

Psalms – Darkness and Dawn (Sanctuary in Focus)

Lesson 5 – Psalm 73-89 (Book 3)

June 15 & 22, 2014

A. Favorite Psalm Section

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Psalm 46

B. Darkness and Dawn (Sanctuary in Focus) – Lesson 5

A. Leviticus Section; Book 3 is composed of Chapters 73-89

- a. Emphasis on the Sanctuary as the prominent theme
- b. Holiness, Pure Hearts and Faith are key traits
- c. Deals with difficult issues of why the evil prosper
- d. Speaks to our focus on God and not worldly prosperity; what provides our sanctuary?
- e. Importance of Worship and fellowship in praise
- f. Written mostly by Asaph (73-83)

B. Psalm 73 – Faith and Assurance From God’s Presence

1 Surely God is good to Israel, **to those who are pure in heart.** 2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. 3 For **I envied the arrogant** when I saw the **prosperity of the wicked.** 4 They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. 5 They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills. 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. 7 From their callous hearts comes iniquity, their evil imaginations have no limits. 8 They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression. 9 Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. 10 Therefore their **people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance.** 11 They say, “How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?” 12 This is what the wicked are like—**always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.** 13 **Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence.** 14 All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. 15 If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. 16 **When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply 17 till I entered the sanctuary of God;** then I understood their final destiny. 18 Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. 19 How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! 20 They are like a dream when one awakes; when you arise, Lord, you will despise them as fantasies. 21 When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, 22 I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. 23 Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. 24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. 25 **Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** 27 Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. 28 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.

- One man’s pilgrimage of doubt to faith, despair to assurance
- Eternal questions of the faithful are addressed:
 - Why does a “good God” permit the evil to prosper
 - Why do the unfaithful seem to have worldly pleasures, money and possessions?
 - What is the rationale of the prosperity of the wicked and suffering of the righteous?
 - Where does your support, strength and protection come from? God or money? What is our focus?

- Turning point came when he went to worship, WOW what a powerful testimony
 - No answer for why the wicked thrive, mystery of a sovereign God
 - Life is often unfair from our earthly perspective
 - Reward of faith and ultimate answer of prayer is to “be near God”
 - Fulfillment in provided by being in the presence of God
 - Contrast of passing pleasures of the sinner verses the eternal peace of the believer
- Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”
 - Real message of this Psalm is “whatever happens in life, simply trust Him”

C. Psalm 84 – How Wonderful is Your Dwelling Place

1 **How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty!** 2 **My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord;** my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. 3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. 4 **Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.** 5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. 6 As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. 7 They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. 8 Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob. 9 Look on our shield, O God; **look with favor on your anointed one.** 10 **Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere;** I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. 11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; **the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.** 12 Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

- Includes several of the most beloved and well known verses in the Bible
- What a great example of joy, peace and tranquility; You can just feel the joy and pleasure of the writer from being in God’s presence
- Celebrates the joy of worship in the Lord’s presence
- Personal faith in God demonstrated
- Blessed is the person who trusts in the Lord
- Do you yearn for this level of fellowship and praise? Joy and Peace?
- God’s “Sanctuary” should be the center of your life

D. Psalm 86 –You Are My God

Hear me, Lord, and answer me, **for I am poor and needy.** 2 Guard my life, for **I am faithful to you;** save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; 3 have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long. 4 **Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you.** 5 You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. 6 Hear my prayer, Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. 7 When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me. 8 Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. 9 All the nations you have made will come and **worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name.** 10 For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God. 11 **Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.** 12 **I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.** 13 For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead. 14 Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me— they have no regard for you. 15 But you, Lord, **are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.** 16 Turn to me and have mercy on me; show your strength in behalf of your servant; save me, because I serve you just as my mother did. 17 Give me a

sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

- A prayer from David
- Includes several of the most beloved and well known verses in the Bible
- Profession of faith in God
- Faith that God will bring joy even from the depths of his problems
- Vs 8-13 shows importance of God's Sanctuary, worship, praise, His presence
- All your needs and strength provided by God

C. Personal Testimony Section

Life Lessons

Psalms 25:12-15; Stewart Matheson

Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will He instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being, And his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him, And He makes them known to His covenant. My eyes are ever toward the Lord, For He will pluck my feet out of the net.

D. Group Reading of Psalm

Psalms 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The Lord will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. 8 The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

E. Questions for Small Group Discussion

1. In Psalm 73:

- a. Verse 1 discuss the comment that "God is good" to those who are pure in heart? What does pure mean? Discuss what "good" mean? What is the current application to our lives?
- b. In verse 2, can you relate to losing your foothold in faith and spiritually? Do you doubt? Discuss situations that have affected your faith.
- c. In verses 3-16, why do we seem to always compare our circumstances to others? Why do we then allow this to impact our faith? What can we do to focus on God and not our comparative circumstance?
- d. Verse 17 is the key, what is the clear meaning for us now? Do you view fellowship and praise in God's house as an integral part of your faith? If not why? What does this Psalm tell us about going to God's sanctuary?
- e. With verses 25-28 being the penultimate point; discuss what the Psalm says is the ultimate outcome depending on your belief? What can we take from this to use today when we leave?
- f. What does this tell us about earthly pleasures and our focus?
- g. How do we become "close" to God from this Psalm?

2. In Psalm 84:

- a. Does your soul "faint" or "yearn" to be in God's dwelling place for worship? How important is worship in your life? Do we need to refocus as per this Psalm?

- b. Is this Psalm referring to a place of worship or “being in God’s presence”? Are these different? If so explain.
- c. What does verse 6 tell us about our attitude and expectations from God about our circumstances in life?
- d. What does “those who walk is blameless”? How do we qualify or satisfy this for God’s blessing?
3. In Psalm 86:
- a. Why do we always seem to pray from such a poor and needy position? What does this imply about us and our relationship with God?
- b. In analyzing the texts, David has multiple requests of the Lord and things in which he will do:
- | <u>Expectations from God</u> | <u>Items we must do:</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▪ Hear me | faithful to you |
| ▪ Answer me | trust in you |
| ▪ Guard me | You are my God |
| ▪ Save me | Call on You all day long |
| ▪ Mercy on me | Put my trust in You |
| ▪ Bring me joy | Payer |
| ▪ Listen to my cry | Worship You |
| ▪ Answer me | Bring You glory in my actions |
| ▪ Teach me your ways | Rely in your faithfulness |
| ▪ Show your strength for me | Fear Your name |
| ▪ Give me your goodness | Praise You with all my heart |
| ▪ Comforted me | Serve Him |
- c. Compare and contrast the above points in our own lives? Have successfully “completed” our part of the relationship? Where do we have trouble delivering?
- d. We always want the benefits with minimum input, we deserve it right? How can we learn from David to help us in our worship and reaching the “True Place of Sanctuary” that God wants us to reach with Him?