



Feast of Gratitude for Mother Yvonne – Rome, April 26, 2020

Your life is a tree that bears fruit. Thank you, Mother!

General notes for reflection on the Psalm (by Fr. Marco Deflorio, SDB)

- 1. Blessed is the man who does not enter the council of the wicked,
he does not remain in the way of sinners
and does not sit in the company the arrogant;*
- 2. but he finds his joy in the law of the Lord,
he law meditates day and night on the law.*

- 3. He is like a tree planted along a running stream
which bears fruit in its time
its leaves do not wilt
and everything he does, he does well*

- 4. Not so, not so the wicked,
but as chaff that the wind disperses;*
- 5. so the wicked will not rise in judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*
- 6. for the Lord watches over the path of the righteous,
while the way of the wicked is in ruins.*



Psalm 1 is a psalm of wise instruction.

The theme of which the psalm speaks is the achievement of happiness, understood as "succeeding" in life. But according to what criteria?

The contrast between wicked / impious and righteous, has characteristics of wisdom. Wisdom is identified with the law of the Lord. The search for wisdom is the way to achieve happiness and here this path is represented by the Torah.

Two ways are presented: that of the righteous and that of the wicked. The way of the just, the way of the wicked and in the end the outcome, is proposed as the point of arrival.

- The righteous: a metaphor for the tree and success
- The evil one: a metaphor for the chaff and ruin

The purpose of the law is the happiness of man. To be happy breaks with the way of seeing and experiencing things according to the world.

There are three decisive "NOs" at the beginning in the metaphor of the journey of life, of which God is the source of true joy.

The ideology of the world is, therefore, that of "anti-unhappiness", that of the impious, of the wicked. One can be satisfied, without a doubt.... But is satisfaction synonymous with happiness?

The wicked person is the one who looks for external pleasure and success. They are slaves and not free, because they do not take their relationship with God into consideration.

Not following the path of the wicked means not following the behavior of sinners. The righteous is named in the singular, while sinners is in the plural. It is an ideology to be contrasted.

Meditating on the law of Moses means to safeguard your heart, keeping the instructions of God the Father in your heart.

This anticipates Jesus' attitude: "*my food is to do the will of my Father*" (Jn 4:34); the wicked, on the other hand, follow their own plans to achieve their goals. The psalmist trusts in God, believes that his plan is better than human plans. Therefore he spends his energies not in creating personal plans, but in understanding, and understanding God's plan for his life.

Analysis of the text

V.2: Meditate Day and Night

Always, because it is not an occasional spirituality, but a continuous permeation of our whole life.

V.3: The metaphor of the tree of life

Water symbolizes the law, the tree, the wise person. In Psalm 1, trust in God is identified with love for his law.



VV. 3-4: The tree and the chaff

The first is stable, well fixed and continuously irrigated, nourished. It grows upwards. The chaff, on the other hand, disperses and spreads through confused, undirected streets and roads.

The tree is stable and does not change its opinion according to the moment. One who makes the Word of God their daily nourishment is not easily influenced by passing fashions. In addition, the deep roots guarantee stability and fruitfulness: the tree puts forth branches, leaves, and fruit, while the chaff does not produce anything and is dispersed.

Each of us is, therefore, invited to produce a unique, unmistakable fruit that only they can generate. Even though the Torah is always the same, it produces a different fruit in each person who meditates on it and who lives it. The **fruit** is the recurring metaphor in the Bible to express good works, especially active love (*Jn 15, 1-17*). The Word of God, says Isaiah, is never fruitless (*Is 55, 10-11*).

The fruit is a symbol of a life that is fulfilled in giving oneself, that is found by losing oneself, which becomes eternal by giving life to another plant.

In its time:

The psalmist warns against expecting the fruit immediately. It will come, no doubt, but in due course. Just think of the pastoral successes of Jesus and what we still proclaim, announce, and try to live today.

Think of the tree in winter and then in spring. This indicates that the Word of God is not dead but waits for the right season to bear fruit.

The tree of life is the metaphor of eternal life, which is achieved by thinking eschatologically and with the attitude of Jesus, who in the Spirit, entrusted himself totally to the Father.

What a person does according to the law of God leads them to a good end. If a person's work is successful, it is successful because it is done according to God's criteria and plan, and ultimately it is God who makes it succeed, using human collaboration.

The wicked:

The theme is poorly developed, because the goal is not to indicate the way of sinners, but that of the righteous. It is a way mentioned only because it is to be avoided, to the point that only the outcome is described.

"Not so": the wicked, unlike the righteous, do not carry out their endeavors. A life plan that does not conform to the will of God cannot succeed, because man's life is precisely in the hands of the Lord.

The chaff is horizontal, unlike the tree, because it has no roots or consistency, and is carried by the wind in all directions: it is an image of the superficial man, it is sterile, it must be burned, because it does not produce life.



The separation of wheat from chaff is, in the Gospel, an image of God's final judgment. Here too the judgment will manifest what the wicked already are, as indeed also for the righteous.

The judgment, the righteous, the wicked

One senses how the righteous are not alone, and that the communion of saints will be revealed only at the end. Can a balance be made only at the end of life? Perhaps, but this, in any case, is a stimulus and a challenge to live more and more, and to grow to a life that is full. At judgment, it seems clear that the wicked will have nothing to do with the righteous. It is an eschatological judgment, the last.

The path of the righteous

The righteous person is the one who sets his tent in the will of God, and this is a source of serenity, peace and moral certainty. This is more developed even in the final verses, while that of the wicked is treated in a succinct way. This indicates that the path they are following leads nowhere, because it is without a future.

For the psalmist, therefore, the two ways are not the same: the just person is the good one and must be described, while that of the wicked is hardly mentioned, so that it can be avoided.

Conclusion

This is a psalm very close to the good news of Jesus, because what matters to him is not respecting the letter of the law, but the spirit in which certain actions are carried out. What matters is **loving**. **Jesus is certainly no less radical than Psalm 1 about fulfilling the will of God**. As for the person praying this psalm, also for Jesus the meaning of life was in fulfilling the will of the Father, as both the prayer of the *Our Father* recalls (*Mt 6, 7-14*), and other biblical passages tell us. (Cf. *Jn 4:34*). Separation from sinners is also understood not at the level of exclusion or marginalization, because Christ has always approached them in life. It is a spiritual separation, which means not to become complicit in evil. Finally, on an eschatological level, there is the resurrection of Christ that gives meaning to the whole perspective that characterizes the psalm.