

Tuesday, December 13, 2022 • Read Psalm 73:23–28

Questions from the Scripture text: At what times does Asaph believe the Lord has been with him (v23a)? What has the Lord been doing (v23b)? What will the Lord continue to do (v24a)? And then what (v25b)? Who will receive Asaph to glory? What does Asaph ask, about what place, in v25a? What is the implied answer? What does he declare about what place in v25b? What is the condition of his physical strength (v26a)? What is the condition of his spiritual strength? What is his heart's rock of strength (v26b)? What else is God to him? For how long? What will happen to whom (v27a)? Who does this to them (v27b)? What have they done to the Lord? What does Asaph now define as good (v28a)? What has Asaph done (v28b)? To be able to do what (v28c)?

What does worship lead a believer to conclude about his life? Psalm 73:23–28 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when worship reminds the believer that God has all blessedness in Himself, the believer realizes that any good in him has already come from God, and that having God Himself means that the believer already has all blessedness in this life and the next.**

One of the benefits of beholding God's holiness in worship (v17) is the realization that He is just as holy, and He is just as present, even when we don't perceive Him. When we add to that the fact that we have been foolish and beastly toward Him (v22), but that He has still granted that we would perceive His holiness (v17), we realize how great His mercy and patience toward us have been. This presents a very different view of ourselves and our circumstances than Asaph had in v13–14.

A reassessment of our past and present, v23–24a. Previously, Asaph spoke as if he had washed his own heart and hands (v13). Now, his explanation for why his foolishness and beastliness (v22) were not complete (cf. v2) is that the Lord was with him (v23a), holding him by the right hand (v23b). He has gone from thinking of himself as a good man (v13) being undeservedly punished (v14) to seeing himself as a sinful man (v21–22) being undeservedly helped and blessed (v23–24a).

What a wonderful word “nevertheless” can be. The believer may bring it into every circumstance: “Nevertheless, I am with You.” Note how much more personal “You” is than “Him” or “the Lord.” He's not just thinking about the Lord. He's interacting with the Lord. The believer can add to every failing: “Nevertheless, You hold me by my right hand.” The believer can add to every foolishness: “Nevertheless, You guide me with Your counsel.” May the Spirit train our hearts to say, “Nevertheless, You...”

A personal definition of heaven, v24b–28. When we say “personal” definition of heaven, we do not mean that every person gets to make their own definition of goodness (v28a), but that the proper definition of goodness or blessing is that it is found in a Person: God Himself.

When the believer is received into glory (v24b), he finds that the One Who receives him there is the One Who has been with him all along (cf. v23–24a). And having glimpsed God's holiness in worship (v17), the believer has come to see that whatever else there is in heaven cannot make it any more glorious than God's display of Himself has made it (v25a).

The wonderful corollary to this is that if God Himself is all of the heavenliness of heaven, then a believer already has heaven on earth (v25b). His failings (v26a) cannot take away what the believer has in the Lord Himself (v26b). And when he “fails” in the ultimate sense of expiring from this world (v26a), the believer finds that he still has the Lord Himself forever (v26b).

What, then, do the wicked have? Certainly not enviable prosperity like Asaph had foolishly thought (v4–12). Rather, they have death and destruction (v27). They had boasted in themselves, but a proper definition of goodness brings the believer to the conclusion that even more than the enjoyment of God, his purpose is to glorify God. No longer is he drawing near to God to obtain something else as a blessing, but in order to declare the great works of God (v28c) Who has in Himself all blessedness!

When is the Lord with you? When is He helping you? What are you looking forward to in heaven? What things do you desire that compete with a desire for the Lord Himself? What is your purpose?

Sample prayer: Lord, we are continually with You. You hold us by the right hand, and You guide us with Your counsel. It is You Yourself Who will receive us to glory, and You Yourself are all the gloriousness of heaven. Make us to know Your presence with us as a heaven on earth. Don't let our hearts go after anything apart from You. Grant that You would be our strength and portion, even now. So, when our flesh and heart fail, we will still have You Yourself. Grant to us to enjoy You and trust You and praise You, now and forever, in Jesus's Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP73C “Yet Constantly, I Am with You” or TPH73C “In Sweet Communion, Lord, with Thee”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 73. Verses 23 through 28. These are god's words. Nevertheless, i am continually with you. You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with your council. And afterward received me to glory. Him have i in heaven, but you And there is none upon earth that i desire besides you.

My flesh and my heart fail. But god is the strength of my heart. And my portion. Forever. For indeed those who are far from, you shall perish. You have destroyed all those who desert you for harlotry. But it is good for me to draw near to god. I have put my trust in the lord yahweh That i may declare all your works.

So, for the reading of god's, Inspired. And Inherent word. Now, one of the things that happened to ASAPH, One of the benefits that he got from entering into, or among god's holiness as his described in verse 17, almost certainly a public worship but Also true whenever the lord brings us to worship him.

Properly, we enter in among his holiness as it were. Which is what is translated there. Went into the sanctuary, one of the benefits that he Received was that he realized what he had actually been like he had previously thought verse 13. That he had cleansed his heart and that he had washed his own hands.

And that he had purified himself, he was innocent. But he was getting no benefit out of this. Great work of self-cleansing. Of heart. And hands says, surely. I have cleansed my heart in vain But he had gone into the worship of god, me and seeing that god as holy, and he had seen how holy God is.

He had had an experienced similar to that, which we always ought to have when we see the holiness of god, that is realizing the greatness of our sin. In which there is no room for being impressed with how righteous we have made ourselves. And so, just like isaiah said, woe is me for.

I am a man of unclean lips, even though he was already for many years at that point, a prophet. As we compare the year that king desire died with the time. The kingdoms during which isaiah Uh was a prophet. He was already a prophet and yet he viewed his lips, not as the best lips in israel but now that he had gone to worship and had seen the hiking, he wasn't comparing himself with others.

He was comparing himself with god. And so he had the same conclusion about himself as he did about the rest of israel. I am a man of unclean lips and i dwell among a people. Of unclean lips. And so asap here in psalm 73 has had a similar experience.

He has gone in among the holiness of god, and he's no longer saying i have cleansed my heart and washed my hands as in verse 13. But he is saying, as we saw in verse 22, i was foolish and ignorant. I was like a beast before you. I had despised The glory of this god, as if i were an animal without the ability to appreciate the greatness of god's glory.

And to know him and love him and adore him and worship him. In other words, his life verse as it were after going to worship was, i have sinned and fallen short of the glory of god. I have suppressed the truth in unrighteousness and though, i knew the glory of god.

I neither. Um, honored him as glorious nor gave thanks. And so he's realizing what he is like and yet there is the fact that he does actually know god and he's praying to god and he's worshipping God. And he has been brought to repentance What a great mercy that he has been humiliated.

And we ought to feel that when we come to worship and we're convicted of sin. And we realize what we are like in relation to the holiness of god, and And yet the in the very fact of our being brought low, in the very fact of our being humiliated hasn't God shown us the exact mercy that these wicked that asap saw.

In the opening part of the psalm were not receiving. Now God doesn't owe it to them. It's a mercy but they are they are wearing arrogance like a necklace and there are full of pride even when they thought about god, they were full of bright. When they were saying, god does not see my wickedness.

Even as asap and previously said, why doesn't god see my righteousness? But the difference was that the lord Brought asap to conviction of his sin. Brought him to repentance, brought him to god awareness, to know, to get a right idea, and view of god and self-awareness to get a right idea and view of himself and having received that view of himself, and that view of god, He could not make the mistake.

Or would not by god's grace make the mistake. Of thinking that his Proper view of himself had come from himself. Now he knows what's coming from himself sin. So, where did this humiliation come from? Where did this conviction come from? Where did this adoration of god's holiness? Come from?

Well, it had come from god as an undeserved gift to a sinner. And so instead of saying i have cleansed my heart in vain. Now he's saying i did not cleanse my heart but god was good to me anyway. His plaguing me and chasing me. Verse 14 are not now viewed as some negative thing.

That is against the good that he deserved. There are actually a mercy. That is opposite that condemnation, the judgment that he deserved. And so he draws a conclusion. Nevertheless, i am continually with you. It is god. Being with me. That has kept me from being destroyed. And that has brought me to repentance and humility.

Nevertheless, i'm continually with you, you hold me by my right hand. The reason that there is the almost and the nearly in verse 2. My feet had almost stumbled. My steps said, nearly slipked. Is because god had made by the hand. In myself, there would only be stumbling and slipping and falling to destruction.

But god had me. Sort of like, when Um, You're walking on ice, i know. Some of you have lived most of your life in Tennessee now. But you're walking on ice and daddy has you by the hand? And, you know, 80 percent of your steps. Uh, result in what would have been disaster?

Except for dad has you by the hand? And you're walking along with him. And so, it's all. Um, almost stumblings and nearly slippings. Uh, which You know, as part of the joy of A walk in the Iowa winter. Well, the whole christian life is like that. In ourselves, we are like the toddler.

Who would stumble and slip with every single step. And the fact that we have not yet been destroyed, Is evidence to us that god is with us that he has us by the hand. That he is guiding us by his council that is word in particular. Is how he has us by the hand.

And so, there's this. There's this this realization of this amazing reality. That the god who's holiness? He had seen in worship. Is the god who's transcendence and otherness and greatness, who is high and lifted up and is almighty and pure and righteous and just who is the alone creator and everything else is creature.

That this god is the one that he's always with. That this god is the one who has him by the hand. That this god is the one who's Giving him counsel to live by. Imagine in the world of Kings. And advisors And here he is. He's got the living god as his advisor.

And they realizes. He already has heaven. Nevertheless, i'm continually with you, you hold me by my right hand, you will guide me with your council. And afterward received me to glory. That heaven is heaven. Heaven is glorious. Because god, Makes himself known and displace himself as glorious. That's the heavenlyness of heaven.

Everything else puts together is not. The smallest part of the heavenly. It only reflects. The glory. Of him. Who is all of the heavenlyness, all of the glory? Of heaven. And he realizes he already has on earth. All of the heavenlyness of heaven. And so, you get that wonderful verse in verse 25.

Whom have i in heaven, but you And, There is none upon earth that i desire besides you. And so, he He has come to a conclusion about himself. And a conclusion about god. The conclusion about himself. My flesh and my heart fail. They have been failing already and they will fail completely.

He will die. And yet god is already the strength of his heart. That's the reason he is not yet been destroyed. And it's the reason that death will not be his end. God is the strength of my heart and my portion. Forever. And so now the question, what do i have to show for my life?

What do i have to show for all of the difficulty that i've been in and whatever? Good i have ever thought or spoken or done? What do i have to show for it? Yes, god to show for it. What does the wicked have to show? For himself, he has nothing.

Whatever else he has. He's going to lose suddenly and all at once and be utterly destroyed as in. And be consumed with terror. The wicket has nothing. The

righteous already has everything. And it's an everything that can't be lost in death. It'll be all the more gained by death.

Because we'll be perfected and holiness and well enter into a more immediate and more direct display of the glory of god to be absent. From the body is to be present with christ. The very thing for which christ was praying, that we would be with him. To see his glory.

Because of the love with which the father has loved him from before the world began. To recognize the glory of the triune god. And to see that more directly. And so if god is your portion now, Just wait until you die. But if something else is your portion now, Oh, just wait until you die.

You'll have an abortion at all. If anything else is your portioned out, If god is your portion now. Then you will have that portion fully. And forever. And so now he's got a A different definition. Of. Um, harm and good. Harm is to be far from god. Good is to be near god.

Verse 27. For indeed those who are far from useful perish. You have destroyed all those Who and it all translates. The rest of it translates. Just one verb desserts you for harlotry. Those who Although they have been made, In order to know, God. That's the purpose of their existence.

They have found their purpose and their pleasure in something else other than him. Harlotry. Against god. So, he says, The perishing. Is equated with being far from god, good. Prosperity for him. Is equated with being near god. And so, Now that he understands his purpose and his pleasure better.

He has one job that he wants to. To do one calling that he wants to do. And that is to tell. To declare of all god's works. I have put my trust in the lord yahweh That i may declare. All your works, praise. Is now. Uh, the thing that he wants to spend his existence on that, he will spend his existence on And god himself.

Is his hope for that, not Asap doesn't. I hope that by his own wisdom or effort or strength or discipline or whatever, That he will be able to praise god, but god will sustain him. So that he may, praise god. That you may declare. All of God's works. So may the lord.

Continue to bring us to him and our worship. That on our bible reading times and our praying times. Our family worship times public worship times. That he would set himself before us by means of his word. And give us a sense of his holiness. And that his spirit would produce an us.

The same sort of response, the same sort of growth. As he produced. In asap in the soul.

Her father in heaven. We thank you. For this portion of psalm 73. Thank you for giving it to us. This morning together. Thank you for giving us yourself. To be our strength. And to be our portion. Grant lord. That we would live this day as those. Who are strong by grace in you.

Not those who lack weakness in ourselves. But those whose weaknesses overcome by your strength. And grant that we would live as those Who have you? So that whatever else we lose. Or failed to have. In an earthly. Way or even spiritually in ourselves. Uh, yet we pray that your spirit might remind us.

That we have, you. In our lord jesus christ that your spirit might make us to rejoice over the lord jesus, and to rejoice over you who we have in him. Grant it, we ask in jesus name, Amen.