



*Ambassadors of a*  
**WORLDWIDE BROTHERHOOD**

**MEDITATION 1 (August 5, 2011)**

Everybody did leave his own home, did get on the road and actually arrived in Tilburg. This week we will discover in which way each one of us is rooted in his/her own habits, traditions, language, schooling. Being rooted is an important theme in the Scriptures. The road is yet another one. Psalm 1 links both themes. This is, as it were, the opening of this week's door.

- **Lectio: Psalm 1**

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or take the path that sinners tread,  
or sit in the seat of scoffers;

but their delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and on his law they meditate day and night.

They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither.  
In all that they do, they prosper.

The wicked are not so,  
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.

- **Meditation**

The Book of Psalms opens with this very psalm. It is the door of the book and sets the tone of the total work. When opening that door, we enter the rich garden which the Book of Psalms in fact is. The Book of Psalms is also called the hymnal of the Scriptures (even though there are also songs in other Bible books). In fact, the Book of Psalms consists of five books; jointly they refer to the five first books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

The first five Bible books aim at pointing humankind the way of God. The psalms are, so to say, the answer of the person to this call. In poetic language the psalms aim at expressing the relationship of humankind towards God. And we find this relationship back in everything the person experiences in terms of joy and sadness, happiness and misfortune. But we also come across the experiences of enmity and friendship, despair and being totally lost. When studying the Book of Psalms in greater depth, we will also discover human desires and longings. The most sincere wish is hoping to live in the Presence of the Lord our God.

Today we will start with a psalm. It is a psalm which opens the door to the project we will start today together. In fact, it is an invitation to travel together along the right way. But going the right way is never a matter of course. That is why this psalm also points out the dangers which are ever present. In the psalm we come across a number of contrasts, such as between those who are happy and those who are wicked. The psalm starts with the words: "Happy are those who ..." That is one of the beatitudes. Thus, the whole Book of Psalms begins with a beatitude. That comes across very well, and Psalm 1 makes thus a link with the beginning of the Book of Genesis. Also the first chapter of Genesis depicts a positive atmosphere: "... God saw that it was good". To start with, the world was good in God's eyes.

In the sentences that follow, we hear three negations: not ... not ... not ... The reader is not supposed to frequent the circles of the wicked ones, the sinners and the scoffers. It would seem that it is already quite valuable when we are not doing such things. Only afterwards do we learn what is indeed wise to do. The psalmist points out to the reader that he will find his happiness by carefully reading the Scriptures and meditating on those texts. And that is now exactly what we plan to do this week.

The very first verse following the above, paints for us a beautiful future: those who meditate on Holy Scripture do have firm and healthy roots.

Then, once again, there is a major contrast. Now we are finding out about the negative side: people who do not meditate on the Scriptures will have no roots. They sail according to the way the wind blows, as the chaff does when the corn is being winnowed. Toward the end the psalmist surprisingly turns to another, quite different metaphor: the symbol of the road. Every person's life may be compared to a road. The crucial questions are: which road are you in fact following?, and: who is really allowed to guide you on this road? Those who do opt to study the Scriptures, are turning toward the Lord for guidance. When a person turns to the Scriptures, he is indeed following the Lord. And it is through, with and by the Scriptures that the Lord protects those who follow His path: a road leading to life.

- **Contemplation**

*After each numbered section, there is to be a moment of silence. At the end there should be a silent period lasting 10 minutes; this is to be closed with instrumental music.*

1. Psalm 1 starts with one of the Beatitudes. Every single reader and listener should feel personally addressed. God approves of people being together in this way. What is your preferred beatitude?  
Complete the following sentence based on how you feel right now: "How happy am I, who ..."
2. The psalm speaks about the roads we should try to avoid. Which ones do you see as temptation? Which roads do you wish to avoid?
3. The psalm speaks about meditating on the Scriptures as drinking from a well and eating food which are essential for all people. To what degree are the Scriptures food for you? What place do you give to this drink and this food in your own daily life?
4. Meditating on the Scriptures is a main objective in the psalm. We will be working on this the whole week. How ready are you for this? How do you prepare yourself for it?
5. The psalmist says that God joins us on our way. He guards the road of the just one. To what degree does this harmonize with your image of God? To what degree do you feel being carried by God? In good days, but especially during bad times? What thoughts and emotions does this evoke in you?

- **Collatio (sharing)**

1. What did this meditation do to you? What do you wish to share with the others?
2. What is attractive in praying the psalms and meditating on them? What obstacles do you experience in your own life?
3. Share with the others how you experience God's presence in your life. At which moments and in which circumstances?

- **Oratio (praying)**

Conclude the collatio with a spontaneous prayer based on (the sharing of) Psalm 1 by one or several members of the group.

- **Creatio (creative processing)**

Presentation by country: every group of countries introduces itself by means of e.g. a short PowerPoint presentation. Tell something about your country; show by means of pictures something of your culture, etc. Where do you come from? Where are your roots?

This presentation by country lasts a maximum of 15 minutes.