**Truly God is Good**

*Psalm 73*

**Introduction**

1. **Psalm 73:1, 27** – As children of God, we know this to be true – nearness to God in faithfulness is a blessed life, and distance from God is terrible.
2. Then Satan throws his fiery darts.
3. At times, we may make the mistake of comparing our circumstances to those in the world. This creates a conflict of perception.
   1. Perception is not always reality.
   2. We aren’t to walk by sight (**Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7**).
4. What we do in these moments of doubt, and question is pivotal – we either make a move in the interest of faith, or to abandon it.
5. We are to choose faith, and faith will win (**cf. Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4**).
6. The Psalmist reveals a struggle he had himself. He is an example of fighting for faith, and the strength and blessing we find if we do.
7. The Darkness of Doubt and Envy **(vv. 1-14)**
8. Close to Catastrophe **(vv. 1-3)**
   1. **(v. 1)** – with **(v. 28)** frames the Psalm in the actual truth.
      1. **Not just reflective conclusion** – reached after experience described in Psalm.
      2. **Known fact prior to conflict** – Psalmist knew the character of God factually (along with the evidence to back it up) – DID HE BELIEVE IT?
         1. **1 Timothy 4:3** – distinction between ***“believe and know.”***
         2. Having the facts are not always the problem – must dig deep, reflect on self, and find true conviction (**cf. Hebrews 11:6; 2 Timothy 4:8** – I know the reward is certain).
         3. To be tested.
   2. **(vv. 2-3)** – conflict of perception.
      1. Where there should be stability, there is wavering based on false perception – perception is not always reality.
      2. **(v. 3)** – he looked OUT, not UP.
         1. **2 Timothy 4:10** – Demas’ faith was shaken by dwelling thoughts on the world.
         2. **James 3:14-16** – nothing good comes from envy, and self-seeking.
      3. **(v. 2)** – ALMOST, NEARLY.
         1. The Psalm is a reflection on a lesson learned on time.
         2. **Don’t learn your lesson too late!**
         3. YOU DON’T HAVE TO EXPERIMENT/SOW YOUR WILD OATS – **Proverbs 6:20-29** (sexual sin, but general can apply everywhere) – listen to counsel and word and trust it, the other way leads to destruction.
         4. **NOTE: These thoughts will come, and the Devil will tempt you. Don’t yield to the doubt but fight for faith (cf. Colossians 3:2 – look UP not OUT).**
9. Envy of Evil **(vv. 4-9)**
   1. **(vv. 4-5)** – general wellness.
      1. ***“For they have no pangs until death” (ESV).***
      2. It is true that the wicked may find good health, and good things happen to them. (**cf. Matthew 5:45** – even enjoy some of God’s blessings)
      3. Yet, this is a false, or at least incomplete perception which Satan seeks for you to have – **Ecclesiastes 9:2-3** – both the wicked and the righteous experience the same.
         1. Satan wants us to only see what will lead to our envy, bitterness, and self-pity.
         2. Is it true that all the unrighteous have great health? No – **(cf. Romans 1:27; Proverbs 13:15**)
         3. **Envy of a case of wellness of the wicked will blind us to the many troubles wicked doers often have.**
   2. **(vv. 6-7)** – pride and abundance.
      1. **(v. 6)** – they take their prosperity as their own doing, and in their elevated view of self, trample others for gain.
         1. **Isaiah 1:23** – Corrupt leaders taking advantage of others and prospering.
         2. **Isaiah 10:12-14** – Assyria proud, and violent. (Who will stop them?)
      2. **(v. 7)** – have an abundance.
         1. But is it truly contentment/satisfaction?
         2. Why do they seek more? (**cf. 1 Timothy 6:9-10**)
   3. **(vv. 8-9)** – boastfulness and blasphemy.
      1. **(v. 8)** – they are vocal about their wellness, prosperity, and pride.
         1. ***“And they speak in the wickedness of oppression, From on high they speak.” (YLT)***
         2. They use their loftiness to oppress others with their speech.
      2. **(v. 9)** – not only speak against others in pride, but against God, and they take that speech with them throughout the earth (speak with no limits as if with free reign to do as they please – answer to no one).
         1. They make their own rules that benefit them and expect others to keep them.
   4. **If not envy their ways, then envy their results. Attracts to their ways and causes doubt in own.**
10. Darkness of Doubt **(vv. 10-14)**
    1. **(v. 10)** – “(therefore he, this class of man, turns a people subject to him hither, i.e., to himself)… They gain adherents from those who leave the fear of God and turn to them” (Keil & Delitzsch)
       1. “Around the proud free-thinkers there gathers a rabble submissive to them, which eagerly drinks in everything that proceeds from them as though it were the true water of life.” (ibid.)
       2. **(v. 11)** – there are some who have turned to that way of life and live as though God will not know or act.
       3. **(v. 12)** – summary of **(vv. 4-9)** – they seem to prosper.
    2. Others have made a change and gone in that way. They’re prospering **(v. 12)**. Why should I continue?
    3. **(vv. 13-14)** – when I look at the ungodly, especially those who have abandoned God to turn there, I doubt the advantage/blessing of living righteously, especially since I’m subject to pain/suffering/adversity.
       1. **Satan has caused such a one to miss the point – IS THIS WAY OF LIFE ABOUT YOU?**
       2. The “what’s in it for me” perspective will fail in faithfulness every time – what we do is for God’s glory (**cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31**).
          1. Entitlement, self-centeredness, shortsightedness.
          2. Also, shortsightedness, carnal mindedness – an UNSOPHISTICATED PALATE – “The idea that ‘we needs must love the highest when we see it’ finds no support here, unless by ‘highest’ we mean whatever appears to have the upper hand.” (Kinder, Derek, Tyndale OT Commentary) (**cf. 1 Corinthians 15:19**) (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:7** – what we see is not true substance, walk by faith).
             1. **(v. 14)** – the spiritual mind would see the good in chastening – **cf. Hebrews 12:5-6, 11**
11. The Light of Faith and Hope **(vv. 15-28)**
12. Time for Truth **(vv. 15-20)**
    1. **(vv. 2-3)** – ALMOST, NEARLY – **the Psalm is one of evading crisis** – it depicts a navigation through doubts and difficult questions to regaining sure footing and faith (**cf. Hebrews 12:12-13** – no dislocation, but healing).
    2. **(v. 15)** – If I would have…MEANING HE DIDN’T – thoughts of doubt came, temptation presented itself, but he snapped out of it.
       1. To express such thoughts, and believe them, WOULD BE UNTRRUE TO GOD’S CHILDREN.
       2. **(vv. 3-14)** – represent the wicked as blessed, while the righteous are foolishly keeping themselves from pleasure.
       3. **(v. 1)** – THIS IS REALITY – **cf. 1 John 3:1** – blessing to be God’s children, not burden.
    3. **(v. 16)** – not that he had discovered the answer…still seeking.
    4. **(v. 17)** – turned to God for answers.
       1. “The first step to enlightenment was not mental but moral: a turning from the self-interest and self-pity revealed in verses 3 and 13 to remembering basic responsibilities and loyalties (15)” (Kinder, Derek, Tyndale OT Commentary)
       2. **INSTEAD OF IMMEDIATELY GIVING IN, HE GAVE GOD A CHANCE – HE GAVE TIME FOR TRUTH.**
       3. **In doubts and temptations, we must let God speak – HE CAN EXPLAIN! HE CAN CLARIFY.**
       4. **NOTE: Sanctuary – worship matters (cf. Hebrews 10:24-25) – this can all be troublesome until we come to God’s throne, reorient ourselves, and find clarity and comfort.**
    5. How things really are – **(vv. 18-20)** (Contrasted with before):
       1. **(v. 18)** – slippery (not stable), destruction (ultimate end). (**cf. Matthew 7:24-27** – house on the sand)
       2. **(v. 19)** – ***“How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!” (NASB)***
          1. In a moment/sudden (**cf. Luke 12:20** – rich fool, THIS NIGHT)
          2. Pleasure is temporary.
       3. **(v. 20)** – God will forget them like we forget a dream (**cf. Luke 13:25-27** – I do not know you)
13. Relief in Reflection **(vv. 21-24)**
    1. Having received true perception through turning to God, he reflects – **(vv. 21-22)**
       1. **(v. 21)** – I was torn up, but over what?! (**vv. 3, 18-20** – envious of wicked? Why was I? LOOK AT THEIR END!)
       2. **(v. 22)** – I was foolish, thinking/acting like an animal.
          1. **Progress** – **(v. 2** – recognized endangerment of self), **(v. 15** – betrayal of God’s children, and their blessings), **(vv. 21-22** – reflecting on state before God).
          2. ***“before You”*** – but doubting You (see to **v. 23** – now ***“WITH You”***)
       3. Like Job – **cf. Job 42:1-6**
    2. **(vv. 23-24)** – learned his lesson, and fully committed to God, renewed hope.
       1. **(v. 23)** – a sense of understanding the privilege of fellowship with God, and the guidance He provides through life.
          1. Newfound understanding of – **Proverbs 3:5-8**
          2. (**v. 23b**) – His hand was never shortened, and by seeking God He found His help and salvation (**cf. Isaiah 59:1** – rather than committing to the way of the ungodly, he reached for God’s outstretched hand)
       2. **(v. 24**) – he will trust in God’s counsel and has confident hope it leads to glory (in the end of life – contrast with **v. 20**). (**cf. Romans 8:18)**
    3. What a relief that he did not succumb to those thoughts. (**v. 2)**
14. Tested Trust **(vv. 25-28)**
    1. His faith has been tested, and now he knows to trust in God is wise. God should be his focus and desire, and despite what may appear to be gain on earth, it is nothing.
    2. **(v. 25)** – God is his single desire – in heaven, but also on earth **(cf. Philippians 1:21**).
    3. **(v. 26)** – life is not all of a sudden easier, but now that he sees the true substance, his struggles on earth are swallowed up.
       1. **Philippians 4:4, 13** – true joy and contentment through the strength of Christ.
       2. **Romans 8:37-39** – nothing can separate us from Him.
    4. **Summation** – **(vv. 27-28)** – where there was a question before **(vv. 13-14),** he is confident now, having tried and true faith, that fully trusting in God is where goodness lies.
       1. ***“That I may declare all Your works”*** – (**v. 15** – not speak), but now bursting forth in declaring God’s praises (**cf. 1 Peter 2:9**)

**Conclusion**

1. If we aren’t careful, we will slip and fall by looking with envy at the lives of those who live without God.
2. God has blessed us richly beyond measure. The sacrifice of faith is well worthwhile.
3. If we simply yield to Him instead of our doubts, giving Him a chance to show His faithfulness once again, we will be able to see that ***“Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart”* (Psalm 73:1)**.