

Evening Sermon – September 27, 2020

“God’s Goodness” Psalm 73

I. A statement of faith –

A Psalm of Asaph. ¹ Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. Psalm 73:1 (NKJV)

1. Asaph saw God’s goodness as a starting place, a foundation!
 - A. God was good to Israel, His people, those He had covenanted with!
 - B. God was especially good to the “pure in heart.”

2. With this statement Asaph was in a good place –

¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, Ephesians 3:17 (NKJV)

What do we build our lives on?

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Matthew 7:24–25 (NKJV)

II. Asaph’s faith was tested by the prosperity of the wicked –

1. Asaph is admitting his own faults and his near fall –
 - A. He almost slipped -

² But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. Psalm 73:2

B. The reason he almost slipped -

³ For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Psalm 73:3

2. How Asaph was temporarily mistaken about how he saw the wicked –

A. He missed seeing their pain, they seem to have no fear of death or Hell -

⁴ For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. Psalm 73:4

B. They are not troubled or sick -

⁵ They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. Psalm 73:5

C. They are so proud and violent -

⁶ Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. Psalm 73:6

* They have no need of diamonds, rubies or gold, their pride glitters, sparkles!

Verse 6.—A chain of pearl doth not better become their necks, nor the richest robes adorn their backs, than sin doth, in their judgments, become and suit their souls; they glory in their shame. Plato saith of Protagoras that he boasted, whereas he had lived sixty years, he had spent forty years in corrupting youth. They brag of that which they ought to bewail.—George Swinnock.

* They are clothed with violence, violence is in style for them!

D. This does not mean they don’t have THINGS; no they have lots of things -

⁷ Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. Psalm 72:7

E. Not only is their pride and violence seen, it is also heard, they even speak against God -

⁸ They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily. ⁹ They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. Psalm 73:8

⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” ⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. Revelation 13:4–7 (NKJV)

- The dragon is Satan, at his strongest
- The beast is the one world government speaking against God, worshipped everywhere by the ungodly!

3. God’s people are robbed, they are on the bottom while the wicked are on top –

A. God’s people come to His sanctuary, with drained cups, meaning small tithes -

¹⁰ Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full cup are drained by them. Psalm 73:10

B. They say, does God know? How does God know?

¹¹ And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?" Psalm 73:11

C. In their prayers they point out the prosperity of the wicked -

¹² Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. Psalm 73:12

D. The temptation is to think repentance, cleansing of the heart are worthless things -

¹³ Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴ For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. ¹⁵ If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. ¹⁶ When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me— Psalm 73:13-16

III. Asaph is brought back to his spiritual senses –

1. Nearness to God is the greatest gift -

¹⁷ Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. Psalm 73:17

2. The wicked's satisfaction with the things of this world, kept them far from God, in slippery places, near destruction -

¹⁸ Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. ¹⁹ Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. ²⁰ As a dream when one awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. Psalm 73:18-20

A. Riches, prosperity, health without God, there are slippery places, they keep men from going to their knees to God in prayer, even good, godly men are hurt by such things –

"They are but exalted, as the shellfish by the eagle, according to the naturalists, to be thrown down on some rock and devoured." George Swinnock

Verses 18, 20.—Their banqueting-house is very slippery, and the feast itself a mere dream.—Thomas Adams.

B. Asaph realizes his foolishness envying such people - ²¹ Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind. ²² I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Psalm 73:21–22 (NKJV)

Verse 22.—"I was as a beast before thee." I permitted my mind to be wholly occupied with sensible things, like the beasts that perish, and did not look into a future state, nor did I consider nor submit to the wise designs of an unerring providence.—Adam Clarke.

IV. Asaph's treasure, Asaph's life is God Himself –

1. Asaph had God on His side -

²³ Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. Psalm 73:23

2. Asaph could count on God's guidance -

²⁴ You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. Psalm 73:24

3. God Himself was Asaph's only ONE -

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. Psalm 73:25

A. Part of Asaph's problem seems to have been loneliness –

B. But he had God, he needed no one else -

4. Asaph failed but not God -

²⁶ My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Psalm 73:26

Verse 26.—"God is the strength of my heart, and my portion, for ever." The Hebrew is, but God is the rock of my heart, i.e., a sure, strong, and immovable foundation to build upon. Though the winds may blow, and the waves beat, when the storm of death cometh, yet I need not fear that the house of my heart will fall, for it is built on a sure foundation: God is the rock of my heart.

George Swinnock

5. Asaph had a preferred position in relation to the ungodly who were "far" from God -

²⁷ For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. ²⁸ But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works. Psalm 73:23–28 (NKJV)

Verse 28.—The Epicurean, says Augustine, is wont to say, *It is good for me to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh*; The Stoic is wont to say, *For me it is good to enjoy the pleasures of the mind*: The Apostle used to say (not in words, but in sense), *It is good for me to cleave to God*.—Lorinus.

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