

Title: Have a God-Centered Perspective in Life

Passage: Psalm 73

Introduction:

Envy

- Be aware of this sin
- Found repeatedly in the Bible (Cain, Saul, King Ahab, Satan)

Passage: Psalm 73

- Author: King Asaph
 - Someone who has faith in God but in honesty has doubts in his faith
- For a time, the author was tempted to look at the world through human flawness (godless prosper, good suffer)
- Difficult question: Why does the wicked prosper while the good do not?
 - David provides an answer in Psalm 37

Psalms 37:1-2

Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.

- - Job

Job 42:3

Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Overview: Psalm 37

- I. Goodness of God (v.1)
- II. Descent in personal doubt (v.2-15)
- III. Turning Point (v.16-17)
- IV. Reset to the goodness and character of God (v.18-28)

I. Goodness of God

Psalms 73:1

Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

II. Descent in personal doubt (v.2-14)

Psalms 73:2-3

But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

- author tempted with envy

What is Envy?

- covetness

- Definition: resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another coupled with desire to possess the same advantage
- want what someone else possesses
- Twin brother of jealousy (not wanting to give what you already possess)
- Ultimately criticizing God, which is sin

What was the author tempted with envy about?

Psalms 73:4-12

For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind. Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes swell out through fatness; their hearts overflow with follies. They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue struts through the earth. Therefore his people turn back to them, and find no fault in them. And they say, "How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?" Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.

- wicked prospering
 - do not appear to suffer with burdens or illness common to others around them
 - Proud and puffed up in their arrogance
 - Think little of God due to perceived wealth

Tempting questions in response: What's the point of being righteous? Is it worth it?

Psalms 73:13-15

All in vain have I kept my heart clean
and washed my hands in innocence.

For all the day long I have been stricken
and rebuked every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed the generation of your children.

Author: King Asaph

- main worship leader over everyone
 - David assigns King Asaph to be the main three leaders to oversee all the Levites

1 Chronicles 25:6

They were all under the direction of their father in the music in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the order of the king.

- - Continues to serve under King Solomon after David's death
- a Levite
 - the 12th tribe of Israel that does not receive any land inheritance but rather serve in the temple
 - Their income was dependent upon others to give.

Deuteronomy 18:1-5 (Provision for Priests and Levites)

The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the Lord's food offerings as their inheritance. They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them. And this shall be the priests' due from the people,

from those offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. The firstfruits of your grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the first fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. For the Lord your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons for all time.

- However, while Israel were supposed to give the first fruits to the Temple, over time, they failed to do so giving less and less as well as what was imperfect (instead of firstfruits and the best)
- King Asaph sees and experiences the deteriorating situation of the Levites getting less and worse yet he doesn't actually complain and verbalize his frustrations.

III. Turning Point (v.16-17)

Psalms 73:16-17

But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.

- Key event: "until I went into the sanctuary of God"
- When was this?

2 Chronicles 5:12-14 (context: when the Ark brought to the Temple)

and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters; and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord,

"For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever,"

the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

- Key phrase: "for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God"
- Likely Asaph's turning point: God's holiness filled the Temple in a way that Asaph never saw before.
 - Previously, King Asaph struggled inwardly with envy while with his lips he was praising God.
 - Similarly, we honestly may have internal struggles in our minds and hearts while coming to church yet externally giving praise or going through the motions.
 - Application: It is only when we have an encounter with God that resets our perspective and hearts in a right perspective and understanding of God may refill our minds and hearts.

IV. Reset to the goodness and character of God (v.18-28)

- *Key Point:* A true perspective of who God is gives you a God-centered perspective on your life.

God is just

Psalms 73:18-19

Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!

- God is just: the true destiny of all sinners is death in light of God's justice

God is gracious and merciful

Psalms 73:23-24

Nevertheless, I am continually with you;

you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory.

- Question: How may God hold our right hand?
- Answer: God provided the Savior to pay the penalty of your sin so that Jesus' righteousness may be yours by faith and trust in Jesus.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Hebrews 13:5b

"I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Are you embittered and saddened and wonder if God loves you?

- Set your eyes and character of God
- Remember what you deserve for your sin (death) and instead what God did
 - instead of being condemned in hell, God sent His Son to die for you

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

- Anything beyond and above death is out of the gracious and merciful hand of God

Are you envious of others that is robbing you of joy?

- Set you mind on things above, what God has done for you.
- Be thankful for what God has done and what you have out of His hand

James 1:16-17

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Psalms 73:25-28

Whom have I in heaven but you?

And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.

Song: All I have in Christ