

Sermon Outline September 18, 2016
“The Failings and Strength of a True and Godly Heart”
Psalm 73

I. *The weaknesses of true believers rival those of unbelievers –*

Asaph’s Testimony to his own weakness:

1. *His first testimony is to God’s goodness to His people –*
<A Psalm of Asaph.> Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. (Psalm 73:1 NKJ)

What Asaph says here, reminds me of Christ’s words –
Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8 NKJ)

There are, in Asaph’s mind, certain people, who attain to God’s goodness, who receive God’s goodness, who Jesus Christ says “shall see God” these are “the pure in heart.”

2. *However, Asaph’s heart was not pure:*

A. *His feet almost slipped –*
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. (Psalm 73:2 NKJ)

If Asaph were an ice-skater, you’d be witnessing his near fall...

B. *The reason for this near fall, Asaph was envious of the boastful, the wicked –*
For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. (Psalm 73:3 NKJ)

This was the garbage, that polluted Asaph’s heart
He secretly desired, with the wicked, to have his part!

II. *Asaph’s godly consideration of the true state of unbelievers (the wicked) –*

1. *They seem –*

A. *- :3 “prosperous.”*

B. *Pang-less, or painless –*

For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. (Psalm 73:4 NKJ)

In a certain movie, a big strong man names his machine gun “painless.”
However, he ends up meeting someone stronger, and who has a bigger gun!

C. *They seem to lack the trouble and plagues that characterize the lives of other men, men like Asaph - :5*

D. *They wear their pride and violence like glorious clothing –*
Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. (Psalm 73:6 NKJ)

E. *Their eyes bulge –*
Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. (Psalm 73:7 NKJ)

Like a steroid- filled Ryan Braun, sin makes their eyes bulge; they HIT it and seem to trot around the bases of life!

F. *They oppress men - :8*

G. *They speak against God - :9*

H. *They drink (all the water) and think ‘God doesn’t see’ - :10-11*

I. *They are at ease in their sin - :12*

J. *They are rich without measure - :12b*

From A to Z, they were as bad as they could BE! Asaph almost thought, if you can’t beat them, join them –

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 NKJ)

2. *They are --- Asaph’s heart was revived to the Hellish TRUTH (REALITY) about the ungodly –*

A. *Consider where Asaph went for his revival and what he found there –*
Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I understood their end. (Psalm 73:17 NKJ)

• *Where he went – before, he was looking around at the world, but here now he returns to God and His Word, lesson –*

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17 NKJ)

• *What he found before he was watching how the wicked travelled*

(with style) through this world, but now he is SEEING their final destination - their end. (Psalm 73:17 NKJ)

What is the final destination of the wicked? ---

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 NKJ)

*All the joys of the wicked are but a dream,
They surely ARE NOT, what they SEEM!
They are cast to destruction, desolation as well...
For their true destination are the terrors of Hell!*

III. *The Strength of Asaph's heart and His Portion
FOREVER, the joy, strength and eternal pleasure
we find in God –*

Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.²⁶ My flesh and my heart fail; **But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** (Psalm 73:25-26 NKJ)

How was Asaph brought to such joy and peace in believing?

1. *He was ashamed and sorrowful for his sinful thinking – 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 NKJ)

A. *Note, his sin had not got to the point of his fellow Psalmist, King David, Asaph's feet only "almost stumbled" :2 David did stumble into adultery and murder! However Asaph counts the sin confined to his heart, very real, very shameful -*²² **I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.** (

2. *He was grateful for God's GRIP on His life – Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand.*²⁴ **You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.** (Psalm 73:23-24 NKJ)

*The one reason any of us are saved is God's strong grip on our lives – "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*²⁸ "And

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand."³⁰ "I and My Father are one." (John 10:27-30 NKJ)

3. *Even if monstrous, beastly sin gets a hold of us for a time, our Good Shepherd is able to save us –*

But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock,³⁵ **I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it.**³⁶ "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." (1 Samuel 17:34-36 NKJ)

As David saved his sheep from the lion and bear, and Israel from Goliath, so his Good Shepherd, Christ – Psalm 23, John 10, saved David, and Asaph from the fiery jaws of sin!

4. *God is the strength of our hearts in the times of great temptation – Asaph saw the ungodly winning, how tempted was he to join them in SINNING! There was a fire in his bones, not to be on the bottom in life, crushed while he saw other seem to prosper!*

And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" (Zechariah 3:2 NKJ)

a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. (2Kings 2:11 NKJ)

I believe these fiery chariots are more common than we think, when we are tempted to sink, like a clod, they are quick to carry us up to God, spiritually, God is our strength and our PORTION, Forever!

WSC 1 What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. (WSC 1:1-2 WCS)

...the joy of the LORD is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10 NKJ)

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11 NKJ)

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