

July 4, 2010

he was feeling over the prosperity of those who didn't seem to acknowledge God. Read Psalm 73:16-28.

Ultimately, what does the psalmist recognize about the life-situation of the wicked?

How does this realization aid him?

What does the psalmist recognize about his own relationship with the living God?

How does this realization aid him?

How has this Psalm encouraged you in your talking with God? How has it challenged you in speaking to God about what is on your heart?

#### Day Five

One of the most noteworthy literary devices in this psalm is the repeated phrase "but as for me." Although it is not as clear in every English translation, three verses begin with this short introductory phrase. And, each time, the phrase introduces a contrast to something in the context.

Read Psalm 73:1-2. (Verse two opens with the phrase mentioned above.) What is the contrast pictured here? How does the psalmist contrast what he is thinking or feeling with the affirmation that opens this psalm in the first verse?

Read Psalm 73:21-23. (Verse 23 begins with the words "but as for me.") What is the contrast pictured here? How does the idea introduced by "but as for me" contrast with what is said in verses 21 and 22?

Read Psalm 73:27-28. (The last verse begins with the words "but as for me.") What is the contrast pictured here? How does the idea of the closing verse contrast with what immediately precedes it?

In each place where this phrase is found, we get a contrast as the psalmist speaks of himself. In other words, he asserts something but then, *in contrast to that assertion*, he admits or affirms something about himself. Perhaps we could follow that pattern this way:

*Observation one:* God is good to those whose hearts are His.

*But I* stumbled over that idea as I looked at those in the world around me.

*Observation two:* I grew bitter when I couldn't make sense of it all.

*But I* realized that I am, nevertheless, continually with You, Lord.

*Observation three:* God will ultimately deal with all mankind justly.

*But I* came to see that Your nearness and intimacy with You, Lord, matters more than having answers to the questions I struggle with.

How do you experience similar patterns in your own journey with the Lord?

In the final analysis, what brings resolution to the heart and mind of the psalmist? What benefit is it, to you, to recognize how that resolution came to him?

Psalm:

Turning Down the Noise

July 4, 2010

#### Day One

Everyone seems to have "pet peeves." There are things that tend to get under our skin; and for each of us it could be something a bit different. What kinds of things tend to rile you up the most?

What do you do when you get bothered by something? When something starts to get under your skin, how do you handle it?

As we have seen in our study of the Psalms so far, the psalmist doesn't seem to be reluctant to share what he is feeling or experiencing with God. And that means he sometimes expresses his strong feelings about what is getting under his skin. And that is what we find in Psalm 73. Read the entire Psalm.

What sense do you get for this Psalm over all? What is the psalmist doing in how he is talking to God and with God?

Looking over this particular psalm, what do you find the psalmist saying . . .

About the world around him?

Weekly Devotional



About himself?

What do those who don't know God give themselves to? What do they pursue?

What do you think he meant when he said that trying to understand what he saw happening was "a wearisome task" (73:16)?

About God?

Are you comfortable with what the psalmist does? Why or why not?

Why does this appear to trouble the psalmist so much? What is the psalmist's real concern?

Have you ever come to the place in your heart and mind where you felt that all your reasoning and rationalizing about what is going on in the world left you weary? When have you experienced this?

Do you find yourself doing the same kinds of things in your time with God? Why or why not?

As you look out on the world around you, where do you see the kinds of things that the psalmist describes?

Why does such speculation and reflection result in weariness? Why would the process of thinking about such things result in such distress?

Why do you think God might have inspired such words, as those we find in this psalm, to be recorded for us? What is the value of seeing this kind of praying to you and your relationship with the Lord?

How do you feel about what you see--particularly when you catch a glimpse of the kinds of things that the psalmist describes here?

Now turn back to Psalm 73:16-22. What helped bring some resolution and peace to the psalmist in the midst of what he was seeing?

### *Day Two*

Remembering that psalms are songs and poems and expressions of heart, let's try and enter into the experience the psalmist is describing. Read Psalm 73:1-15.

Just like the psalmist, take some time today to voice your thoughts about what you see in the world. Open your heart to the Lord and tell Him, honestly, how you are feeling about what you see in the lives of those who apparently don't acknowledge Him.

Although the psalmist couldn't fully explain why and what was currently happening in the world and in the lives of those who didn't acknowledge God, what did he come to see?

What kinds of things does the psalmist see going on around him?

How did coming to see that aid the psalmist in dealing with the distress he was feeling?

What does he see in the lives of the wicked, of those who don't acknowledge God?

### *Day Three*

All of us are "interpreters" of our lives and the world around us. As we see how things are unfolding, we seek to make sense of it. We want to "fit" the world around us into how we think things should go. The psalmist attempts to do this as well.

How could your own realization of what the psalmist came to see help you when you are faced with things in this life that leave you distressed and confused?

What is the attitude that he detects in the lives of the wicked? How do the wicked, apparently, approach life?

Notice Psalm 73:16. What does the psalmist say about what it was like when he tried to "make sense" of what he was seeing in the world around him?

### *Day Four*

As we continue to move through Psalm 73, we are introduced to the thinking of the psalmist that aided him and resolved the distress