

Series: Psalm

Title: The Making of Doer

Text: Ps 73: 1-28

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Psalm 73: 1: «A Psalm of Asaph.»

This is a Psalm of Asaph—he was the chief song leader. Either Asaph wrote this Psalm or David wrote it and gave it for Asaph to sing. It does not matter because this is experienced by every true believer. It is a reminder given by God the Holy Spirit for every true believer.

Psalm 73: 1: Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart.

This is the truth. It is the constant, continual, perpetual, truth at all times. Whether in good times or heartbreaking times, at all times, *God is good to Israel*. God is good to those God everlastingly loves in Christ. God is good to those perfect in Christ's righteousness. God is always good to his true spiritual Israel.

Here is the description of God's Israel who have been born of God's Spirit, "*To such as are of a clean heart.*" That is every true believer born of God. We did not have a clean heart by nature. But the Spirit of God created in us a true heart, a clean heart, a right spirit with the gospel of Christ's precious blood. God continually cleanses our heart with the same gospel by which God keeps the believer walking by faith rather than sight.

Romans 8:16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

God conforms us to Christ's image in spirit by making us suffer with him. Scripture says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." He experienced suffering and perfected obedience for us. When we suffer, God dealth with you as with sons for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. He corrects us to keep us running this race looking only to Christ. That is what it means when it says he corrects us that "*we might be partakers of his holiness.*"

By God giving us a clean heart, every believer desires to be a doer of God's word.

James 1:22: But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

God makes his child apply it to himself, personally. God makes a believer see how far short he has come of being a doer of the word. God brings him pray, "*God make ME a doer of your word, do not let ME deceive myself.*" What I am saying is God makes the word personal. When God makes the word effectual God makes the word intensely personal. Between God the Father and his child. That is what we see God doing in this Psalm

WALKING BY SIGHT

Psalm 73: 2: But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

If you have ever seen a cow slip backwards, down a muddy slope, as they are slipping they lower their head and look straight ahead. We are the opposite. The reason we slip is we look away from Christ, raise our prideful heads and look to things with carnal sight. When we attempt to walk by sight rather than faith this is the result, “*As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.*” What did the Psalmist see with carnal sight that caused him to almost slip away?

Psalm 73: 3: For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4: For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. 5: They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.

A sinner to whom Christ is Wisdom is blessed with the unsearchable riches of Christ. So we play the fool to look at the prosperity of the wicked. It will fill the sinful flesh with envy. But the truth is, without Christ the rich man is very poor because the only thing he has is money. It will soon perish with him. What else did the Psalmist see that caused him to slip?

He saw the wicked living without afflictions and trouble, dying in old age with apparent peace. Unbelief makes us exaggerate. The Psalmist was comparing his suffering with the wicked who appeared to have no trouble like other men. The “other men” he speaks of are “believers”—particularly himself. He said, “The wicked are not in trouble like I am, they are not plagued and weak like I am.”

Brethren, the ungodly may appear to live and die in peace, while God’s child suffers greatly in this earth but do not judge God by providence. Judge providence by God as he is revealed in his word. What are the foolish things unbelief makes us envy?

Psalm 73: 6: Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. 7: Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. 8: They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. 9: They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. 10: Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. 11: And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? 12: Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

Pride, violence, corruption, speaking wickedly, oppressing the poor and needy, speaking against God, imagining that God does not know—do the wicked really have more than heart could wish? Are those things to envy?

God hates pride. What does God say is of great price?—“the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” True riches are knowing the grace of Christ, how that though he was rich, yet for the sake of his people, he became poor that we through his poverty might be rich.

Jeremiah 9:23: Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

We cannot know these things and have a meek spirit and be doers of God’s word, if God leaves us to ourselves. We see it in that while God left him to walk by sight, here is the sad state he came to by looking away from Christ to the prosperity of the wicked.

Psalm 73: 13: Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency. 14: For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

God has made all his people doers of his word by his grace and power working from the heart. The Psalmist *had* cleansed his heart. He did so by faith in Christ. He *had* washed his hands in innocency. He did so by the constraint of Christ's love in his heart by the Spirit making him to honor Christ in his walk. This is what God makes all his children do.

But we see in the Psalmist that we can never think ourselves sufficient for anything. As soon as the Psalmist began walking by sight his feet began to slide and he almost slipped away. He even began to think his religion was vain. Looking from Christ to the prosperity of the wicked and comparing it to the affliction and chastening that he bore, he began to think his religion was all in vain. But thanks be to our God for restraining grace. Thanks be to God for preserving grace. By God restraining grace, the Psalmist would not dare speak this out loud to his brethren. Why?

Psalm 73: 15: If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children.

Thanks be to God, once he has filled our hearts with the love of God, he constrains us by his love. God's love makes us want to build up one another in this most holy faith, not offend. God makes us see that unbelief begets unbelief; bitterness begets bitterness; judgment begets judgment. Our flesh lusts to envy, to provoke, to separate. But God's restraining grace reminds us that it is only by speaking to one another the things concerning Christ that the Spirit builds up and unites. Unbelief said, "We can't go in the land of Canaan, it is just like God said it would be full of foes we cannot overcome." Faith said, "Let's go, it's just as God said it would be full of foes we cannot overcome, but God said he would make us victorious!"

THE MAKING OF A DOER

Psalm 73: 16: When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; 17: Until I went into the sanctuary of God; 17: *then understood I their end*. 18: Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. 19: How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. 20: As a dream when *one* awaketh; *so*, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. 21: Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. 22: So foolish *was* I, and ignorant: I was *as* a beast before thee. 23: Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee: thou hast holden *me* by my right hand. 24: Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

God gives faith and strengthens faith from his sanctuary in heaven into the sanctuary where he declares his gospel in this earth. He does it through the gospel of Christ. In light of Christ, God makes us understand the end of the wicked—"Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakes, thou shalt despise their image."

God touches us in the heart and makes us understand our own heart?—"Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee." God's word tells me to walk in holiness of heart in the fruit of the Spirit looking to Christ alone by faith. So to make me a doer, God makes me see that "every thought of the imagination of MY [sinful flesh] is only evil continually".

God makes me know that the only way I ever put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new is by the Spirit of God renewing my inward man and creating his fruit in me—*"Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."*

Brethren be sure to get this. God will permit us to slip, well-nigh, almost gone. But he will not let his child slip away.

Psalm 37: 23: The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD and he delighteth in his way. 24: Though he fall, [even our slips are ordered by the Lord for our good; but though he fall]: he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT OUR SLIPS?

Psalm 73: 25: 25: Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.* 26: My flesh and my heart faileth: *but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* 27: For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. 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 thy works.*

Why does God permit our slips? It is to teach us to never put confidence in our flesh. It is how God keeps his child walking by faith, running the race set before us, looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith. It is one of the ways God keeps his child crying out from a renewed heart, *"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."*

God's word teaches me to drink from the fountain of the water of life. So to make me a doer God painfully breaks all my earthly cisterns one by one, as he makes me behold Christ, the only Fountain of Living Waters.

God's word tells me to seek refuge under the shadow of his wings. So to make me a doer God painfully smites all my gourds, turning me from all temporal shade to Christ alone.

It is to make us understand—by experience—the truth of our weakness and our only strength, *"My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. 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 thy works."*

A baby cries when they are being weaned but it is how they are weaned from milk and begin eating stronger food. God gives thorns in our flesh in this world on purpose to wean us from our flesh and from this world. He permits satan, as a messenger, to beat us black and blue on purpose. The thorns cause real pain. But mainly it because our sinful flesh does not want to be weaned and subdued.

We pray amiss when we ask God to take away our infirmities, reproaches, necessities and distresses. Is that not what the apostle Paul learned? God left us in this body of sin and this wicked world on purpose. He lets us slip to the point of being well-nigh gone to make us see our flesh is only weakness and to make us know that Christ is our only Strength. He brings us

to know—by experience—and confess from a true heart, ***“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 thy works.”***

Truly God is good to Israel, to each of us in whom God has created a clean heart. Paul was brought to say, “I thank God for my infirmities and trials because when I am weak then I am strong when Christ is my only Strength.” At the end of the trial God always brings his child to say, “It is good for me to draw near to God.” He increasingly makes us put less confidence in our flesh, in this world or in any other. He increasingly makes us put our trust in the LORD God. He does it so that we console our brethren with the same consolation wherewith he has comforted us. So that we come before our suffering brethren declare all these works of our faithful Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen!