

## The Doubting Man

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 73

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### I. Jesus in the Psalms (cf. Lk 24:44; Heb 2:11, 12; 10:5)

Why study the psalms around Christmas? As we've emphasized each year, *the psalms are Christ's songs*. Paul exhorts the Colossians, "*Let the word of \_\_\_\_\_ dwell in you richly, speaking to one another in psalms...*" (Col 3:16). When we sing the Psalms to one another, Christ Himself speaks to us through our brethren. *The psalms are \_\_\_\_\_ songs*. In addition, because we have been baptized "*into Christ*", these songs are also \_\_\_\_\_ songs. So Paul commands *us* to "*speak to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord*" (Eph 5:19).

#### Psalm 73 - A Psalm of Asaph

<sup>1</sup>Truly God *is* good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. <sup>2</sup>But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. <sup>3</sup>For I *was* envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

<sup>4</sup>For *there are* no pangs in their death, But their strength *is* firm. <sup>5</sup>They *are* not in trouble *as other* men, Nor are they plagued like *other* men. <sup>6</sup>Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them *like* a garment. <sup>7</sup>Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. <sup>8</sup>They scoff and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression; They speak loftily. <sup>9</sup>They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. <sup>10</sup>Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full *cup* are drained by them. <sup>11</sup>And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?" <sup>12</sup>Behold, these *are* the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase *in* riches. <sup>13</sup>Surely I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, And washed my hands in innocence. <sup>14</sup>For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning.

<sup>15</sup>If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. <sup>16</sup>When I thought *how* to understand this, It *was* too painful for me— <sup>17</sup>Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I understood their end. <sup>18</sup>Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. <sup>19</sup>Oh, how they are *brought* to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. <sup>20</sup>As a dream when *one* awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image.

<sup>21</sup>Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind. <sup>22</sup>I *was* so foolish and ignorant; I *was like* a beast before You. <sup>23</sup>Nevertheless I *am* continually with You; You hold *me* by my right hand. <sup>24</sup>You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me *to* glory. <sup>25</sup>Whom have I in heaven *but* You? And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You. <sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart fail; *But* God *is* the strength of my heart and my portion forever. <sup>27</sup>For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. <sup>28</sup>But *it is* good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works.

### II. The Doubting Man

#### A. Intro: God's Goodness to His People and our Temptation to Stumble (1-3)

The heading to our psalm ascribes this to Asaph. Indeed, all our psalms this year are ascribed to Asaph. Asaph was a descendant of Levi and one of David's chief musicians.

<sup>1</sup>Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals. And the number of the skilled men performing their service was: <sup>2</sup>Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah; the sons of Asaph were under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied according to the order of the king. (1 Chr 25:1-2)

#### B. Grief: The Temptation to Doubt God's Goodness (4-14)

As the psalmist looked out at the wicked, he was tempted to doubt God's goodness and justice. For while the wicked seemed to flourish like a green tree, the psalmist himself was *plagued* and *chastened every morning*. So he is tempted to conclude, "*Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence*" (13).

### C. *Guidance*: The Psalmist Remembers God (15-20)

The psalmist realized that giving way to such a temptation would be a *betrayal* of God's people, particularly the *children* (15). So he wrestled with the temptation at length (16) and found relief when he worshiped *God* in His \_\_\_\_\_ (17). The wicked shall not flourish.

### D. *Glory*: God's Goodness Displayed in our Glorification (21-28)

So this brings us to the final section of the psalm – the psalmist revels in God's care for him and thus for all those who are "*pure in heart*" (1).

## III. Dealing with Doubt

### A. Remember that you are not alone

First, remember that you are not alone. Doubt has been a universal experience of God's people. We live in a fallen world. At times the wicked triumph and good people suffer. Hence, God's people are regularly tempted to doubt God's goodness. "*Unbelief does not doubt, \_\_\_\_\_ doubts.*" We are also not alone because to give way to doubt is to betray all those who are doing the hard work of standing for righteousness against unrighteousness.

### B. Draw near to God

The second thing to do is to draw near to God. Note well the conclusion of the psalmist: "*it is good for me to draw near to God*" (28a) whereas it is those who are "*far from Him*" who shall perish (27a). So when you are doubting, take your doubts into the presence of God. Only He can make us *pure of heart*. In ourselves we are weak. *Our hearts are grieved* by the prosperity of the wicked (21); our natural and spiritual strength fail (26a); we need God to strengthen us (26b). So draw near to God especially in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's people:

<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup>and having a High Priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb 10:19-25)

### C. Cling to the truth

We not only need God to strengthen our hearts but to instruct our \_\_\_\_\_. Note that doubt *vexes our minds* (21b). We are often *foolish* and *ignorant*; like *beasts* we fail to think rationally (22). Hence, we need God to *guide us with His counsel* (24a) and give us *understanding* (16). So what is it that we need God to help us understand?

1. The end of the wicked is \_\_\_\_\_ (17-20 cf. Pr 2:22; 21:7; 24:19-20)
2. The end of the righteous is \_\_\_\_\_ (24 cf. Pr 3:33; 10:7,24,28; 11:21; 12:7,13; 14:11,32; 24:16)

## IV. Conclusion