

Ps. 73:21-24 “With Your Counsel”

For the Children: Some people are not very good at taking advice. They like to do things their way, even if it is the wrong way. Some even like to go against advice, just so they can prove they are stronger and smarter than everyone else. God’s people are to be humble. That means we must listen to God’s “counsel” – His Word – and use the Wisdom He gives as a gift. When faced with difficult choices in life, we should ask what God commands in His Word; what needs doing and what we are good at doing. For we want to be as useful as we can in His service. **Questions:** What big choices do you think you might have to face in the years ahead? How would you go about seeking the Lord’s help? What does Ps. 73 have to say about people who don’t look at life the way God tells us to in His Word?

Introduction:

First Point: The Psalmist’s Problem

- **The Embittered Heart:** Asaph came close to stumbling (v. 2) because he envied the prosperity of the wicked. He could not understand why they were not immediately punished by the Lord. It seemed so unfair, and such a waste of effort to strive for righteousness in a world where the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper
- **Self-Harm:** Holding a wrong view of Providence does harm to the individual. Such a view “sours” (“embitters”) the heart. By it a sinner pierces himself inwardly. Similar damage is done by self-pity and by undue fear of what might happen in the future – which also undermines our confidence in Providence. The problem comes when we think we deserve better, and feel that God or others have deprived us of it, or will do so in the future
- **The Problem of Evil:** The unbeliever evaluates the evil in the world on the basis of faulty presuppositions. He judges God by a faulty view of good and evil. He assumes the right and ability to judge God, though he does not know all the factors. He does not see God’s holding back of judgement as His patience, leaving time for repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). Though believers should know better, they sometimes reach a similar conclusion that Providence is unfair
- **The Psalmist’s Verdict on Himself:** Asaph sees the folly of his thinking. His verdict on himself is that he was senseless, ignorant and beast-like. A beast does not judge on what lies beneath appearances, on the basis of God’s Word; it reacts on instinct to what lies before its eyes. A beast does not see its limitations or faults

Second Point: The Psalmist’s Solution

- **Coming Into God’s Presence:** Asaph found the solution to this once he came into God’s presence in His sanctuary (v. 17). Today, that means drawing close to God through Christ, in prayer and meditation upon His Word
- **He Is Always There for Us:** In that way Asaph learned that God is always with His people and has us with Him (v. 23). He constantly cares for us, supports us, provides for us and governs all our circumstances – even when we feel we are lacking. He works all for the best for us, ultimately (Rom. 8:28). He does so despite (“nevertheless”) both the evils in the world and our folly and sin. He restrains our folly, so that we are not destroyed but restored
- **A Gracious Grasping:** God’s grace in doing this is seen in that He takes the initiative to grasp us by the right hand, even though we murmur against Him
- **Guidance with Counsel:** Having taken us by the hand, the Lord then guides us by His counsel – according to His plan, His eternal counsel; and according to His Word i.e., His secret and revealed will. We need this guidance to lead us safely through life
- **Receiving to Glory:** The end of that leading is the glory of eternal life – though we have a foretaste of that glory already in Christ. Without His guidance, we would never reach glory at all

Conclusion