Psalm 1: 1-3; "Christ - "The Most Blessed of Men"; A Communion Sermon, given in preparation for the taking of the Lord's Supper, by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 4th, 2009, in the Morning Worship Service.

This Psalm, as it is the entrance door to all of the rest of the Psalms, stands as door-keeper to open up the door and let us in to look at the experience of true religion; to see the character a godly man; what he looks like, and how he lives. This door-keeper is asking you - "Would you be godly?" "Then enter here." To be a godly man or woman, your orientation must be that you are most concerned with God. You are most concerned to learn to do what is pleasing to Him. You are caught up with Him. It is not just that you want to be godly; but it is true of you that you have determined by the grace of Jesus Christ that you will be godly. Godliness is a matter of heart obedience. The direction of your heart; what you pay attention to, the most, in your thoughts; what gives you the greatest delight in your feelings; and what determines your will; is all to be found in God. It is not found in the World; it is not found in leaning to your own understand; it is not even found in other people; it is found in God Himself. The first and greatest commandment is that you are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6: 5) In Matthew 22: 37, the Lord Jesus gives the answer to the Lawyer's question. He was the man who asked Jesus what was the greatest commandment in the law. He answered him in this way: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." It is what you do with your heart, your soul, and your mind that will show God how you will spend your strength; how you will use your days, and how you will glorify Him with your life. So this morning as we prepare for the Lord's Supper I would like to approach this Psalm from the standpoint of the heart and life of the Lord Jesus, and I want you to compare His life with your own life. I do not hesitate to say it; the Lord Jesus Christ is the most blessed of men because He was the most godly while He walked upon this earth. Do you want to be blessed; do you want to be happy, and happy forever? Then listen as I give to you the 3 descriptions of a godly man as they were fulfilled perfectly in the heart and life of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1st, a man is godly if he is Separate. 2nd, a man is godly if he Meditates. And 3rdly, a man is godly if he is Fruitful. Let us, each one, look carefully at our heart, look carefully at our life, to see whether we are a godly person. If we are not, we should pray to come to know God through the One; the only One; who was perfect here upon this earth; the Lord Jesus Christ.

1st of all - The first description of a godly man, as it was ultimately fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, is that he is Separate. (Verse 1)

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinner, nor sits in the seat of the scornful...." The word "Blessed" in the

original Hebrew is in the noun plural; (Ashrey) which means "blessednesses". So we can, and we should, conclude that there are many rich blessings which attend the way of the godly man who will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. The word "ungodly" Matthew Henry says, "signifies such people who are unsettled, they aim at no rule, but are at the command of every lust, and at the beck of every temptation." In other words, they are unstable souls and yet they like to believe that they are wise and can give advice and instruction to other people when they do not know God; when they do not know the meaning of life, and when they do not know their own hearts. It is always a blessed thing when a person will walk; when they will live their life, walking separate from sinners. Our Lord Jesus Christ knew this better than anyone else. He knew that there was a counsel that the ungodly will give to godly and ungodly alike, that would ruin many lives and which would ruin them eternally. He knew that the ungodly, without grace coming to their souls, would always live according to their own ideas of what is right and wrong and good and bad. He knew the philosophy of fallen human nature. Live to please yourself and do not worry about pleasing God, or living under Biblical authority. Ungodly people are those who will not live to God, and they will not live under the authority of His word. They refuse and reject the idea that they should submit to His ruling over their lives. For this very reason they will also eventually, sooner or later, reject their godly parent's counsel. They will come eventually to reject their spiritual admonition and authority in the most important matters of life. The Lord Jesus knew that there is a progression in being a sinful and ungodly person. He knew that sinners never remain in a static state, but they will move ever downward and away from God without grace. If He was standing here today, He would say to us: "This is why you should early believe in Me and be separate." Do you see the progression of sin? First, you walk in the counsel of the ungodly; then you stand in the path of the sinner, and then finally you sit down in the seat of one who scorns the admonitions of God's Word. You will no longer have anyone telling you where you might be wrong or leading you toward what is right. This is why the Lord Jesus died. It was the counsel of the ungodly who found the Righteous One guilty and put the Lord of Glory on the cross. But the Lord has used it for the ultimate good; the salvation of all who would believe in Him.

You should understand this morning that there is a counsel of the Lord that He gives to you in His Word which must be heeded if you would have eternal life. This counsel is the gospel and all the Scriptural principles, precepts, and promises, all of which are fulfilled in Christ. There is wisdom in heeding this counsel which is found in the Bible. You will always be wise and blessed if you heed it from a young age. Turn with me to 2 Timothy 3: 12. "But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to my at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra--what persecutions I endured." "And out of them all the Lord delivered me." "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." "But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." You can see here that the Apostle Paul was separate. And he was willing to suffer for it. Are you? Do you listen more to the counsel of your friends or to your godly parents if you are a young person? If you are an adult, do you listen to the counsel of worldly friends, relatives, and acquaintances, or do you listen to the advise of the godly who will give you the truth and counsel of the Scriptures? But Paul is reminding Timothy, here, of how he came to be a Christian. He knew the Scriptures because he had been taught them from childhood. It was the Scriptures that were able to make him wise unto salvation. So salvation comes by faith in Jesus Christ. This is why the Lord Jesus suffered; so that you would be made wise.

Now if either Paul or Timothy had not heeded the instruction of the Scriptures, they would not have been either wise or saved. If they had been inclined to do what was right in their own eyes they would have ended up fools. They would have walked in the counsel of the ungodly. Turn with me to Proverbs 12: 15 and you will see this. We find these words written here for our instruction. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise. Why is it that young people go astray and ruin their lives? It is because they believe that they are right in their own eyes, and they do not want to walk in God's counsel in the Bible. They want to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But the counsel of the ungodly leads you to God's judging you. Turn with me to Proverbs Chapter 1. Here in Chapter 1 of Proverbs, Solomon is introducing us to the importance of listening to godly parents and wise and godly men. Verse 5 says, "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain (or acquire) wise counsel, to understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles." You see, the Bible seems like an enigma, godliness seems unattainable when you are not believing in Christ. But Solomon points us in the right direction to the answer to our perplexities and our questions. Verse 7 - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; for they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck." If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, then we must realize that this fear is good. It is nothing to be afraid of. It comes by hearing and heeding a godly parent's instruction as they teach the Bible to their children. What happens if the Bible is taught and you do not response by faith to come to Christ? Well, the counsel of the ungodly and the world will eventually prevail with you. Eventually you will come to stand in the way of sinners and finally you will come to sit in the seat of scorners.

Look down at verse 20 of Chapter 1 of Proverbs. "Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares." "She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city she speaks her words; How long, you simple

ones, will you love simplicity?" "For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge." "Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you." "Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, when your terror comes like a storm and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you." "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me." "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would have none of my counsel." How suddenly, and how finally will come their calamity. Ah, how important it is, not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly; how very precious it is; how very blest is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But how does this strength and grace come? It comes through Jesus Christ our Lord whose death and resurrection we have come here to remember at this hour. The Lord Jesus was full of wisdom and the fear of the Lord, even if you have not been. He was the most blessed among men because He was given the Spirit without measure and He walked in the fear of the Lord all the day the long. In Isaiah 11: 1 it says, "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and Branch shall grow out of his roots." "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understand, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of 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."

Listen to how Jesus was, when he was a young man. In Luke 2: 49; after His parents had been seeking for Him in Jerusalem for 3 days; they say to Him, "Son why have You done this to us?" "Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." "And He said to them, 'Why did you seek Me?" "Did you not know not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Was He being unkind? Was He being disrespectful? Was He being arrogant? No, He was being faithful to His Father to love Him with all His heart. "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" "But they did not understand this statement which He spoke to them." Did He then, after this, treat His parents as though they did not know what they were talking about, and that He was much smarter and wiser than they? No, not at all. It says in verse 51, "Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Jesus was separate from sinners. He loved God His Father with all of His heart and He put God first in terms of all of His obedience. That is why we worship Him today. Because He was faithful in every way where we were not when we were young and growing up. This is why we rejoice today. We have a Savior who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, as it says in Hebrews 7, verse 26. He was not detoured from His obedience by any man, He did

not compromise to walk in the counsel of the ungodly at any point. In Hebrews Chapter 7, verse 22, it says that "Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant" than the Old Covenant. Jesus rendered a perfect obedience to God and went to the cross and bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. This is the New Covenant. In His righteousness He endured the mocking and the reviling of men who should have been worshiping Him. He had not walked in their counsel, and now they scorned Him. But He did this for our sakes. This is why you and I can become godly and increase in godliness; because of what Jesus did as the most Blessed of men.

Now the 2nd description of a godly man as it was ultimately fulfilled in Christ, is, that he Meditates.

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." To meditate is to think upon or ponder the Scriptures long enough to grasp the greater and deeper meaning that is there. There is always something more for us in the Word of God because it is God's book. Let us remember that, and place it at the top of our reading list; not to read it occasionally, but day and night. Calvin says that God is only rightly served when His law is obeyed." How then can you please God if you neglect what He is saying to you? Well you cannot. Thomas Watson says, "The Hebrew word to meditate, signifies to be intense in the mind." "In meditation there must be a fixing of the thoughts upon the object." "Meditation is the concoction of Scripture; reading brings a truth into our head, mediation brings it into our heart." It is meditating upon this word that makes and shapes you into a godly man or woman. You are to meditate upon it day and night. Not just when it is convenient; but you are to incorporate it into all of your thinking. You think upon it long enough that you take it into yourself; into your soul, so that your soul is nourished and strengthened. The Christian man or woman learns that, in terms of their growth or spiritual strength, it is not enough just to have the spiritual food to eat, but that the food should be enjoyed. The Word of God, which is what it means here by "the law of the Lord", is something that should be carefully chewed and swallowed and then digested. "It is not a good thing to wolf your food," my mother used to tell me when I was young. Truth is not something simply to be hastily brought into the spiritual stomach of the mind and heart. It is to be thought upon in relation to ourselves and then ourselves in relation to God. Meditation is more like the chewing of the cud. You chew it, and then you chew it again to get more out of it.

Let me give you 5 reasons from Psalm 119 that you should meditate on the law of the Lord. Psalm 119, verse 15 - "I will meditate on your precepts, and contemplate your ways." You should meditate upon the moral commandments of God's holy law in order to know more about His righteousness, His holiness, and His way of doing things. His ways are not your ways, nor His thoughts your thoughts. The more that you meditate on His precepts; His rules for you to live by; the more you come to understand something more of what He would have you to do for Him, as a Christian, and even how to go about doing it. When your mind

and your heart are filled with the Scripture and you meditate upon it; it will speak to you. It will be living and active and sharper than a two edged sword; the truth coming to your heart. This is especially true when you remember that God has given His Holy Spirit to reside in your heart and to reveal more of Christ through this means. It will lead you personally to render to God a more loving and more thorough obedience to His commands. Christ must have been the Ultimate Meditator upon the Scripture. He was the One who said, "Behold, I have come--in the volume of the book it is written of Me--I delight to do Your will, O God, and Your law is within my heart." How often He must have meditated upon it in terms of keeping all the commandments of God on our behalf. "I have food which you know nothing of, He said to His disciples. His food was to the will of His Father God.

Secondly - Psalm 119: 23 - "Princes also sit and speak against me, but Your servant meditates on Your statutes." You should meditate upon the Law of the Lord in order to have the spiritual strength necessary to bear up under people in authority who might speak against you for your doing what God has commanded you to do. This is what Christ did when the "Princes of Israel" spoke against Him; the whole council of the Rulers of the Jews falsely tried Him and mocked Him and spit upon Him. But God's Word held sway in His heart and He prevailed with God, and His prayers were heard, so that He could go to the cross and die for our sins. It was God's powerful Word which upheld Him in His sufferings so that He could finally say, "It is finished." This redemption, this atonement, was for you O believer so that you can run your race, and finish your course; looking to the Most Blessed of Men.

Thirdly - Psalm 119: 48 - "My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, which I love and I will meditate on Your statutes." Meditating on God's statutes you will be able to praise God for all of His wonderful commandments, confessing that you now love them, when once you hated them. You come to realize that this change of attitude comes also from Christ's having died for you. You could have never praised Him before, for what you once thought was burdensome; the service of God by keeping His commandments; if the love of Christ did not now fill your heart. But now the word is sweet; sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb.

Fourth - Psalm 119, verse 78 - "Let the proud be ashamed for they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; but I will meditate on Your precepts." You should meditate on the precepts of God's Word when people treat you wrongfully; proud people who think that they know better than you; what it means to serve God. This very thing that happened to the Lord Jesus. The proud people who put Him through so many sufferings were wrong; but they thought that they were right. They accused Him of being a liar and a blasphemer when He said that He was the Son of God. He could still pray for His accusers and those who treated Him wrongly: "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do." You and I can do the same when people treat us wrongfully, because Jesus died. We must learn

to meditate upon these things more. We can do that, during the time of our partaking of the Elements today.

And then one more reason why you should mediate upon God's Word - Psalm 119, verse 148 - "My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your Word." What is it that you should do when you cannot sleep? I think that we can confidently say from this verse, that God would have us to meditate upon His word. He will bring to our mind as we think upon it, or get up to read it; the things that He would impress upon our minds and hearts; the things that He would have us to do in obedience to His word and by faith in His promises. This is the way of the Lord; to give us wisdom and strength on how to live our Christian life, all because Christ died. So let us now come down front and meditate upon all of His wonderful works for us, and to us, and through us; when He gave us His dear Son, the most Blessed of Men.

The 3rd Description of the godly man, as it was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, is that He is fruitful.

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in it season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." A Christian is tree planted beside the rivers of living water which Christ Jesus has brought to His soul. Jesus said to the woman at the well in John Chapter 4, verse 10, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She thought that He was talking to her about physical water, coming from the well that was before them. He was in the process of planting her as tree beside His rivers of living water. "Whoever drinks of this earthly water will thirst again, 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." The woman, after Jesus spoke with her for a few minutes more about her sin, came to believe when He told her that He was the Messiah. But as we now come to His table, let us realize that He has brought us spiritual life. He has spoken to us about our sin. He is living in our hearts. His grace causes all of our spiritual growth, because we are planted next to these rivers of water. And having been planted there, the Lord Jesus is expecting that every true Christian will bring forth fruit in their season. Because of Christ's death on the cross our leaf will not wither. We have life in Jesus name, and our profession of faith in Him will not be an empty one if we continue steadfast in our faith in Him. That is what this ordinance is all about. It is about strengthening and nourishing our faith in Him. It is feeding upon His faithfulness.

But once we become a Christian; one who is planted as a tree of righteousness, the Father and the Lord Jesus both expect fruit to come because of Gods' working in us. "I am the vine, you are the branches," Jesus said to His disciples in John 15: 5. "He who abides in Me , and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are

burned." (He is speaking there of the fire of hell, and the person who is cast there is the one who says that they are a Christian, but does not bear fruit.) "If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you." "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." To abide in Christ is to see your constant need for the grace of Christ to be able to do anything spiritual. You see your utter dependence upon Him to see changes in your heart, your life and your behavior. You see your constant need of grace from the Savior to be able to show forth the fruit of righteousness in your words and actions and works.

But before we partake of this Supper, let me now read you the words of Hosea 14: 8. After speaking of how He would heal their backsliding and love them freely and turn away His anger from Israel, God describes for us how many among the tribe of Ephraim would become godly. "Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do anymore with idols?" "I have heard and observed him." "I am like a green cypress tree; your fruit is found in Me." These are the words of true repentance: "What more do I have to do with idols?"; an idol being anything of this world and this life that we would make to be of more significance to us than God Himself. We must search our hearts now that we are at the table, and we must ask if there are such idols there. If there are; we must confess them as sins and put them away. Further, let us remember that God is observing us. He is hearing our prayers at this moment. Christ is saying to us now, "I am the green cypress tree; your fruit is found in Me. All the good that we desire to do for God and for Christ's kingdom and cause; all the good that we desire to do for other people; all of this fruit can only come from Him. If this is so, let us thank Him for love that took Our Lord Jesus to the cross. The cursed cross; the tree of death upon which He died, has become a tree of life and fruit to us because of His resurrection from the dead. Let us thank Him that He purchased for us the forgiveness of our sins by His precious blood, and also purchased for us that great grace which will, by His resurrection life, allow us to bear fruit, and fruit that will remain, and have everlasting effects. Let us resolve not to receive any of His precious grace in vain, but rather follow Him in righteousness. When we are enabled to do this by grace, whatever we then do in Christ, shall indeed spiritually prosper. "Who is wise?" "Let him understand these things." "Who is prudent?" "Let him know them." "For the ways of the Lord are right; the righteous shall walk in them." Let us remember, as we partake of these Elements, that we only walk in the counsel of the godly, and stand in the path of righteousness and sit with Jesus in the heavenly places because our Christ was the most blessed of Men.