

Introduction

- Image
 - Jesus' haunting interaction with the religious leaders in John 5
 - He heals a man on the Sabbath > They plot to kill him because they claim he's violated the words of God
 - When these men spoke, people would have listened because they knew their Bibles
 - There's a way to listen to God's word that drives you further away from him
 - There's a way to listen to his word that draws you closer to him
 - Why do I share? Draw Near Series Overview > Last week, the important of listening to God's word
 - How do we listen like Jesus wants us to listen rather than the Pharisees listened?
 - See, there's a real danger in Christian circles of what you might call, candy apple syndrome.
 - You have a head full of the words of God, and yet a heart that is unaffected by those words
 - Transformed minds without transformed lives
 - How do we make sure God's words don't just inflate our heads, but actually transform our lives?
 - The answer is the practice of meditation
- Subject: How do we listen to God's word in such a way that it transforms our whole lives and not just our heads?
- Text: Psalm 1
- Preview: The Blessings of Meditation - The Practice of Meditation - The Obstacle of Meditation

Body

- The Blessings of Meditation (3)
 - "Blessed" is the first word of this Psalm
 - Happiness (deep sense of joy and fulfillment)
 - This term for blessed is used for those that others look at and say they've found the good life.
 - You can become that person if you learn how to meditate.
 - This isn't for the super-spiritual. David says, blessed is "the man", not "the academic" or "the pastor" or "the king"

- That's the word for those who meditate, but the Psalmist goes on to give a word picture to flesh it out more
 - Those who meditate are like a tree
 - Stability
 - Trees planted by streams of water are stable regardless of their external circumstances
 - We believe stability only comes through stable circumstances
 - But those who meditate come into contact with something they can draw life from, even through hardship
 - Contrasted to chaff. Chaff is stable when everything in their life is stable. But as soon as a storm begins to roll in, they are thrown back and forth.
 - If you want to be a person of stability in an unstable world, learn to meditate (doesn't mean you won't be shaken, but you won't be uprooted)
 - Fruitfulness
 - Trees planted by streams of water produce fruit
 - Think of those people who when you're around them, you leave feeling more filled up than when you arrived
 - Why do you feel that? Because you're experiencing fruit. You're experiencing the nourishment of the life that God has worked into their very being. Your partaking of the some of the richness God has brought as they've aligned their life with his wisdom
 - Contrasted to leaves that wither
 - The world promises to offer fast fruit, but it withers quickly
 - The Bible offers fruit in its season
 - Not every season is fruitful
 - But every fruiting season is fruitful, even into old age (92:14)
 - If you want to be a walking fruit tree giving life to everyone you come into contact with, learn to meditate
- The Practice of Meditation (1-2)
 - Definition: The practice of reflecting on God's word until it begins to move from your head into the rest of your life (intellectual proposition to lived reality)
 - The word literally means "to murmur"

- Cough drop illustration
 - Wailing wall
 - Rehearsing the word until it moves from intellectual knowledge to existential knowledge (head > heart)
 - Seatbelt story
 - Jonathan Edwards quote
 - Biblical Examples: Psalm 42 / 103
 - More than we need a new word from God, we need old words from God to become new to our hearts
- How do we practice it?
 - Meditate On God's Word
 - Eastern meditation says you can find blessedness by forgetting reality
 - Christianity tells us we can find blessedness by getting more in touch with reality
 - Meditate Through Questions
 - The muttering idea is the idea of interrogating yourself in light of the words of God
 - Use the PRAY acronym to transition into prayer
- The Main Obstacle to Meditation
 - The Main Obstacle: The more we meditate, the more we realize just how far from God's vision for our lives we are
 - Jesus in the sermon on the mount (they shall not commit idolatry)
 - The more you reflect on God's word, the more realize just how little those words have taken root in our hearts
 - The more we meditate, the longer the list of judgments against us becomes
 - What's the Bible mainly about?
 - Moral Code: Pharisees in John 5
 - Words that point to the only one who can give us life
 - If you let your meditations drive you to me, then and only then, will they make you stable, fruitful. Will they bless you
 - How?
 - Jesus always delighted in God's word. He meditated day and night.
 - He was a tree planted by streams of water. Never was there a tree with roots deeper down into the waters of the scriptures.
 - And yet, on the cross, Jesus says something shocking. He says, "I thirst". Though I'm meditating day and night, the river has dried up.
 - What's happening? He's becoming chaff. He's drying up.

- He's experiencing the judgment of all the times we have failed to delight in God's word so that when we come to God's word and it reveals our failures, we can still delight in it.