

THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETERNITY

Psalm 73

When we allow ourselves to compare our life with the life of a *prosperous worldly man*, doubts about God can overwhelm us...just as it did the **Psalmist**. But as a believer we must learn to keep everything in *perspective of eternity*. The *contrast of our destinies* allows us to *keep a proper perspective* on life. In this world, we are *aliens*. Our *citizenship* is in *heaven*. This world is only *temporal*. Our time with God is *eternal*.

I. THE BLIGHT (*disease...stain...scar*) OF ENVY: (vs. 1-5)

Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart! But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. For I was *envious* of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pains in their death, and their body is fat. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like mankind. (vs. 1-5)...

What causes your *heart to grow cold*...or what causes you to *begin to lose faith* in God? Is it the *envy* you feel creeping into your soul as you *look at others*? Is it a *cynical response* to someone's *arrogance*? Or like the **Psalmist**, is it seeing people around you who don't seem *remotely interested* in God *prosper*? Why should the people who *oppose* God *be better off* than those who *trust* Him? (*Health...wealth...and prosperity gospel*).

These are hard and probing questions. This problem was so overwhelming that the **Psalmist almost lost faith** in God's *goodness*.

How do we respond when *life*...and our *life experiences* begin to *conflict* with *our beliefs*?

Envy...Heb. *qanah*, means *to be very jealous*.

*“For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and *envy*, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...”*

~Titus 3:3-5

*“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God...Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and *envy* and all slander...”*

~I Peter 1:22-23, 2:1

II. THE BREATH OF FAITH: (vs. 16-17)

When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end. (vs. 16-17)...

In *verse 13*, the **Psalmist** was confused over the *worth of his salvation*. He felt that he had *cleansed himself in vain*. He felt frustration in trying to *live a righteous and godly life*. But he *overcame his doubts* by considering the *destiny* of the *wicked*. He chose to have an *eternal view*.

One thing is for sure, God wants us to voice all our *questions* and *struggles* to Him. Unfortunately, sometimes when the harder questions of life pop up, we let them push us *away from* God, rather than *to* Him. They may feel too *overwhelming*...or even *unanswerable*.

One of the core things this **Psalm** shows us, though, is the importance of *never leaving God out of the questions we ask*.

The best way that can happen is when we spend time with Him. The **Psalmist** calls it *going into* God's **sanctuary**. It's the place where we can *honestly* and *intimately pour out our heart* to our loving Father.

Sanctuary...defines *a place of worship*. Today, this is in *our heart*.

Do you know...whether it's the person asking the questions or the person the questions are asked about...the *love*, *forgiveness*, and *freedom* of God *is there*? None of us deserve any of this. It's called **grace**. And it's all His *gift* to us *without strings, without expectations*.

III. THE BLAZE OF GLORY: (vs. 21-26)

When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (vs. 21-26)...

The **Psalmist** confessed that his *perspective* had been dulled by *insensitive ignorance*. If he hadn't been so *ignorant*...his heart wouldn't have become *bitter*.

He was able to *come to his senses* and realize his own *glorious destiny*. His *true position* was in *stark contrast* with the *wicked*.

He acknowledged that God was *always with him* and that He would *always guide him* with *wisdom* and *receive him into glory*.

Receive me to glory...means that *God will be glorified through him and his obedience*...and he will *walk in* that *glory*.

Paul was a great example of *living the victorious Christian life* regardless of the circumstance surrounding him. In **Philippians 3**, he counted his impeccable pedigree as *rubbish* (vs. 8)...even though he could have boasted in the *rite of circumcision* (vs. 5)...in his *race* (vs. 5)...in his *religion* (vs. 5)...in his record of *persecuting the church* (vs. 6)...and in his *righteous life* (vs. 6). Instead, he *viewed everything* in relation to the *surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus as his Lord*.

"If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

~Philippians 3:4b-7

But notice **Paul's eternal perspective**.

"More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His

resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

~Philippians 3:8-14

And in the next chapter...he *exhorts* to turn *vertical*...

“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

~Philippians 4:8

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **When we envy, we have a horizontal and temporal view of life.**
- **Envy results in a root of bitterness being developed and growing in one’s heart.**

“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled...”

~Hebrews 12:15

- **We must always maintain an eternal perspective in every situation we face in this earthly life.**

Psalm 73

1 Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart! **2** But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, my steps had almost slipped. **3** For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked. **4** For there are no pains in their death, and their body is fat. **5** They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like mankind. **6** Therefore pride is their necklace; the garment of violence covers them. **7** Their eye bulges from fatness; the imaginations of their heart run riot. **8** They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; they speak from on high. **9** They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue parades through the earth. **10** Therefore his people return to this place, and waters of abundance are drunk by them. **11** They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" **12** Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. **13** Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; **14** for I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning. **15** If I had said, "I will speak thus," behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. **16** When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight **17** until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end. **18** Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast

them down to destruction. **19** How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! **20** Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form. **21** When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, **22** then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. **23** Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. **24** With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory. **25** Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. **26** My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. **27** For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. **28** But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.