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| 1  Psalm 73 Sermon Outline  08/11/24  “Delighting In God Alone”  **INTRO:**  Everyone lives for pleasure  -You live for what you think = gives ultimate pleasure + delight  Even criminals do evil crimes = ultimate pleasure/delight  Opposite: You don’t live for something that doesn’t give you delight  Exception: Jobs that pay bills but don’t give you delight  But if your dream job was offered, you would take it  Real question: What is your ultimate delight?  What is your ultimate pleasure? | 2  Majority of world = earthly prosperity  That’s understandable = nobody wants to live in pain  Life = free from suffering, disease, pain, death  But reality = not everyone gets what they want: beautiful home, wife, husband, kids, etc.  Not everyone gets = American dream  We live in a fallen world, cursed by sin and death  What especially adds to this stinging reality is that wicked prosper and righteous often suffer  This is what Asaph, author, struggled with  What is the point of living godly if conditions are like this?  But Asaph was living for wrong kinds of pleasure and delight  He realized that God was His ultimate delight and pleasure |
| 3  **MAIN POINT:**  And God wants you to realize that life’s supreme delight and pleasure consists in God Himself.  This psalm has two parts  First part: Asaph describing his struggle with the fact that the wicked were prospering. I call it, “Envying Earthly Prosperity” from verses 1-15.  Second part: Asaph coming to realize that one’s true delight and pleasure must be in God Himself = “Delighting in Eternal Prosperity” = vv. 16-28.  **BODY:**  So we get into first part  “Envying Earthly Prosperity” vv. 1-15  Psalm of Asaph = We don’t know much about Asaph = choir director, one of worship leader of Israel | 4  We know he was going through some hardship/suffering in life  Verse 1: “*Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart*.”  Verse 1 starts off great and positive but next verse dashes all that to pieces  Verse 2 “*But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, My steps had almost slipped.*”  “I know God is good to Israel, but I don’t know if God is good to me!?”  Asaph = saw disconnect with truth about God and his perspective, experience, and what he saw  He knew generally righteous are awarded prosperity while wicked earn a hard and difficult life  Prov. 14:24 “*The crown of the wise is their riches, But the folly of fools is folly*.” |
| 5  Or blessings and curses of Deuteronomy and Leviticus  = righteous = milk + honey + rest from enemies  = curses = opposite  Asaph: “Here am I God! I am doing everything that you asked, yet why am I suffering like the wicked should be suffering?!”  V. 4 “*there are no pains in their death…*  They seem to die peacefully!  Ripe old age = not horrific death like cancer  “Body” = lit. “belly”  Not starving!  Call someone “fat” back then was compliment, not like today (explain) | 6  Verse 5 “*not in trouble as other men, and they are not stricken along with the rest of mankind*.”  Asaph troubled much of what happens mankind doesn’t happen to wicked  Maybe wealth insulates/mitigates their suffering?  Can avoid some diseases that come on the poor or maybe can afford to pay for them?  V. 6 “*Therefore lofty pride is their necklace; and the garment of violence covers them*. *their eye bulges from fatness; the delusions of their heart overflow. They scoff and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue goes through the earth.”*  Eye bulging from fatness = indulgent lifestyle  Live in fantasy world of their delusions, oppressing others, speaking against humanity and against God |
| 7  Acting as if they were God Himself  It gets worse…Verses 10-11  “*Therefore his people return here, to his place, And waters of fullness are drunk by them. They say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High*?”  So attractive in evil and prosperity = even God’s people flock to them  They think they can avoid God’s judgment = he’s not fully omniscient  Verse 12 “*Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth*.”  Gain wealth through unjust means  Not through honest hard day’s work as rest of God’s people do | 8  Asaph so discouraged, angry, cynical that V. 13  Lifts up his hands and scoffs:  “*Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; For I have been stricken all day long and reproved every morning*.”  “God what’s the point…?”  “It seems like I’m the one punished for my obedience!”  Verse 15 Concludes this part  “*If I had said, “I will recount thus,” Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children.”*  “I was this close to bringing your people down with me!”  Just when Asaph at his lowest point in life, jaded, cynical, etc. he saw a brilliant light that drove the darkness he was in |
| 9  He understood where true delight was found  We come to second part of this psalm  “Delighting in Eternal Prosperity VV. 16-28  “*When I gave thought to know this, It was trouble in my sight…Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end*.”  Something in temple of God = reminded Asaph of the truths of Scripture  It unmasked what he did not see  It lifted him out of the fog of his delusions  It exposed his envy for prosperity, success, and wealth instead of yearning for God Himself ‘  He came to realize that prosperity of wicked is only temporary and they will perish while righteous will live on | 10  Came to see perspective of psalmist in Psalm 1 that righteous man is like a  “*tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and it whatever he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.”*  Instead of Asaph slipping, in the end when God comes again to judge the earth, they will be the ones slipping into judgment  V. 18 “*Surely You set them in slippery places; You cause them to fall to destruction. How they become desolate in a moment! They are completely swept away by terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form*.”  There will be no escape  Their delusions of grandeur is only but a dream  You’ve experienced dreams like that right? Felt so real and when you awoke, it was a dream! |
| 11  They will one day awake from their dream to the reality of hell  Whatever injustice they committed, whatever they got away with on earth will be punished in eternity in hell  Asaph is humbled before God and admits…  V. 21 “*heart was embittered and pierced within*.”  and  V. 22 “*senseless and ignorant like animal*”  However V. 23 “*I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. With Your counsel You will lead me, And afterward take me in glory*.”  The truth Asaph forgot was that God was always with him…He never abandoned him  God was the one leading him and counseling him this whole time, teaching him to rely and delight in God through the difficult times | 12  Furthermore that God will bring him to glory in the end  Asaph realized that to obey God was to delight in God  You don’t obey God to get a specific reward from Him…the proper motivation to obey God is because You delight to obey Him  Where Asaph and many other Christians get wrong is that they think that if they do the right things, go to church, read their Bibles, pray, and don’t drink, smoke, or chew or go with girls who do…they will get rewarded with some type of prosperity  I mean the example in Scripture that absolutely shatters that idea that obedience is always going to get you prosperity is Job  If there was anyone who deserved to live a prosperous life based on righteousness, it would be Job.  And yet God took almost everything that he held dear from his life |
| 13  And what did Job say,  “Though He slay me, yet shall I praise Him”  Job cannot say that if he obeyed God because God gave him stuff  And in a similar way, Asaph says,  “*Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart fail, But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever*.”  If you were offered heaven without Christ, would you go?  Heaven wouldn’t be heaven if Christ was missing  Asaph is not saying to live like a monk or a hermit refusing all creaturely comforts and blessings  But in comparison to delighting in God, everything pales in comparison | 14  Like the song  “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full on his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.”  Asaph also further knows that in the end, those who reject God will be destroyed  V. 27 “*For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed everyone who is unfaithful to You*.”  V. 28 “*But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have set Lord Yahweh as my refuge, that I may recount all Your works*.”  Notice “But as for me” = V. 2 = “But as for me” = V. 28  Notice also V. 16 =If I had said, I will recount thus…”  to V. 28 “I will recount thus” |
| 15  Maybe you can relate to Asaph  Frustrated with direction of this world  Evil and wicked men seem to be winning and prospering  There was a time when to be a Christian in America at least was more accepted by society…but not anymore  You are working diligently and without compromise while your co-worker is cutting corners and producing the same amount of work unethically  If God is not your supreme delight and desire in life, when difficult times comes, you will end up like Asaph, frustrated and jaded that life did not turn up as you expected  If you delight yourself in anything other God, then you are deceiving yourself, and sin is deceitful as Asaph’s envy deceived him | 16  But Jesus Christ came to expose the true nature of our sin, that it robs you of true joy and delight in God  That is gives you a temporary pleasure that you think will last forever, when in reality it is fleeting  It is only when you see that Christ in all His glory and beauty will your affections be transformed to delight in Him  His glory and beauty was displayed at the cross when He layed down his life for sinners, to take the wrath that they deserved, and to give them eternal life  Eternal life that we don’t deserve  He rose from the dead, defeating the grave so that afterwards, he will take you in glory to Himself one day when He returns  Right now it seems like the wicked are prospering and the righteous are suffering, but one day it will be reversed for all of eternity |
| 17  Therefore with that eternal perspective in mind you say with Paul in 2 Cor. 6:10 though  “*sorrowful but always rejoicing, as poor but making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things*.”  The question is…do you believe what Asaph believed?  “*Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You I desire nothing on earth*?” Let’s pray  Benediction:  Psalm 37:5-6  *“Commit your way to Yahweh, Trust in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday.”* | 18 |