

Psalm 73: Living by Faith When Life Doesn't Make Sense

A Psalm of Asaph

1. Holding Fast to Foundational Truth

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

The psalm begins with a foundational truth: God is good. This isn't just an idea to be affirmed when things are easy—it's a rock we must cling to when life feels unjust, confusing, or painful. Faith doesn't mean understanding everything God does; it means trusting who He is. When trials come that we can't explain, we must fall back on what we know: God is good, He is loving, and He is working in ways we can't always see.

Personal Application:

When I face hardship—whether it's a diagnosis, a loss, or a disappointment—I don't need to explain it all. I can say, "Lord, I don't understand this, but I trust You." Building on this kind of truth keeps us from spiritual collapse when the storms hit.

2. A Personal Crisis of Perspective

"But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." (vv. 2–3)

Asaph admits he almost lost his spiritual footing. The turning point wasn't a theological crisis—it was emotional. He saw the wicked thriving while he, a faithful man, struggled. He let comparison shape his view of justice.

Personal Application:

If we fix our eyes on others instead of the Lord, envy will creep in. It's easy to feel cheated when the ungodly succeed while we're suffering. But that's a narrow view. We must remember: material success is not the same as spiritual blessing.

3. The Illusion of the Prosperous Wicked

"They are not in trouble as other men... Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish." (vv. 5, 7)

Asaph exaggerates their ease—something we often do when we're hurting. He paints a picture of untouchable people living above consequences. But this perception is flawed. The wicked are not immune to trouble; their lives are not as peaceful as they appear.

Personal Application:

Satan distorts reality. He makes sin look sweet and the lives of the godless appear enviable. But that's a trap. The life that looks perfect on the outside may be hollow on the inside. Don't be fooled by appearances. God sees the heart.

4. Wrestling with Bitterness

“Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain... For all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.” (vv. 13–14)

From his limited perspective, Asaph begins to question whether living a holy life is worth it. That’s exactly what the enemy wants—to convince us that righteousness is pointless.

Personal Application:

When obedience seems unrewarded, we must step back. Feelings are not facts. The life of faith will always be worth it—not because of temporary results, but because of eternal realities.

5. The Turning Point—The Sanctuary of God

“Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.” (v. 17)

Everything changes when Asaph enters the sanctuary. In God’s presence, his vision clears. He realizes that he was only seeing part of the story. The lives of the wicked, no matter how prosperous, are headed toward judgment. God’s justice may not be immediate, but it is inevitable.

Personal Application:

Worship and time in God’s presence reshapes our perspective. When life feels unfair, we must press into the sanctuary—into prayer, the Word, and fellowship—where eternal truths recalibrate our thinking.

6. The Fate of the Godless

“Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.” (v. 18)

Those who appear secure are actually on the edge of disaster. The footing that seemed so stable is fragile when it rests on pride and godlessness. Asaph realizes: he was never the one on slippery ground—the wicked were.

7. Personal Repentance and Restoration

“Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind. I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.” (vv. 21–22)

Asaph confesses how short-sighted he was. Like a senseless animal, he had acted on emotion instead of trusting God. But God didn’t abandon him. In fact, God patiently walked with him even when he was angry and confused.

Personal Application:

God is not intimidated by our questions or shaken by our doubts. He holds us fast even when our faith feels weak. His grip is stronger than ours.

8. The Beauty of Eternal Fellowship with God

“Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” (vv. 23–24)

What a stunning reversal. Asaph shifts from envy to gratitude. He realizes he has something far better than earthly wealth—he has God Himself. God’s nearness, guidance, and promise of eternal glory outweigh every temporary pleasure the world could offer.

9. A New Center of Desire

“Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.” (v. 25)

This is the voice of a heart finally satisfied in God. Not in ease. Not in stuff. Not in comfort. Just Him.

Personal Application:

This verse is a life verse. It’s one to memorize and meditate on: “There is none upon earth that I desire besides You.” When we truly know God, we realize that everything else is secondary.

10. Strength in Weakness

“My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (v. 26)

Asaph doesn’t pretend he’s strong. He confesses his weakness, but affirms God’s sufficiency. God is his portion—his inheritance, his identity, his satisfaction—forever.

11. Final Resolution

“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.” (v. 28)

Nearness to God—not prosperity, not popularity—is the true good. That’s where peace is found. That’s where envy dies. That’s where eternal joy begins.

Closing Thought

Psalm 73 is a testimony. It’s the journal of a believer who wrestled with injustice, questioned God, nearly gave up—and found peace again by drawing near to the Lord. Life is full of moments that seem unfair, but the sanctuary reorients our hearts. In the end, the wicked are not to be envied, and the faithful are not to be pitied. God is our portion. That is enough.

Prayer:

Lord, when I’m tempted to envy the wicked or grow bitter in hardship, draw me into Your presence. Help me to remember that You are my portion and my strength. Let me live with eternity in view, trusting that Your counsel will lead me and Your glory will receive me. Amen.