

Psalm 73, a Psalm of Asaph

In **1 Chronicles 6**, we're introduced to Asaph. He was descended from Levi and he served as a musician that ***"David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest.... ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting..."*** (1 Chronicles 6:31)

He stood at the right hand of his brother Heman, who had been placed in charge of the music. Besides being a singer, Asaph was a writer of psalms to the Lord. A number of them are found in the Book of Psalms, and **Psalm 73** is where we want to spend our time together today.

These are the words of Asaph:

"Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence." (Verses 1-6)

Asaph then goes on writing about the successes of the wicked, and of his own troubles:

"This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments." (Verses 12-14)

How many of us feel this way? Poor me! The evil seem to prosper while we struggle. But Asaph finally figured it out. He had everything he needed, in spite of the hardships he faced. He had Someone the wicked would never know:

"When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Verses 21-26)

We sing the song "Farther Along" and it has the same message as the Song of Asaph. God is my portion --- he is all that I need. I don't need earthly wealth or fame, or success, or even lack of trouble. I have God. Eventually, we will be rewarded for our life of struggle while those who are wicked will be punished.

As the songwriter of "Farther Along", W. B. Stevens, put it:

“Faithful ‘til death,” said our loving Master, a few more days to labor and wait; Toils of the road will then seem as nothing, as we sweep through the beautiful gate.”

“Farther along, we’ll know all about it. Farther along, we’ll understand why. Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine. We’ll understand it all by and by.”

Never ask “why?” Remain faithful and realize the comfort only God can give us, both in this life and in the life to come. ---Johnny Stephens