christ motivating you to forgive that person who you think doesn’t deserve it. You will help your spouse or friend even when you know it doesn’t really make you happy to do so. Yet your inward man delights in such things.

So is what the Dalai Lama said true? “The purpose of our lives is to be happy.” Perhaps we could say, yes. The purpose of our lives is to be happy, but not in the things of this world and most especially not by something we find in ourself or in our doing. Our delight is in the Word of the LORD. Here is our righteousness. Here is the right soil. And here we produce the right fruit.

We close with a reading from Paul’s letter to the Colossians: **Colossians 1:9–10 (NKJV) — 9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord,**

fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Amen.