

Lesson 9: THE BOOK OF PSALMS

2 Samuel 23: 1,2; Psalm 1

2 weeks

Lesson 9-A: “He Is Like a Tree...” Psalm 1

INTRODUCTION:

The book of Psalms is an interesting and unique part of the Word. Rather than stories or prophecies, the book of Psalms is a book of 150 poems or songs, given by the Lord mostly through King David. King David himself, at the end of his life, said that it was not he who wrote the Psalms, but the Lord.

READING:

Pass out to each child a page with **Psalm 1** written out on it. Have them either take turns reading parts of it out loud, or have them follow along as you read it out loud.

Now introduce and get them started on the painting project. While they are working on it, read to them the following:

The Psalms are given to us by the Lord to help us express the feelings and thoughts we ought to have, and often do have, about Him and our relations to Him. That is why people have always loved the Psalms and found help in them. We all like to express our feelings, but some of our feelings from day to day are selfish and wrong, and these often “come out” when we do not really mean to show them. So it’s especially good for us to read and sing the Psalms and try to bring our feelings into the pattern which they give us.

The very first Psalm shows us a good pattern to live by. “Blessed” means “happy” and sometimes things which we think are going to make us happy actually do just the opposite. So we need to listen to this teaching from the Lord. He really knows.

The first verse tells us that those who are “blessed” or “happy” do *not* do three certain things: listen to advice that is only worldly and not heavenly; stand with people or ideas that care nothing about the Lord; or sit with people or ideas that mock or scorn the Lord’s truth.

The second verse tells us that a blessed or happy person is one who looks to the Lord and the Word for guidance.

Verse three pictures of the life of a good man or woman. Such a person stands firm like a tree, soaking up truth from the Lord like the tree soaks up water from the river and grows strong. This person’s beliefs don’t have to wither away and change, like leaves in the fall, because his or her beliefs are based on the Lord’s unchanging truth. They stay fresh and green, like summer leaves. He or she lives the Lord’s truth by doing good things for other people, and these are like delicious fruits on a tree.

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Verse four talks about what it's like when people rely only on the thoughts of people, without guidance from the Lord. Without the Lord's true guidance, people's ideas about what is right or wrong keep changing from generation to generation, and are like "chaff"—dried-out husks of grain—that just blow away in the wind.

So Psalm 1 starts off the book of Psalms by telling us to keep our thoughts and beliefs turned toward the Lord, and that if we do, we will live firm and strong and growing, like a beautiful tree.

Project for Learning Psalm 1

Create a "Dot Painting" of a Tree Planted by Streams of Water

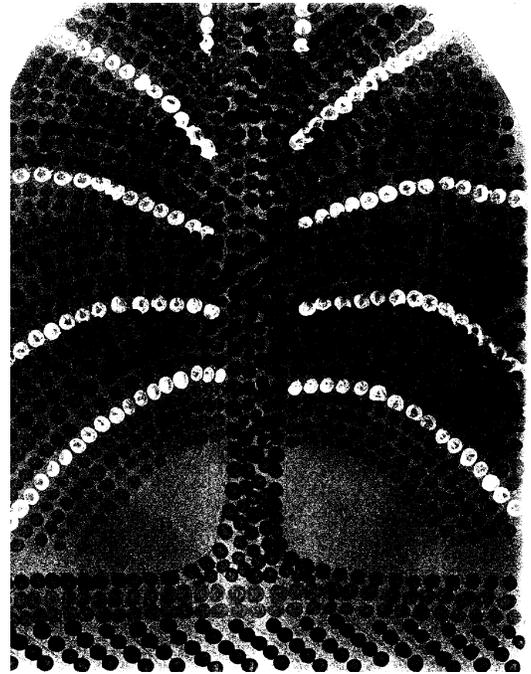
Supplies:

- large sheets of white paper
- Q-tips
- a variety of paints (green, brown, 2 shades of blue, and other nice colors for fruits and flowers)
- pencils
- newspaper to put under it all

Procedure:

1. Tell students they will each make a picture of a tree, like the one described in Psalm one, using the Q-tips to fill in each area of the painting with dots of color.
2. They may first want to lightly sketch the outlines of the things that will be in their painting—a tree by a stream, and maybe other trees, or plants nearby.
3. Now have them paint their picture by dipping Q-tips to fill in each area of the painting with dots of color.
4. Have them dot in colorful fruits and /or flowers amount the leaves of the tree. Encourage them to fill the whole page with color.

Note: This project needed one more week, so we continued it, and the teacher read "The Prophecy of the Branch" as the children worked.



EXTRA ACTIVITIES:

You may want to photocopy the Psalm 1 word search (from the *Dole Sunday School Activity Book*, lesson 81) that can be done when students finish the project.

Lesson 9-B: The Prophecy of the Branch

(Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8, 6:8; Isaiah 11:1-5)

INTRODUCTION:

Last week, we learned about Psalm one, which talks about a person being like a tree, planted by streams of water. The branches of a tree are like the true things we learn, which make us able to stretch out and do things in life.

A tree is also a picture of the very greatest Human Being -- the Lord. And in several prophecies that were foretelling the Lord's birth on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ is called a Branch.

READING: Prophecies of the Branch

Listen to these prophecies from the book of Jeremiah:

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” (Jeremiah 23:5)

“In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” (Jeremiah 33:15)

There are also two such prophecies in the book of Zechariah:

“Hear, o Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.” (Zechariah 3:8)

Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD.” (Zechariah 6:12)

But why is the Lord Jesus Christ called a Branch? When the Lord caused Himself to be born on earth, He took on a new way of reaching out to people, just as a branch that grows out from a tree trunk is a new way for the tree to reach out and grow more leaves and bear more fruit. In being born a baby and then growing up to walk among people, teaching and healing them, the Lord could stretch out to people. He could tell them things that they needed to know -- things that they hadn't understood before. And even today, many centuries later, we can know deep things about how we ought to live if we want to be connected with the Lord, and be eternally happy. And all because the Lord sent Himself as Jesus Christ, the Holy Branch that grew, reaching all the way down to the earth to bring us His love.

I'll finish by reading one more beautiful prophecy of the Lord's coming from the book of Isaiah:

There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

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The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.
(Isaiah 11:1-5)

PROJECT:

Continue the dot painting project started in connection with lesson 9-A.