

Psalm 73

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[0:00] Good morning. Please turn to Psalm 73. Psalm 73. I've been really enjoying the time we've been in the Psalms.

! It's kind of a where will we be this week type of deal. And so if you guessed Psalm 73, you would be correct. So I encourage you to guess what next week is. I have no idea. But I chose this, a bit of a challenge.

I think Nathan threw out some Psalms and I was like, yes, sure, I'll do it. So, and I, it's a joy to come up here and tell you to please turn with me into the Psalms.

So turn there, but we're actually not going to read it at first thing. That's like a preaching 101 I'm going to break. So, hold your thumb or bookmark there and turn to Psalm 1. So Psalm 1. And it will become obvious in a bit why.

So Psalm 1. This is, Psalm 1.1 is really, it sets up the entire Psalter.

[1:12] And what it says in this one verse repeats, expands over and over and over. And so, if you're there, read with me Psalm 1.1.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

So, here we have a bit of a, it's a pattern for the rest of the Psalms. So you have, here you have blessed is the man, you have wicked.

And so you have these two characters that are personified throughout the Psalms. And these can be done with like the wise road, the wicked road.

And here in Psalm 73, we get an expansion of that. So I want you to have that in the back of your mind as we read this text. This is generally this theme of Psalm 73.

[2:14] And here, here it is. If you're going to write something, it's underlined here, so it's important. So, what happens when the wicked seem to be wise and the blessed foolish?

That is what this Psalm is about. This Psalm is just trying, is wrestling with, he knows Psalm 1.1. But, when he looks out in the world, he sees something different.

And he's struggling with that. So, have all that in your mind. So, now, with all that background, let's read Psalm 73. A Psalm of Asaph.

Truly, God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled. My steps had nearly slipped.

For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they have no pangs until death. Their bodies are fat and sleek.

[3:18] They are not in trouble as others are. They are not stricken like the rest of mankind. Therefore, pride is their necklace. Violence covers them as a garment.

Their eyes swell out through fatness. Their hearts overflow with follies. They scoff and speak with malice. Loftily, they threaten oppression.

They set their mouths against the heavens. And their tongue struts through the earth. Therefore, his people turn back to them and find no fault in them. And they say, how can God know?

Is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the wicked. Always at ease. They increase in riches. All in vain have I kept my heart clean.

And washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long I have been stricken. And rebuked every morning. If I had said, I will speak thus.

[4:20] I would have betrayed the generation of your children. But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task. Until I

went into the sanctuary of God.

Then I discerned their end. Truly, you sent them in slippery places. They make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment.

Swept away utterly by terrors. Like a dream when one awakes. Oh Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms. When my soul was embittered.

When I was pricked in heart. I was brutish and ignorant. I was like a beast towards you.

Nevertheless, Nevertheless, I am continually with you.

You hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel. And afterwards, you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you?

[5:23] And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail. But God is the strength of my heart.

And my portion forever. For behold, those who are far from you shall perish. You put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.

But for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Lord God my refuge. That I may tell of all your works.

Pray with me. Father, we thank you that you have given us this time today. This place. In this word. We thank you that you have given us this word. And we pray that you would help us with all the many distractions. That we may be distracted with. Whether it is tomorrow morning.

[6:25] Or our children. We would take those things to you in prayer. And to have a time that is focused on your word. To have eyes to see.

Ears to hear. And a heart to understand. What you have given us this morning. Amen. So. I almost want to stop there.

And say that's it. I'm not. Because you know. That's not preaching I guess. So. The structure is all about. The structure is very important. So I'm just going to say almost the same thing over and over. Because the text preaches. And so. There are. Two bookends. The beginning and the end. And within these bookends. There are three books.

Alright. These three books. Are three points. Are three divisions. So. The bookend. Is. Verse two. One. And then the second.

[7:20] Last bookend. Comes. Verse twenty-eight. The last verse. And says. But as for me. My feet had almost stumbled. My steps have nearly slipped.

Verse twenty-eight. At the very end. But for me. It is good. To be near God. I have made the Lord God my refuge. That I may tell of all. Their works.

We're going to spend some time. Looking. Considering. Time. In this. To see how. Asaph. Went from. Nearly slipped.

Nearly slipped. Nearly stumbled. To. But as for me. It is good to be near God. That's what we'll be considering today. And within those two.

But as for me's. There are. Three truly's. Or surely's. So. If you are astute. You probably only have two. But.

[8:14] Here's a. Little weird thing about translation. And. There's. In the. The second. Truly. Truly. Is not translated. Usually. So. In my.

Is. Is. Is. Is. There's no. Truly. But. If you are. A person. Who writes. In your. Bible. You can. Totally. Put. Truly. Truly. Or. Surely. It's up to you. In verse. The beginning. Of.

Verse. 13. All in vain. Have I. It's truly. All in vain. I have kept my heart clean. So. God. Just so you know. So.

The first. Truly. Comes in. Verse. One. Truly. God. Is good. To Israel. To those. Who are pure in heart. That's the first. Second.

Comes in. Like I said. In 13. Truly. In all. All in vain. Have I kept my heart clean. And wash my hands. In innocence. And then the last. Is.

[9:08] Verse. 18. Truly. You. Truly. You set them. In slippery places. You make them. Fall. To ruin. So. Verse. One.

13. And 18. Are the beginnings. Of the three sections. We'll be talking about. So. The first. Truly. Comes in. It's. The problem.

We can. Summarize that. Saying. The problem. Second. In verse. Beginning. In verse. 13. Is. The struggle. And. Beginning. Of. Verse.

18. Throughout. The rest. Of the psalm. It's. The solution. So. The problem. The struggle. And. The solution. We cannot.

Understand. The solution. Without. Going through. What is the problem. What is the struggle.

Before we get to. What is the solution. And. This. Psalm. Is. A bit.

[10:04] Like. It is. The Christian life. So. As we spend time in here. In this text. Just think. This is. Our problem. This is. Our struggle.

And we have. A solution. So. First. First. First. The first verse. Is. More of an affirmation. Read with me.

Truly. God is good. Is good. To Israel. To those. Who are pure. In heart. You know. Anything about the psalm. You've heard this already. Over and over. But this affirmation. Become.

It's. Almost like an intellectual. I know this. But. He will be working out. The. Real life. Problem. Struggle. And the solution.

He will be reminded of. Knowing. This intellectual. Affirmation. That God. Is. Good. Truly. God. Is good. To Israel.

[10:59] To those. Who are. Pure. In heart. Because at the very end. The last. Two verses. Is more of a. Confession. There's an affirmation.

Which is important. But there's also faith. And there's. Confession. You see that end. So you see these. Parallels. Throughout the whole psalm. So verse two. But as for me.

Our first bookend. My feet. Had almost. Stumbled. My steps. Had nearly. Slipped. So. There's a problem.

For I was envious. Of the arrogant. When I saw. The prosperity. Of. The wicked. Now. You've seen. This before.

In Psalms. But. If. The question he asks. Is why do. The wicked. Prosper. Why do. The wicked. Prosper. And if. You've asked this.

[11:56] Looking out in the world. The same question. You are in good company. Because. Job. Solomon. And. Jeremiah.

Have all asked. The same question. So. In Job. Flip with me. If you want. To Job. Chapter 21. Job. Chapter 21.

Verse 7. Job. This is just. Many. References. To Job. So if you. If your bible. Has cross references. Like in the margin. Or at the end of the page. You will see. Job.

Job. Job. Job. Over. And over. For good reason. Because this theme. Of Psalm 73. Is. Very much. Jobish. If you will. So.

Chapter 21. Verse 7. In Job. Job says. Why do the wicked live. Reach old age. And grow mighty.

[12:51] In power. This one question. He repeats. Differently. Over and over and over. And then. If you turn. To. Psalm.

Psalm 37. Psalm 37. Verse 7. David.

Writes. Be still. Before the Lord. And wait patiently. For him. Fret. Not. Yourself. Over the one. Who. Prospers. In his way. Over the man.

Who carries out. Evil devices. You see this. And then. Last place. Jeremiah. Jeremiah.

Chapter 12. Verse 1. And Jeremiah says. Righteous are you. O Lord. When I complain. To you. Yet. I would plead. My case.

[13:51] Before you. Why does the way. Of the wicked. Prosper. Why do all. Who are treacherous. Thrive. So you see. This is a. Prevalent.

Theme. In scripture. Why do. The prosper. Or. Why do the wicked. Seemingly. Prosper. That is the problem. He'll flesh that out. In the coming verses.

So. Verse 4. Chapter 73. Psalm. For they have no pangs. Until death. Their bodies are fat. And sleek. This is the wicked. They are not in trouble.

As others are. They are not stricken. Like the rest. Of mankind. Therefore. Pride. Is their necklace. Violence. Covers them. As a garment. Their eyes.

Swell out. Through fatness. Their hearts. Overflow. With follies. They scoff. And speak. With malice. Loftily. They threaten. Oppression.

[14:45] They set their mouths. Against the heavens. And their tongue.

Struts. Through the earth. Therefore. His people. Turn back to them. And find. No fault in them. And they say. How can God know.

Is their knowledge. In the most high. Behold. These are the wicked. Always at ease. They increase. In riches. That is the problem. Why do. The wicked.

Seemingly. Prosper. In this world. So. There are. Things that he thinks. That he sees. He's looking out. In the world.

And he's seeing. That the wicked. Get. Escape. God's judgment. On. These things. They are. They seem to be. Free. From. Several different things.

So. Verse four. They seem to be. Free. Free. From. Pain. Verse five. They seem to be. Free. From. Trouble. In verse.

[15:44] Six. They. Seem to be. Free. Free. From. Humility. And. Notice. Their pride. And violence. It is not secret.

It is visible. To all. They do not. Hide. Their wickedness. Verse eight. They seem to be. From. Free. From. Judgment. Nine. They seem to be. Free. From. Discipline. Free. From. Discipline. All the kids. Perked up.

When I said that. Verse 10. Free. From. The fear. Of. God. These are the wicked. They seem to be. Free. From. Judgment. Of. The Lord. And. In the eyes. Of. This psalmist. This is injustice. So this is the problem. Why do. The.

[16:38] Wicked. Seem. To be free. From. God's judgment. And seem. To prosper. So. Second.

Let's go into the struggle. Let's move towards. The solution. Like I said. We cannot. Understand. The last. Of the psalm. Before we. Understand. The beginning.

And the middle. So the struggle. Is from. Verse. 13. Through 17. So. All in vain. Have I kept. My heart clean. Back to. Verse. Verse 1. And washed. My hands. In innocence. For all the day. Long.

I have been. Stricken. Again. Back to verse 5. And rebuked. Every morning. And here's the turning point. Verse 15. Is the turning point.

[17:31] If I had said. I will speak. Thus. I would have betrayed. The generation. Of your children. But. When I thought.

How to understand this. It seemed. To me. A wearisome. Task. Until I went. Into the sanctuary. Of God. Then.

Then. I discerned. Their end. So here. What is the struggle? The struggle. Is knowing God's word. The psalm.

The psalmist. Knowing God's word. But also seeing. The current state. Of the wicked. He's wrestling. With how this. This tension. That he feels. Knowing. That.

Truly. God is good. To Israel. To those. Who are pure. In heart. But. What is this good? If. In this world. The wicked. Seem to prosper. In verse 16.

[18:28] And 17. We'll. Spend a few minutes. There. But when I thought. How to understand this. It seemed to me. A wearisome. Task. Wearisome task. Think about.

Where have you. Where you have. Seen that. Trouble. Is this. Wearisome. Trouble. Ecclesiastes. That's almost. The entire book. He's. Fleshing this.

Struggle out. Maybe that's why. It's. So. So good. To read. But it's also. A struggle to read.

That book. Because he's. Struggling so much. And he's being. Very honest. About this struggle. Right here. Ecclesiastes. And here. 17. Until I went.

Into the sanctuary. Of God. We could put. Holy places. For sanctuary. Then. I discerned. Their end. Now we don't know. What holy places.

[19:22] Or what specifically. He means. By sanctuary. Maybe he means. The temple. And maybe. He's. Walking into the temple. And the temple. Has been.

If you know your old testament. It is. Modeled after. The cosmos. The universe. And he's seeing. All these symbols. And he's. Being reminded. Of.

God. Is the creator. He is the creation. The psalmist. And being. Humbled. That. God. Is the creator. Of all things. Maybe. I like to think so. So. Here's the turning point. And finally. Welcome to. The solution. So.

The solution. Let's read. 18. Through the rest. Truly. You set them. The wicked. In. Slippery. Places.

[20:18] Back to verse 2. You make them. Fall to ruin. How they are destroyed. In a moment. Remember in verse 2. He said. Almost slipped. But now. The wicked. Are destroyed. In a moment. Swept away. Utterly. By terrors. Like a dream. When one awakes. Oh Lord. When you rouse yourself. You despise them. As. Phantoms. When my soul. Was embittered. When I was pricked in heart. I was brutish. And arrogant. I was like a beast. Towards you. Nevertheless. I am continually. With you. You hold. My right hand. You guide me. With your counsel. Remember. Psalm 1. You guide me. With your counsel. And afterwards. You will receive me. To glory. Whom have I. In heaven. But you.

[21:13] And there is nothing. On earth. That I desire. Besides you. My flesh. And my heart. May fail. Or be spent. But God. Is the strength. Or rock. Of my. Heart. And my portion. Forever. Forever. For behold. Those who are far. From you. Shall perish. But you. Put. An end. To everyone. Who is unfaithful. To you. And here comes. That confession. You mentioned earlier. But for me. It is good. To be near God. As compared to. Just. The previous verse. For behold. Those who are far. From you. Shall perish. But. In 28. But for me. It is good. To be near God. I have made. The Lord God. My refuge.

[22:08] That I may tell. Or recount. Of all. Your works. The solution. The long. Definition. Of what the solution. Is. That we just read. Is that. God is God. And he will accomplish. What he. Has promised. Again. If you have read Job. You have already. Seen this. In this small psalm. He. Summarizes. Job's. Struggle. And God's answer. What does God say. In the end of Job. I am the creator. And you are the creation. Who are you. For I am God. So. God is God. And he will accomplish. What he has promised. No matter what you may see. In this life. Because. The justice. And judgment of God. Will come. Because he has promised.

[23:05] So the short answer. If you want a short answer. Short answer. To what the solution is. Is God's presence. God's presence. Is the solution. For. Seeing. A wicked world. That may seem. To be prospering. Where. The blessed man. Pure in heart. Does not seem to prosper. But there is an. An end. An eschological. Prospering. For us. Who are in pure in heart. Not on our own works. But. Purely. Because God's presence. And. Grace. So. Is. God. Your strength. Is God. Your rock. Is he. Your portion. Forever. No matter. How. What's going on. In the moment.

[24:02] This day. This week. This year. Is he. Your rock. Is he. Your strength. Is he. Your portion. Is it. Is it. Good. For you. To be. Near God. In the mornings. Whenever you open. Scripture. Is. It. Good. To be. In the scriptures. Is. God. Your refuge. Have you. Made. The Lord. God. Your refuge. So. Much. So. That you. Cannot help. But tell. Or recount. Of all. He has done. If you have said. Yes. Praise the Lord. If you had said. No. Pray. To the Lord. To. Convert. Your heart. From. Being wicked. To being. Blessed. Only through.

[25:01] Christ. And what he has done. Through his son. Can you. Not be wicked. But be blessed. God. God.