

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 34 (August 14-20, 2016)

There was a time in my life when I questioned **God's** faithfulness because **my** thinking was wrong. By my observation, those who ignored the teachings of the Bible got ahead in this world. It seemed to me like Asaph wrote Psalm 73 as my personal psalm. I even displayed it on my license plate. Praise God, I have finally experienced life at the end of the psalm! We'll look at it together this week.

Sunday, August 14 (read Psalm 73:1-3)

But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. (Psalm 73:2)

My **worldly** thinking took priority over my **Biblical** knowledge during a tough time in my life. This incorrect viewpoint even led me to the outside of a bridge where I battled with suicidal thoughts. You can see why the printed verse means so much to me personally. The relevant truth of this psalm may also speak to you if you have ever entertained the kinds of thoughts that drove me to the edge. If so, I pray that this psalm will bring you peace and encouragement this week. Start by substituting your name for the word "Israel" in the first verse. You can be **pure in heart** while you are still struggling with sins of the flesh. Do not envy the arrogant, even though they seem to prosper (v. 3). Just "keep looking up! Fully rely on God!" (KLUFROG)

Monday, August 15 (read Psalm 73:4-12)

Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. (Psalm 73:9)

Have you ever viewed the wealthy in the light of today's text? If not, you are certainly in the minority. Since Satan operates by sight and sound, God's people are often confused during those times when they live by **sight**, not by **faith**. In 2 Corinthians 5:7, we are challenged to do just the opposite – "to live by faith, not by sight." Of particular interest to me is the printed verse above. The greedy, successful businessmen often claim to be Christians; however, they do not believe that their faith should interfere with their business pursuits. As a result, many people try to follow their example (v. 10). They, too, want the carefree lifestyle without God's interference (v. 11-12). We will see the psalmist's personal pity party in tomorrow's devotion.

Tuesday, August 16 (read Psalm 73:13-17)

When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. (Psalm 73:16-17)

During times of discouragement, it is easy to feel sorry for yourself. You forget, at least temporarily, that we are all sinners and that God does not consider one sin worse than another (see Romans 3:23 and James 2:10). While we have our pity party, we think that God is not rewarding our "purity" (v. 13-14). We can't admit these feelings to others in the Body of Christ, because we could cause them to lose faith as well (v. 15). How do we explain all these "bad things happening to good people?" The answer is in today's printed text! When we enter into God's presence, we realize that those who walk with the Lord will be fully rewarded in heaven! Satan may reward those who reject God on this earth, because he has been given temporary control, but his benefit package ceases at their death at which time they receive "their final destiny." Which do you choose, temporal or eternal?

Wednesday, August 17 (read Psalm 73:18-20)

Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. (Psalm 73:18)

You can certainly be a successful businessman as well as a dynamic Christian if you follow the command of Jesus: “But seek **first** His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33, emphasis mine). Those who succeed by cheating others, however, are living on slippery ground and their self-made empires can come tumbling down in a moment (v. 18-19). Sadly, some people will wake up from their dream life and find that it ended in a nightmare (v. 20). Does the name Bernie Madoff come to mind? He obtained worldly wealth from his ponzi scheme, but he is living out the final days of his life in prison. He is luckier than some, however, because he has a chance to repent before facing final judgment. The psalmist is finally raising his eyes upward as we will see in the next devotion.

Thursday, August 18 (read Psalm 73:21-24)

Yet I am always with you; You hold me by my right hand. (Psalm 73:23)

During the time of my depression due to my loss, no one wanted to be around me! I couldn't say anything positive because my world was falling apart (v. 21-22). Do you relate to this? Have there been times in your life when you couldn't even stand yourself? Then God has something to say to you and it's quoted above. The psalmist finally realizes what I came to understand: **God will never leave us or forsake us, even when it seems that our friends and loved ones have** (see Hebrews 13:5-6). He holds us by the hand, teaches us His Word and His will, and someday will call us into glory (v. 24). Can you praise Him now for those tough times He has brought you through?

Friday, August 19 (read Psalm 73:25-27)

Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. (Psalm 73:25)

God had to set me straight on the printed verse above. After I accepted Psalm 73 as my personal psalm, I reminded God that many of the folks I had baptized are now with Him in heaven. He said clearly, “They are not in heaven because of you, Roger. They are here because of me!” Once I grasped that concept, earth really **does** have nothing I desire more than Him! Someday, a doctor will tell me that he can do nothing else for me. “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (v. 26). I want you to know that this is not written just to me, but also to each one of you who believe in His Name. God's Word is personal! He loves you just as much as He loves anyone! He also loves the people who prosper on this earth, but those who reject Him will be lost forever (v. 27).

Saturday, August 20 (read Psalm 73)

But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds. (Psalm 73:28)

I am asking you to read the entire psalm today and marvel over the accuracy of His Word. The printed verse above is powerful! God is in control! Stay close to Him and find refuge in Him! Tell others about His Word and His will and His ways. It is true that those who follow Satan's will and his ways may get ahead down here, but we have a future that makes all of our discomforts on earth seem trivial. Don't get discouraged! God is on the throne! Nothing will enter your life without His permission, and everything that He allows to come in will ultimately work together for your good and for His glory (Romans 8:28). Relax! The Master is in charge!