

Sunday Night Message

October 19, 2014

Psalm 73 – It Ain't Over Yet

Series – The Psalms

Text – Psalm 73

Introduction

Introduction to Book III

As I said in the beginning, we are dividing the Book of Psalms according to the Pentateuch. The first forty-one psalms we call the Genesis section. Psalms 42–72 are known as the Exodus section. Now we come to Psalm 73 which brings us to the beginning of the Leviticus section. It corresponds to the Book of Leviticus because in this section—even in Psalm 73—the sanctuary is prominent. You see, the Book of Leviticus is the book of worship for the tabernacle and later for the temple. It is one of the greatest books in the Bible. Now as we come to this Leviticus section of the Book of Psalms, we find the emphasis upon the sanctuary and, in particular, on two aspects of the house of God. The Book of Leviticus emphasizes two things: that God is holy and that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins—the key words are *holiness* and *sacrifice*. These two words will also figure largely in this Leviticus section of the Book of Psalms.¹

Introduction to the Psalms of Asaph

Psalm 73 through 83 (as well as Psalm 50 are attributed to Asaph. Asaph was a musician who was also a worship leader in the sanctuary. (See 1 Chronicles 15:16–19; 16:4–7, 37–42; 2 Chronicles 5:12–14; 29:13; 35:15).

In this particular psalm, Asaph will state the principles that he came to understand in the first and last verses of the psalm. He will then explain how he came to understand these principles.

I The Principle End (vs. 1 and 28)

God is good. (v. 1)

¹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 792). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, pp. 792–793).

*"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."
(Psalm 34:8)*

*"For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all
generations." (Psalm 100:5)*

*"Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is
pleasant." (Psalm 135:3)*

*"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Psalm
145:9)*

*"The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him."
(Lamentations 3:25)*

*"The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them
that trust in him." (Nahum 1:7)*

God is good in a general way to everyone, but God is especially good to those who are His children. The "Clean heart" is a positional reference first to those who have been washed clean by the blood of Christ.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

We are washed by the blood of Christ, and we are also washed by the Word of God. The Word of God sanctifies us.

*"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto
according to thy word." (Psalm 119:9)*

God is good in a practical way to those who seek to please the Lord by living a pure life before Him. (See Psalm 51)

Because God is good, it is good for us to trust Him. (v. 28)

Sometimes circumstances in life will cause us to question the goodness of God. We may think that God is somehow favoring somebody else over us, or that He is being unfair to us. When you begin to think this way, you need to cast down the imagination and remember that God is good.

"God is good all the time and all the time God is good."

Notice that it says to "draw near to God"

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:7-10)

II The Problem of Envy – Asaph Forgot (vs. 2 – 14)

Why does God seem to be blessing the wicked?

The psalmist took his eyes off of the Lord, and started looking outwardly to the people around him. He saw the prosperity of the wicked, and it didn't make sense to him. He thought that there was an injustice being done to him by God: God was not treating him fairly. He deserved better, and the wicked certainly deserved judgment.

Illustration

It was brought home to me when our first child was born. In the hospital God took that child. I only heard the cry of that little one. All she ever did in her life was cry. I shall never forget the day she died. Across the hall from where my wife was, there was a very wealthy couple who had a baby boy, and their rich friends came to celebrate with them. As I drove into the parking lot in my old beat-up Chevrolet, they all drove up in Cadillacs. They went into the hospital with their champagne and celebrated the birth of the little boy. He was a precious looking little baby—all they desired, I guess. I shall never forget that night. It was summertime, and I went out on a balcony that was there and cried out to God. To be honest with you, I don't know to this good day why God took our baby and left the baby across the hall. They have money, and, boy, they live it up! I have seen write-ups about them, and they have been in trouble several times. Their little boy is now an adult, as my daughter would be. After all these years, I still don't have the answer. You may be thinking, *You are a minister, and you don't have the answer?* No, I don't have the answer. *Then how can you comfort others?* Well, I'll tell you how. Although I don't have the answer, I know the One who does, and He has told me to walk with Him by faith. He tests me by putting me in the dark. Then I'll reach out my hand and take His. In His

Word He tells me that I can trust Him. Someday He will explain the whys of life to me.²

Envy is wrong regardless of who it is directed to, but envying the wicked is just stupid.

"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."
(Proverbs 14:30)

"Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways." (Proverbs 3:31)

"Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long." (Proverbs 23:17)

Why would you want to be like the wicked, knowing that ultimately, if they do not repent, they are going to end up in Hell.

Notice from v. 2 that envy is a stumbling block.

Notice v. 4 – “bands” means pain – meaning they are not suffering for their sin.

Notice vs. 13 and 14 – Asaph is saying that he had made a mistake by serving God.

III The Process of Enlightenment – Asaph Remembers (vs. 15 – 27)

Notice that it was in the sanctuary where Asaph came to understand his error in thinking. The sanctuary is always a good place to get the answers that you need. The bottom line is that God is always with the righteous. “He will never leave thee or forsake thee”. And the wicked will surely perish unless they turn to God. You can take that to the bank.

Asaph learned an important lesson. God is always good, even when the circumstances in life seem to indicate otherwise. “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” If he is longsuffering toward the wicked it is only because He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God may not giving the wicked what they deserve today, but aren’t you glad He is not giving you what you deserve?

Turn to Luke 16:19 - 31

² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, pp. 792–793). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.