

Psalm 73:15-28

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Preacher: Spencer Baumgardner

[0:00] Good evening. In the Old Testament, the book of Psalms this evening. Psalm 73.

The Psalm of Asaph. I appreciate the other things we find in Scripture about David. But Asaph is my psalmist. I relate more to Asaph. The Bible describes David as a man after God's own heart.

And quite frankly, I wish that I could see myself that way, but I can't. And I don't. As much as I might try and strive to be, I don't.

But Asaph, I relate heavily to Asaph. Now, this psalm that we're going to read through a little better than half of it tonight, and as the good Lord's help preach a little better than half of it, is a psalm that Asaph wrote in confusion.

[1:18] But we have to remember though, Asaph was not a man that was an atheist. He wasn't a man that was in rebellion against God. He was a man that was in covenant relationship with God.

In fact, you read in 1 Chronicles 16, that Asaph was a Levite. And that he was given the title or the position, what we would call nowadays as worship leader, for the children of Israel.

By King David himself. So this was not a man that was unfamiliar with God. It was not a man that was unfamiliar with the ways of God, or with the Word of God, for that matter.

And that's where the confusion kind of sets in, in this Psalm 4, Asaph. Asaph is trying to reconcile what he sees going on in the world with what he knows about God, and what he knows about the Scripture, and what he knows about the God that he is in covenant with, the God that has made promises to him and to his people.

And that's why the confusion sets in on Asaph. We read in the first several verses of Psalm 73, that Asaph, well, he begins the psalm, he says, Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

[2:41] But as for me, my feet were almost gone. My steps had well nigh slipped. So Asaph here admitting that God has been good to Israel. And the very next verse he says, but my steps, my feet have almost slipped.

Even though the fact is that God has been good to Israel. And folks, if we're not careful as New Testament believers, as New Testament church, we'll find ourselves in the exact same spot as Asaph was here.

We'll see the world. We'll see as Asaph describes in the first several verses here, the prosperity of the world, the health that the world seems to have, the wealth that the world seems to have.

It seems like they don't have a care. And we'll grow envious of that. Just as Asaph did. Asaph was envious over what he saw in the world.

And what he saw going on in the world with those that were out of covenant relationship with Almighty God. And that's what we're dealing with here in this psalm. We're not going to read the entire psalm.

[3:50] There's 28 verses to it. But for time's sake, we won't do that. But we read the first two verses. And if you'll start with me in verse 12.

Just for context, we'll start reading there. I'm going to hopefully start preaching after we read through the rest of the chapter about verse 15 or so.

But for context, we'll begin with verse 12. Psalm 73 says, Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. They increase in riches.

Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. If I say I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then understood I therein. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places.

[4:54] Thou castest them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.

Thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I and ignorant. I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee.

Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee?

And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

For lo, they that are far from thee shall perish. Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God.

[5:55] I have put my trust in the Lord God that I may declare all thy works. Back to verse 15. Verse 15 in Psalm 73 says, If I say I will speak thus, Behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

And what Asaph here is saying, now again, the context here is Asaph has seen everything that is going on in the world and basically how the world has not a care and how their prosperous and how their wicked ways seem to have no judgment from Almighty God.

And that's why he says in verse 13, Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency. In other words, Asaph here is saying, I have done my best to live a life that is upright, to live a godly life, and it seems that it's all for naught.

These are the thoughts that Asaph was having. But in verse 15 he says, If I say I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. He's saying here that if he speaks what is on his mind, if he goes to the crowd, if he goes to Israel and speaks these things, that he's afraid that he might become a stumbling block unto all of Israel.

And folks, this is something that the church needs to take very serious heed to. What Asaph is saying here when he says, If I say I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

[7:20] Folks, sometimes we have confusion that enters into our life. And we know from what Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, that God is not the author of confusion. So when confusion comes into your life, it is not of God.

It has never been of God. And it never will be of God. For he is not the author of that confusion. But folks, sometimes we have private confusion. But it's best to take that confusion unto God.

It's best to do as Asaph here said. He said that he went into the sanctuary of Almighty God. In other words, he went into the presence of Almighty God.

And that is where your confusion will be cleared up. That is where you will find your answers. In the Word of God. Bowing on your face before God. Pleading with God.

Making supplication and petition known unto God. This is how your confusion will be cleared up. But making your public, making your personal confusion can cause public corruption.

[8:19] If you bring it to the body of the church and say, well, I've got questions about this, I've got questions about that. Nothing wrong with doing that. Nothing wrong with seeking someone else's help. But folks, truly and honestly, the best place to get your answers is in the Word of God and making prayer unto God.

And having others to pray for you about such things. But if we're not careful, we will corrupt the body of the church. We will corrupt the body within these walls here. We can corrupt the body within other walls with our confusion.

It's best to take that unto God. Again, there's nothing wrong with asking questions. I encourage people to ask questions. And I can promise you, I'll never give you an answer if I don't feel certain of

it.

But I'll find somebody that can. And more often than not, that's Almighty God. It's Almighty God and in His Word. Many times at my work, people will come in my office, whether it be drivers, whether it be office personnel, whether it be people that work in another part of the city.

They'll come in my office and they'll want some kind of guidance, some kind of counseling. And I'll tell them all, I'm not a certified counselor. But if that's what you're seeking, it'll be biblical counsel.

[9:32] You're opening this door, I'm just letting you know what's on the other side of it. I'll listen to you, but if you want counsel, it will be biblical counsel. Because that's the only counsel I know how to give.

You don't want counsel from this finite mind. But when it comes from the words of Almighty God, that's the kind of counsel that we all need. Verse 16 and verse 17, When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me until I went into the sanctuary of God.

Then understood I therein. He says, When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. When I thought to know this, it was too painful. Folks, he had tried to figure it out all on his own.

Asaph says, When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. When I sought answers, when I tried to reconcile this thing unto myself, whatever it was, in the first several verses of Psalm 73 here, everything that he is talking about there, when I tried to figure this thing out on my own. It was too painful for me, folks. This makes me think about the disciples that were on the road to Emmaus and they were talking about the death of Christ and they tried to reconcile amongst themselves.

[10:44] They tried to come up with answers amongst themselves and it led into nothing more than despair until God Himself showed up on the scene. God Himself, walking in the flesh in the form of Jesus Christ, opened up the Scriptures to them and explained them to them and only then did they understand.

They had to get into the presence of Almighty God in order to get their answers. But when he thought of it himself, when he tried to figure it out on himself, he said it was too painful for him. He says, Until I went in to the sanctuary of God, until I got in to God's presence, what was the sanctuary of God? At this time here, this would have been the temple of God.

But folks, there was the tabernacle and there was the temple. When you walked into the actual sanctuary, I'm not talking about the outer courts or anything like that. When you go into the actual sanctuary, the first thing you come into contact with is the brazen altar on the right.

That's the place where there was blood. That's the place of worship. That's the place of intercession. That's the place of sacrifice. And that's the first place that you would come into or come to in the sanctuary of Almighty God.

[11:55] was the brazen altar. He says, Until I went in to the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Notice, what brought on the confusion for Asaph?

We talked about it. We didn't read through all the verses. But we talked about it. It was the prosperity and the well-being and the well-doing of the world. But here he says he went in to the sanctuary of God.

And there he understood their end. He didn't understand the present circumstances. And he doesn't claim to understand the present circumstances.

He says, I understood their end. And that is what humbled Asaph. That's why we get into the verses that follow this. That is what humbled him. Because he understood their end.

What is the end of the wicked? What is the way of the end of the wicked? Folks, it is fire. It is death. It is destruction. It is an eternity outside of the presence of Almighty God.

[12:52] It is an eternity outside of the forgiveness of God. And outside of the mercy of God. That is the end of the wicked. And that's what he understood. Not the present circumstances.

Folks, we will not always understand. And every one of us have had the question. Every one of us have had the question, why do bad things happen to good people? Every one of us have had the question, I attend church.

I put money in the offering plate. I sing songs. I do this. I do that. Why am I suffering through this? Why is God allowing this in my life? Every one of us have felt that way at some point in our

Christian walk.

And folks, it is not sometimes for us to understand the present, but we understand the end. The end of it is for us to glorify God in everything that we do, to give Him the honor and to give Him the glory through the sickness, through the health, through the brokenness, through the triumph, through everything in our lives.

It is our duty to give glory unto God. That is our chief end. It's to glorify God. The chief end of sinners originally was to glorify God, but folks, if they die lost in their sin, they die lost without Jesus Christ, their end will be eternal destruction.

[14:10] To die forever and ever and ever in what the book of Revelation describes as the second death. They will die forever and ever. He understood their end, not the present.

He understood their end. Verse 18, Surely thou didst set them in slippery places. Thou castest them down into destruction. Surely thou...

He's speaking of God here. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places. Thou castest them down into destruction. God does this thing. Folks, there is a line somewhere out there in the universe. Somewhere out there in this big, vast world that we live in. There is a line that people can cross where God will quit dealing with the heart of man. Where God will say, okay, that's enough. I have sent my spirit. I have sent my word. I have sent my son. I have sent preachers. I have sent grandmothers. I have sent mothers. I have sent all of these people their way to testify of my goodness.

[15:11] And they have rejected me over and over and over again. And that line is drawn out there. And there are people that cross that line. And God sets them in slippery places.

And God sends them to desolation. And God sends them to destruction. But ultimately, they choose that path. They choose the broad path and the wide gate.

They choose these things because they reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. Surely, thou didst set them in slippery places. Thou castest them down into destruction.

Surely, you do this thing to the wicked. Folks, think of Pharaoh. Think of Pharaoh. Literally, literally, one day, he was on the throne of Egypt.

He ruled planet Earth at that time. He was ruler of the entire world from Egypt at that time. The very next day, not only he, but his entire army was reduced to nothing more than fish food.

[16:15] Think of that. God set him in that slippery place. I understand in the book of Exodus, it says that Pharaoh hardened his heart, but God hardened his heart as well. That's not me coming up with something.

That's what Scripture said. God set him in those slippery places. And He done it for His glory and for His honor. And He is God. He can do whatever He wants to, with whomever He wants to, and we have no right to question it.

God sets them in slippery places and He casts them down to destruction. Verse 19, How are they brought into desolation? As in a moment, they are utterly consumed with terrors.

As in a moment, they are utterly consumed. This is how God brings them into desolation. I don't know everybody's heart here tonight. I have no reason reason to think that anybody here is unsaved.

But let me tell you now, if you are unsaved, don't mistake God's patience for a license to continue on your way. Don't mistake the delay of judgment on you for denial of judgment on you.

[17:23] Judgment is coming. Judgment is coming. It may come tonight. It may come tomorrow. It may come next week. You may live another 50 years on this planet for all we know.

But judgment will come. And there are many people in the world right now. There are many people in the church world right now that think, well, God hasn't punished me for what I'm doing right now. I've felt no conviction. I've felt no guilt. I've felt none of these things. So what I'm doing must be okay with God. Don't mistake that for denial of your judgment.

Don't mistake that. Folks, there's many people in the church world, many people in the world in general, that have that very thought. But folks, that just shows the long-suffering of God. That shows the patience of God.

That shows the mercy of God. That shows the love of God toward His creation. But again, there's a line out there somewhere. And if anyone dies outside of Jesus Christ and His gospel, they have nothing but hell to their end.

[18:27] Period. God, help them. God, help us to pray for those people. Help me to pray for those people. Give me more of a burden, God, for lost souls. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image.

So, what's he been talking about in the past couple of verses? He's been talking about the wicked. And he's been talking about the punishment of the wicked in the previous verses, the ones that we didn't go through tonight.

He's talking about the prosperity of the wicked. He says, as a dream when one awaketh, folks, when one awaketh, he says, so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image. Think about when we dream, when you have a dream or when I have a dream and we wake up and it seems so vivid to us. It seems so real to us. Whatever it was that was going on, but at the same time, after we are awakened, it is unreal.

This is exactly how the desolation and destruction is brought upon the wicked. Their life seems so real. It seems so fine. It seemed like everything was going to go smooth until the end of their days. [19:35] And maybe it did. But when they awaken their eyes and open their eyes in death, it will be for all of eternity. As one awakeneth. As one awakes.

But it says, O Lord, when Thou awakens. Now folks, we know that the God that looks over Israel never sleeps nor does He slumber. So we're not talking about God sleeping and then awaking. We're talking about God awakening to judgment. That's precisely what we're talking about here. When Thou awakest, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image. When you awaken to judgment, you will despise the very image of the wicked doers, of the evil doers, of those that have trampled underfoot the blood of Jesus Christ, of those that have trampled underfoot your commandments and your statutes and your judgments and your law and everything else.

Folks, that is one of the main things that needs to be preached is that we have trampled underfoot the law of Almighty God. We have rebelled against the law of Almighty God.

[20:37] Jesus Christ came and He obeyed the law of Almighty God. He has not trampled underfoot one thing about it and He suffered and bled and died a cruel death on behalf of those that did those very things.

He's the one that died on behalf of sinners. Praise God. He said, I came to seek and to save that which was lost. That was me. That was you. That was all of us. Thou shalt despise their image. Thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins. This is where the true turn starts to take for Asaph. It says, Thus my heart was grieved. Why?

We've got to go back to verse 17. Until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then understood I their end. And He talks about their destruction. He talks about their desolation.

He talks about the suddenness of it. He talks about the completeness of it. He talks about God awakening to judgment. And all these things. And He says, Thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins.

[21:37] He was grieved because of the way that He had thought. Because He said that He had cleansed His hands in innocency. Because He had tried to live an upright life and it was all for naught.

That's why His heart was grieved. Because He had grieved God. And He realized that. He said, I was acting as they were. I acted as a beast. How does a beast act?

How does any animal that you know act? They act by instinct. And that's exactly what Asaph was saying. I was acting by instinct and not by trust in You, O God. I was acting by sight and not by faith in You, O God.

That's what Asaph is saying in this. He was acting by instinct. He was acting just like a beast. And He was acting just like the world would act.

And this is why His heart was grieved. Because He realized He was acting just like them. Just like them. God help us. God help us as believers. God help us as professors of Jesus Christ.

[22:39] God help us as preachers of the Word of God. God help us as those that go into the world to tell people of the goodness of Jesus Christ. To tell people about His sacrificial, atoning death on the cross.

To tell people that they can be saved by a God that loves them. God help us to not be like them.

God calls us to come ye out from them and be ye a separate people.

God says, Be ye holy for I am holy. Brother Ellis just read that this morning out of 1 Peter in Sunday school. Which is a quote from the Old Testament. Be ye holy for I am holy.

People say, We can't be holy. We're sinful. We're sinful creatures. God would never command us to do anything that we were incapable of doing. Be ye holy for I am holy.

God help us to be holy. God help me to be holy. Thus was my heart grieved and I was pricked in my reign. So foolish was I and ignorant I was as a beast before thee.

[23:36] So foolish was I and ignorant. Boy, he's being honest here, ain't he? So foolish was I to act like the world. So foolish was I to envy the world.

You read those first several verses in this chapter sometime later, you will see that Asaph was envious of the world. And now he's calling himself foolish for being that way.

And folks, if you and I envy anything that the world has, you and I are foolish to do so. Because we've got something they don't have. We have eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus said to himself, He that believeth on me hath eternal life. I have believed on Jesus Christ, therefore I have eternal life. If you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, you have eternal life.

The world cannot say that they have eternal life. Let them be envious of us for once. But we don't need to be envious of their things. We don't need to be envious of their material goods.

[24:35] Do you have food in your cupboard? Do you have a refrigerator that's full? Do you have a little bit of money? Do you have a house? Do you have family? Do you have all these things? Folks, you've got more than you deserve if you do.

And if you've got salvation, that is far more than you deserve. And it's far more than I deserve. I deserve nothing more than the flames of hell for all of eternity. But God looked down one day and He said, I can redeem that.

And He did redeem that. And I praise God for that. So foolish was I, and ignorant. I was as a beast before thee. He was like the world before God. Verse 23, Nevertheless, I am continually with thee.

Thou hast hold me by my right hand. Folks, this nevertheless is so full of grace. Nevertheless.

Folks, even though, even though He was envious of the world, even though He wanted what the world had, even though He was seemingly mad at God because the world was getting away with murder, He was trying to live a godly life, and He's the one that was suffering.

Even though He had all of these thoughts. Just like you and I have had thoughts very similar to this in our Christian walk. He says, Nevertheless, nevertheless, I am continually with thee.

[25:52] Nevertheless, I, Asa, am continually with thee, O God. But He tells us why. It's not because of Asa's effort.

It's not because of Asa's grip on God. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee. Thou hast hold me by my right hand. Folks, I am not saved right now.

God has not kept me because I've maintained a good grip on Him. God has not kept me saved to this day for almost 17 years now because of my grip and my hold upon Him.

And God is not going to keep me saved on into the future where the Bible says we shall be saved because of my hold upon Him. It is because of His hold upon me.

He holds me by my right hand. It is not what I do, but what Almighty God is doing. Hallelujah. I

thank God for that because if I was depending on me and quite frankly, if I was depending on any of you and I think you all love me, but if I was depending on you or me, folks, I'd be sliding into hell right now.

[27:04] We got a weak grip, folks. We got a weak grip. We have weak minds. We have weak hearts. The heart is deceptive above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? We have wicked hearts.

We have deceptive hearts. But God has a strong hold on my right hand. And this gives the picture not just of God grabbing us and dragging us.

Folks, this is a fatherly picture that it's giving us here. He holds to my right hand. I used to love it when my boys were little. They're 29 and almost 25 now. But when they were little and we'd be walking somewhere and they'd just out of the blue reach up and grab my hand. My goodness, how that made me feel. But folks, how often do we do that to God? How often do we say, God, hold my hand? No, we say, God, I've got this. God, I'm going to go my own way. God, I'm going to figure this out. God, I'm going to do this thing. I'm going to do that thing. And I don't want Your counsel to do it. God, help us. But God, nevertheless, nevertheless, the psalmist says here, I am continually with Thee. [28:10] He is continually with God regardless of our thoughts, regardless of our failures, regardless of our stumbling. Praise God. I love the Scripture that says God understands that we are but dust.

We are but dust. He understands that we are finite. Folks, again, that doesn't give us license and that doesn't give us permission to go out here in the world and do stupid stuff or to go out here in the world and just plain out sin.

It doesn't give us permission for any of that, but God understands that we are but dust. That brings me great comfort. Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee.

Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory. There's another graceful verse here. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory.

God's going to guide us with counsel. Where do you get counsel from God? The number one place you get counsel is right here in this book. Right here in this book. Yes, you can pray to God.

[29:13] And yes, you can ask God to reveal out of His Word what He would have you to know. And yes, God can and will do that. But the number one place to get it is to read it for yourself.

What does the psalmist say in Psalm 119? Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet. It's what's going to guide. It's what's going to help us.

The Holy Spirit, He will help us as well. The Bible teaches that He's a counselor to us. The Bible teaches He's a comforter to us. The Bible teaches us that He will teach us.

And I praise God that He does. But, folks, if we don't have our nose in the Word, there's nothing going into our minds that can seep into our hearts that the Holy Spirit can teach us. Now, He might teach us to get our nose in the Word.

And that's a lesson I don't really want to learn. I've learned that one. Don't want to learn it again. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel. So we've got guidance.

[30:13] But, folks, that guidance leads to something. It leads to an end. And the end is in the same verse. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory.

God will guide us with His counsel. He'll guide us with His Word. He will guide us with His Spirit, which is God Himself. Praise God. He will guide us with all these things.

And afterward, receive us to glory. But, folks, while we are here on this earth, while we are here on this planet, while we are here for whatever time God has allotted to you and whatever time God has allotted to me, we have a promise from the Word of God not just here, but in many other places in Scripture that God will be with us, He will guide us, and that He will guide us with His counsel and with His Word and with His Spirit.

and we go through this life and we still murmur and we still complain and we still say, why me? When we know what our end is that will receive me and the glory.

Folks, it doesn't matter what we're going through here. It doesn't matter. In light of eternity, it does not matter. It's but a brief moment. Just like the prosperity of the wicked in the first about third of this chapter.

[31:29] Just like their prosperity, it's fleeting. It's fleeting. He'll only be here for a little while. Then they'll have all eternity to suffer. Not because they were prosperous, but because they rejected God.

God does not condemn prosperity. Nowhere in the Scripture does God condemn prosperity. But let me tell you right now, prosperity without God is a dangerous thing.

It's a dangerous thing. God prospers His people. In fact, He promised Israel prosperity when He was bringing them into Canaan land. He promised them He would prosper them.

So He doesn't condemn it. But folks, it is a dangerous thing to have prosperity without God. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Receive me to glory. Receive me to Yourself, God. You'll receive me into heaven. You'll receive me to forever be with You in a land that is flowing with milk and honey in a land where the tree of life blooms, in a land where the crystal river flows from the throne of God.

[32:32] You'll receive me unto glory. Which in a nutshell is receiving me and you if you've been born again unto Himself. That's glory.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? What a question. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? Folks, not the angels. Not loved ones that have gone home.

That's not who we attribute salvation to. And we cannot attribute salvation to them. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee.

Folks, not only in heaven, but here on earth. There's no family that we have here. There's no preacher that we have here. There's no church family that we have here.

There's no blood family. No friends. Nothing that we have here that compares with Almighty God. And this is the psalmist Asaph asking this question. God gives that answer Himself several times throughout the Scripture when He says, I am the Lord thy God and beside me there is no other.

[33:41] Not to mention He will not share His glory with another. And He's receiving us up into His glory according to the previous verse. I'm sorry.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? There is none and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee. Folks, what's your desire? That's the question. We have no one in heaven but God that we can depend on.

No one that we can depend on but God. But where is your desire? There's no one else on earth, the psalmist here says, that He desires beside God.

Where's your desire? Is it in other people? Is it in other things? It needs to be in God. Whether we're talking about earthly things, whether we're talking about heavenly things.

Folks, what did Jesus say Himself? Lay not up for yourselves treasures here on earth. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. That's where our treasure needs to be. And whether we're thinking about the worldly things, the earthly things, folks, we need to be focused on God.

[34:52] Because everything here from what I read in the Scripture is going to burn up in a fervent heat. Including the elements. I don't know how in the world water is going to burn up. Quite frankly, I don't care.

But the Bible says the very elements will be burnt up in a fervent heat. The Bible says it. I believe it. Verse 26, My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. This is nothing more than reality mixed with hope. He says, My flesh and my heart faileth. That's the reality. And folks, your flesh and your heart faileth.

I'm not talking about necessarily on the spiritual side of things here. Although our heart does fail us there. Although our flesh does fail us there.

But folks, our flesh wears out. Our flesh gets weak. We get tired. Ain't none of us any younger today than what we was yesterday. We're all getting older.

[35:52] We're all becoming more susceptible to the elements. We're becoming more susceptible to gravity. We're becoming more susceptible to time. We're becoming more susceptible to all of these things.

Our flesh and our heart fail us. But folks, even though that be the case, even though that be the case, the psalmist here says, but God is the strength of my heart.

God is the strength of my heart. God is the rock of my heart. God is the fortress of my heart. God is where I draw my strength from. And by it from no other.

He says, in my portion forever. Let me tell you something now. Asaph would have known something about portions. Asaph being a Levite, when the children of Israel were crossing into the Canaan land, God had then told them, Levi won't have an inheritance.

I'll be their portion. I will be their inheritance. And here's Levi reminding God of that very thing. Not that God needed reminding. But Levi is reminding God He is His portion forever.

[37:02] Asaph being a Levite himself. Again, you can read that in 1 Chronicles 16. It says, Though my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Folks, if God is the strength of your heart, God is your portion forever. Not just here on this earth. Not just here in this life.

But He has promised to go with us always, even to the end of the world. He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us in folks. That never means on out of this life into the next.

He won't forsake us there either. He will not leave us there either. We will be with Him forever and ever to share in His glory, to share in His power, to share in His majesty, to share in His salvation. Hallelujah! Amen. That's the promise that we have from Scripture. He is our portion forever. So whenever you feel like you've been gypped here on earth, and all those have felt that way, I've felt that way.

[38:04] You have. You feel like you've been gypped, you've been ripped off, didn't get what you quote unquote deserved. You remember God is your portion. And He's your portion forever.

Whatever it was you got gypped out of, it's going to burn up one day. It's going to be gone one day. I don't care what kind of collectibles you might have. I don't care what kind of money you might have in the bank.

It's all going to be gone. And if it ain't burned up, somebody else is going to get their little paws on it. And it won't be yours to spend. But folks, it doesn't matter. Because God is our portion.

And He's the only portion that we need. He's not just the only portion that we have. He's the only one that we need. Hallelujah. For lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish.

Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from Thee. So He goes back from this praise that He's been giving to God for a few verses now to reflecting back upon the wicked one more time.

[39:07] Right after He says, God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever, He says, for lo, or look, He says, they that are far from Thee shall perish.

Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from Thee. But, verse 28 couples well with that. But it is good for me to draw near to God. What did He say in verse 27?

Lo, they that are far from Thee, they that are far from Thee shall perish. Verse 28, but it is good for me to draw near to God.

Why is it good for Him to draw near to God? Because those that are far from God perish. Folks, neutrality, neutrality with God is not a win.

on behalf of sinners. It is nothing more than destruction. And there are many people in the world right now that say, I don't really need to repent.

[40:09] I don't really need to pray. I just need to go through life. I don't need to rob any stores. I don't need to drink. I don't need to drug. I don't need to lie.

I don't need to steal. I don't need to do all these things. And man, God will be good. And I'll tell you, the main reason that people in the world have that mindset right now is because it's been preached from the pulpits.

That's why the world has that mindset. It's because it has been preached from pulpits. And people have believed a false gospel. And that false gospel will lead them straight into a real hell.

Amen. God help us to preach the true gospel that man is a sinner but that God is a Savior. We are all sinners. All sinning comes short of the glory of God.

But again, verse 27, For lo, they that are far from thee shall perish. Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee. So again, neutrality leads to destruction. Being far from God is not a good place to be.

[41:14] And folks, in my Christian walk, there's days I felt like God wasn't within a blue billion miles of where I was. And I'm sure you felt that way in your Christian walk too.

But I know the Scripture. Again, in the introduction of this whole thing, what Asaph was having such a hard time with was reconciling what he was seeing with the wicked and the world with what he knew about God.

And that is our problem many times. But those that are far from God, they shall perish. God has destroyed them. It says, Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee.

So he's talking about two different things here. He's talking about those that are neutral with God, those that are far off, and those that have gone a-whoring after other idols after they've heard about

God, after they've known about God, after they've heard the Word of God.

Folks, idolatry is another way straight into destruction. That is betrayal against God. It is betrayal against God. And truth be known, folks, this would apply just as much to believers.

[42:24] This would apply just as much to us. We're in danger of idolatry if we ain't real careful. We're in danger of taking something or someone in our life and placing it above God and placing it above service to God and placing it above church and placing it above prayer time and placing it above Bible reading time.

I've said many times and I've given the warning many times you be careful saying, well, little Bobby, little Susie's got a practice coming up Sunday. We won't be at church the next Sunday it's the same thing and the Sunday after that it's the same thing.

You be careful what you're using for an excuse because God can take those excuses out of the picture. God can do that and then you'll be left without excuse and you'll have to provide an actual reason.

And you still won't be able to. Be careful. Be careful. Verse 28 It is good for me to draw near to God. I put my trust in the Lord God that I may declare all thy works.

But it is good for me to draw near to God. Notice this begins with but. And again, if we couple it with the previous verse that those that are far from thee shall perish. And he says, but it is good for me to draw near to God.

[43:42] He is not far from God. And Asaph realizes that he wasn't far from God. But he wants to draw near to God. James chapter 4 verse 8 says, draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh to you.

But that verse continues. First, it says, draw nigh to God. The ball is put in your court. You draw nigh to God.

And he will draw nigh to you. But that verse continues. It says, cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

James wasn't writing to unbelievers. He was writing to the church. He was writing to Jews. You read it in James chapter 1 where he says, James, a servant of God to the twelve tribes scattered abroad greeting.

He was writing to Jews that had professed Jesus Christ as Lord. And they believed the gospel when they heard it. And yet he is telling them, draw near to God and he will draw nigh unto you.

[44:50] Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Saying that to believers. Folks, the same command goes to us.

How do you cleanse your hands? How do you purify your heart? Again, with this word, and with the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and with the guidance and the counsel of Almighty God that we talked about just a few verses ago.

That's how you cleanse your hands. And that's how you purify your heart. Back to the tabernacle and back to the temple. I was talking just a little while ago about how when you first walked in, the very first thing you saw was the brazen altar.

The sacrifice had to be made. It had to be made before you could continue on to service for Almighty God. I'm talking about for the Levites, for the priests. They had to go in. They had to make sacrifice.

Before they could continue on to where the show bread was, where the incense was burned, where all these things were going on, they had to make a sacrifice. But even before they could reach that area, before they could reach the holy place, not the holy of holies, but the holy place, there was a laver between the altar and the holy place.

[46:02] And they had to stop and they had to wash. Why? Well, they just got through making a sacrifice. They had blood all over them. For one. Two, they had been all around the encampment of Israel.

They had been all around the town. I mean, at the time of the tabernacle, it was all around the encampments. At the time of the temple, it was all around town, different people's houses, believers and unbelievers alike.

They got the world on their feet. water. They had to wash that off. They had to keep clean. So you had the altar where the blood was shed, where worship was done, where sacrifice was made.

Then they had to walk through the laver. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Those priests done what the Word of God told them to do.

That's how they cleansed their hands. And that's how they purified their hearts. Now folks, I'm not talking about salvation. Only God can cleanse us for salvation. But folks, the ball is in our court to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

[47:13] To keep ourselves unspotted from the world. If we being saved, again, I talked about it just a little while ago, if we being saved, go out and act like the world, we will not win one soul to Christ.

Amen. But we'll win a whole bunch of them to hell and say, well, if they're going to heaven, I shouldn't have any problem getting there. Folks, we're not called to be like that.

God does not expect us to act like that. We're expected to act like children of God. But it is good for me to draw near to God. I put my trust in the Lord God. He says it is good for me to draw near to God, to get closer to God.

He says I put my trust in the Lord God. God. And then he says that I may declare all thy works. Folks, we receive salvation.

When we receive salvation, we are sanctified. We are consecrated for the service of Almighty God. At that point in our lives, whether you were five, whether you were nine, whether you were fifteen, or whether you were fifty, at the point of salvation, salvation, you were sanctified, and you were consecrated.

[48:27] You were set apart and set aside for the service of God. Amen. And what is that service? To bring Him glory. We've already been over that. But to declare all His works.

To declare Him righteous. To declare Him perfect. To declare Him good. To declare Him Savior. To declare Him all those adjectives that we find over in Isaiah chapter nine.

Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Declare all those things about Him as well. We declare all of these things about God.

Including the wrathful side. Including the side of fury. Including the side of vengeance. We declare all things of God.

The psalmist here says, put my trust in the Lord God that I may declare all thy works. Now folks, I've said it many times.

[49:28] It does no good to preach a gospel that is nothing but the love of God. It does no good because then people hear it and they say, well God loves me.

I must be alright. No. No. No. We have to preach man is a sinner because man is a sinner. You're a sinner.

I'm a sinner. I didn't deny it when I was lost. And I sure ain't going to deny it now that I'm saved. All of us are pretty much proud of it when we was lost.

But, we must preach man is a sinner. But we must preach God is the Savior. And He is the Savior through Jesus Christ. The psalmist here says that it was good for him to draw nigh, to get closer unto God, that he had put all of his faith and his hope and his trust in the Lord God.

That, so that, he could declare all of his works. If your faith is solely in God and holy in God, go out and declare his works to this world.

[50:40] That's what we're commanded to do. That's the great commission. Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every living creature, teaching them and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

We are to do these things. Declare the works of God to your family, your friends, your co-workers. Declare them to me. Folks, that's testimony. That's testimony.

If God saved you, that's testimony. Declare it to people. God bless you all. That's this evening's message.