

Psalm 73

- Asaph was a contemporary of King David, and the prophet Nathan.
 - 12 Psalms are attributed to Asaph, Psalm 50, 73-83.
 - Asaph was a Levite, who along with his brothers was appointed by David to lead the choral worship when the Ark was brought back to Jerusalem.
 - Asaph becomes a family name associated with worship that is passed down through many generations of worshippers.
 - This Psalm is the beginning of the 3rd book within the Psalms.
-


V: 1 Truly God is good! And He's good to Israel... This is a foundational truth.

David declares what we already know:

Psalm 86:5 “For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”

- This is an important truth to embrace because there will be those times when you are tempted to question that truth, when circumstances that would test us.
- During those difficult times or periods where we don't know the full ramifications, when we don't know the outcome - Satan is prone to challenge the goodness of God in our own hearts.
- If God is good, why did He allow this or that to happen in our lives. That is when our faith is put to the test, our commitment to Him. It is important to have this basic foundation firmly planted in our hearts - that God is good!

Psalm 37:5 “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

- “*When pondering the mysteries of life, hold on to what you know for sure, and never doubt in the darkness what God has taught you in the light.*”
- He is good, and He is specifically good to Israel - those who are governed by Him, those who have a clean heart. 

1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

V: 2-3 Asaph states up front that God is good, but then he begins to draw the contrast that he is not. He begins to address that age old question of why does God allow the wicked to prosper, and why does He allow the righteous so often to suffer persecution.

- We're reading this because Asaph took his eyes off of the Lord and cast them on the people around him, his focus fell, then his heart fell, and it almost takes him down.

Psalm 141:8 "But mine eyes are unto Thee, O God the Lord: in Thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute."

- If I'm a child of God where is the blessing? The wicked seem to have it so easy.
- When he says that his feet were almost gone, he had well nigh slipped - he was being stumbled by these things, they were tripping him up in his faith.
- There is a difference between doubt, or questions and unbelief. Doubts or questions come from a struggling mind, while unbelief comes from a stubborn heart and a will that refuses surrender to God. The unbelieving person will not believe, while the doubting or questioning person is struggling to believe but cannot.
- He was becoming envious of the wicked - coveting.
- This is an all too vivid example of the spiritual warfare that the enemy brings against us. The conclusions that he's initially drawing are not true because it's Satan whispering in his ear, seeking to create doubts about God and His purposes.

Ephesians 4:27 "Neither give place to the Devil."

V: 4-5 Observing the wicked, they don't seem to have any struggles, they are healthy right up until they die, no suffering - they just die.

- They have an easy death, and an easy life. This is his skewed perspective, which isn't true.
- Asaph is mistaken, the wicked suffer through life and through death as much as anyone, actually more so in many cases because they have no hope or real comfort.
- Like Even in the garden, Asaph is being seduced by Satan to believe a lie. The only way to resist or combat a lie is with the truth.

Jesus said:

John 8:31-32 “³¹... if ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed;
³²and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

V: 6 Because of this the wicked are wrapped up in pride; they are covered in violence like a garment. God hates violence, and they are covered in it.

- “Like white on rice...”

V: 7 Their eyes bulge with fatness, meaning they are very prosperous (fat), they have everything they want, they’ve got it made.

- I don’t know who Asaph was looking at, but I’ll bet that if we could have talked to them, they would have described their problems and their issues - we look at people and we presume a lot.
- The wicked especially seem to always want more, they seem to never be satisfied; much like where they are headed:

Proverbs 27:20 “Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.”

V: 8-9 Part of that pride that surrounds them like a chain; they are corrupt and speak wickedly, bragging about their oppression of others, speaking loftily, and against the heavens - meaning God, they blaspheme.

- Their tongue walking through the earth is no doubt speaking of earthly things, profane things. (Bunyard kids at Disneyland / hand rails...)

Ephesians 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

V: 10 In spite of all of that, their cup is full, they have more than their hearts can desire.

V: 11 They speak even more contemptuously of God, they are emboldened, what does God know? Why should anyone follow after God?

- Misinterpreting God’s love and patience for ignorance or even approval of their bad behavior.

V: 12-13 The ungodly prosper and the righteous suffer. Satan is working his mind, drawing him to a wrong conclusion.

James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

- Consider the source!

- He saying that it doesn't seem to pay to live a good life, it's just a waste of time.
- Satan almost had him, **V: 2** "my feet were almost gone, my steps had just about slipped."
- Asaph wasn't wasting his time with these things, and neither are we:

Psalm 24:3-4 "3Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? 4He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

- God is good! Don't listen to the enemy! Keep going! Don't give up! Trust the Lord!

V: 14-16 My life is filled with pain and suffering, I keep trying to do the right thing and all I get is hammered.

- If I were to speak of these things, I would offend or stumble the younger believers, when he thought about it, it was very painful.
- These are the thoughts of his heart, his conversation with God.
- It's all just too painful to think about anymore.

V: 17 "**Until...**" until I went into the house of the Lord; then I understood.

Psalm 34:7-10 "7Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. 8Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. 9For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. 10For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be."

- Having these troubling thoughts, he didn't go to a man, or even speak out loud, he went to the Lord, to the house of the Lord, he took it up with the Lord.
- He had been very focused on the material or the practical things of life, on the worldly things, but as he entered into the house of the Lord he became focused on the eternal things.
- This is something that the sanctuary of God should always do for us, always bringing us to a consciousness of the eternal.

Matthew 16:26 "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

- The wicked die and go to hell regardless of their wealth - there is no profit or benefit from their wealth.
- Coming into the sanctuary of God brings a new perspective. You see the eternal for what it is, taking a longer view of things - what is the end result of each kind of life? For one it is heaven, for the other it is hell.

This is why we are exhorted & warned:

1 John 2:15-17 “¹⁵Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

V: 18-19 I thought I might stumble, or slip - but they are the ones who have been set on a very slippery path, they are the ones who are going to be cast down to hell, their fate is much worse than I had imagined.

- In a moment everything will change for them - in that moment of realization and sudden terror they would indeed give everything, all their riches to change their fate.

V: 20 They will enter into a living nightmare that will never end, there will be this sudden terrible awakening.

Hebrews 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

- It would seem that God was just sleeping as far as allowing them this time of prosperity, but as He awakens it all just dissolves away, giving way to the reality of eternal damnation.

James 4:14 “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

V: 21-22 He was grieved to realize how foolish he had been, he was “pricked” or convicted in his heart or conscience, recognizing his ignorance - he was like a brutish beast before God.

- The prophet Isaiah was a Godly man, a man used mightily of God - yet when he was in God’s presence, when he had a clearer perspective on God - he too realized very quickly his own short comings.

Isaiah 6:5 “Then said I, woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

V: 23 “Nevertheless” - in spite of all that, I’m still with you Lord.

- Not because of my faithfulness or goodness, but because you’ve held me by the hand and would not let me go, you’ve kept me!

2 Timothy 1:12 “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

- He keeps us, He is faithful!

Isaiah 42:6 “I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.”

V: 24 He will guide us - and we need Him to do just that!

Jeremiah 10:23 “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

Isaiah 30:21 “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

Proverbs 3:5-7 “⁵Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding ⁶In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. ⁷Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.”

- The end of the wicked is utter terror and suffering for all of eternity; my end is much different - afterward you shall receive me to glory!

As David declared:

Psalms 16:11 “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

V: 25-26 Lord you are my only hope! There is none else, I have no one else.

Isaiah 44:6 “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and His Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God.”

Psalms 37:4 “Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

- God, the Lord, Jesus is our portion, He is our reward, Heaven is just where He resides!

- Having Him, He being our portion is better than anything on this earth!

Psalm 27:4 “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.”

V: 27-28 A summary of sorts:

- Those that pull away from God, those who purposefully keep their distance, those who go whoring away from him, those who are unfaithful - basically prostituting themselves to other lesser gods will be destroyed.
- Those who draw close and stay near fare much better - they end up in His presence for all of eternity.
- So, the Psalmist coming into the house of God saw life from a new, or perhaps renewed perspective. He was brought to a right understanding of things, seeing them for what they really are as opposed to falling prey to the lies of the enemy.
- Now that he wasn't slipping or doubting, now that he had a right perspective and a properly restored focus, now he was prepared to go out and declare His, God's wonderful works.

Psalm 51:12-13 ¹²Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. ¹³Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”