

# How Will It End For You?

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[ 0 : 00 ] And David uses many different illustrations to highlight what he is doing, what he is contrasting the life of the wicked or the life of the ungodly with the life of the true believer, the one who loves the Lord.

And if we could look at verses 35 to 37. I have seen a wicked, ruthless man spreading himself like a green laurel tree.

But he passed away and behold he was no more. Though I sought him he could not be found. Mark the blameless and behold the upright. For there is a future for the man of peace.

Now quite often when we go through different situations, when we are faced with differing experiences, and as Christians we will often go to particular parts of God's word.

If we are going through trials we will more than likely, we will go to some passage in scripture that is familiar to us, and where we will read about how God deals with his people in the face of trial.

[ 1 : 16 ] And very often when we are going through uncertainty, and when we are just not quite sure how life is working out, and sometimes we are left confused and perplexed, there is no doubt but that this psalm is a great comfort, because it speaks right into our heart, it affects, it challenges us, very much as to really how life is, and that God, God is watching over his people, even although there are times it may appear that he isn't.

And that's what this psalm is showing, that there are, the prosperity of the wicked, and the trials of the godly, are not a mystery, and that God has a purpose in both of these things.

It's a psalm that speaks of the age-old problem of Christian suffering, because a lot of people, and particularly in the Old Testament, a lot of people find it hard to equate God's love with Christian suffering.

And the idea is that Christians shouldn't suffer, that they should have a smooth passage through life. And when there is suffering, that somehow it's highlighting that God is no longer concerned or interested in them.

But the Bible never tells us that. It makes us very clear that it is part and partial of life. Jesus himself said that in this world. He said, You shall have tribulation.

[ 2 : 48 ] It's not you might have. It's not that there's a strong possibility that you will have, but you will. In this world you're going to have it. But then he adds, as he always does, but he said, Be of good cheer, because I have overcome the world.

Now, the prosperity of the wicked is often a source of perplexity to the godly. Very often, and we can often see it in life, some of the most godless, the most careless people are those who thrive and prosper in this world.

And sometimes, those who love the Lord, and they work incredibly hard, and everything that they do seems to be working against them. And as they look around, and they see those who care nothing for the Lord, or his day, or his cause, or his word, or anything at all, that everything they touch seems to turn to gold, and that they are seeking, with all that they have, to honor the Lord, to walk in his ways, and everything that they seem to touch turns to dust.

And that can be a really difficult thing to take on board, because people are wondering, how can that be? How is that? But it's nothing new, because when you go through the word of God, this is something that so often manifests itself.

It's the theme you find, for instance, in quite a number of the Psalms, but particularly in Psalm 73. Now it was a much bigger problem for the Old Testament saints than it is for us today, because on two counts, the Old Testament saints didn't have the full light of revelation that we have.

[ 4 : 48 ] We have a complete Bible. They didn't. They didn't know that verses like our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The Old Testament saints had never read that. They didn't have that. And so the New Testament shed so much light upon how God is fashioning and shaping and molding and renewing his people and preparing them for glory, because that's God's great purpose for us.

So the Old Testament saints, although they had light, yet they didn't have as much light as we have. although some of the writings that have come from the Old Testament, but of course they have been spirit-inspired, have gone right into levels that sometimes surpasses what we have in the New Testament.

But the New Testament certainly opens things out for us so that we understand God's dealings, God's workings, in a way that the Old Testament saints didn't.

But the other thing which caused an even greater problem for the Old Testament saints was that God's favor to his people tended to be more in an external, more in an outward form.

[ 6 : 17 ] For instance, when God was saying to his people that if they walked in his ways that he would bless them, and that that blessing would be seen in good homes, in good crops, in blessings within the family, blessings of work, all these outward blessings.

So, for the Old Testament saint, when all these things were going against them, it was an even greater challenge to their faith than it is to us in New Testament times where the blessings tend to be more in the spiritual realm, not of course, but that the Lord also blesses his people providentially as well and with prosperity and in many different ways.

But this was certainly in the general way, excuse me, within the Old Testament. And so we find that it is often one of the situations, excuse me, that people are battling with a whole area of suffering. Book of Job is a classic example of that book where the Job's friends couldn't believe that Job was a good man. They were saying, it's impossible, you wouldn't be suffering this way.

Yes, everybody believed you were a man of God, but obviously you weren't. You must have, there must have been another, you were a split personality, you were a Jekyll and Hyde.

[ 7 : 45 ] You had one face for the public, but there was another job hidden away. That's why God has dealt with you this way. You're the ultimate hypocrite, which he wasn't. But that was the conclusion that they came to because they believed that God was dealing justly with Job and that everything that came into his life he deserved.

But of course, as you work through the book of Job, God was dealing with Job. But in the end, God exalts Job and God rebukes his friends for coming to the wrong conclusion.

So David in this psalm is saying, he talks so much about what he sees the wicked happening. And he expects, there's no doubt, but that David is expecting that God's retribution is going to fall upon the wicked.

But here he is and David, there's no doubt, but there are times in David's psalms where he does face problems with this.

But one of the things that comes through here is that however a situation may appear for the moment, that's not the final picture.

[ 8 : 58 ] This is not the end of the story. And particularly when it comes to the area of the righteous and the unrighteous.

And David is highlighting the fact that no matter how much an unrighteous person, a wicked person may prosper, that that prosperity that they enjoy is but for a moment.

When we compare our life here to eternity, it's just like the blink of an eye. At one level, as far as this world is concerned, it's like we never come out of nappies.

It's so short. The period of life is so brief. Life is just, it's whirring by. And you try to put the brakes on but you can't.

And it's going, it's going, it's going. And those who live for this life, they've got nothing else. And that's one of the great themes that this psalm is driving home is that if you live for this world, it is only going to end in disappointment.

[ 10 : 05 ] And it's going to end in failure. Whereas if you live for the Lord, it ends in perpetual and everlasting happiness and peace. And so, we find that God's silence towards the sinner is often an area of perplexity.

We find that often in David's writing and find it in many of the Bible, right? how come that God is not dealing with those who are fighting against him, those who are warring against him, those who are rebelling against him?

Because often we have this idea that retribution has to come right away. But God doesn't deal like that. God is infinitely patient. He's so long suffering.

But one of the sad things that often happens as God gives people opportunity to turn and to repent and to think upon their way and to look to him, one of two things is always happening in life.

With God's providence and with God's word, the same thing happens. Either people soften under it or they harden under it.

[11:18] That's what happens with God's word. As God's word is read and sung and preached, people under God's word are either drawn by it, challenged by it, softened by it, where there is something within them that there is an appeal made right into their heart and where they say to themselves as they face to face with God's word, I must listen to this word.

I must deal with this word. I must adhere to what is being said here or else as you sit under the word you become harder and harder and harder and you become deaf and you no longer hear anything.

You can come to church week in, week out, nothing goes in. You hear the words but they don't affect you, they don't touch you.

and the solemn thing is that sometimes people, there was a day when they sat under the word and they listened and they were challenged and they were excited and they said, yes, I must respond but that was years ago and now they're in the place where it means nothing.

God's word is just like any other word. Passes them by. They can hear about God's judgment, it means nothing. They can hear about God's love, it means nothing.

[12:54] So you see there's a very solemn aspect to being under God's word. As it says in the New Testament, it's either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.

And it's the same with God's providence because there can come times in our life where God's providence will shake us to the very core. And I'm sure you can think of experiences in your own life.

Maybe you nearly died or you just escaped with your life in whatever way. And it shook you for a while or somebody very close to you died and it shook you and you thought that could be me.

That could have been me. What would have happened if that was me? Where would I have ended up if that had been me? And sometimes we're shaken to the core but as time goes on passes by, it's like having a bad dream.

you know, you have waking up with a nightmare and maybe not cold sweat but as time goes on you begin to calm down and you think it's alright. And it's the same sometimes under God's providence that as time goes on it begins to calm down and you forget about it.

[14:03] For others, a shake in God's providence has been the turning point in their life. They've turned round. God has spoken to them through it. So you see it's a very solemn and challenging thing to be under God's word.

And God of course is always speaking to us through this. Now again, as David will look at that in a moment where he's talking in verse 37 about marking the blameless, marking that's really looking at the Christian.

But you know, we can become immune to the impact of death and such like in God's providence. But you know, one of the most solemn things is when we become immune to the death of the Christian.

Where God's people are taken away and we don't really take it to heart. That's one of the times that we're spoken about in the prophecies. The righteous are perishing or the righteous are dying and nobody is taking it to heart.

The prophet was saying these are grim times if you're not taking it to heart. Because every time a believer leaves this world a light goes out. And it's an amazing thing to be in a community where there are lights all over the place.

[15:25] I remember very shortly after I was converted, I remember being up to I was up the back of the hill in Briesclit. I was looking down over Briesclit and Cullen looking down over the whole place.

And I was thinking there's a light there and there and there and around all the houses. And there were lights meaning Christians in so many of the homes.

And I was thinking wow what a blessing in our community. What a wonderful thing that is. There's a light. One light in a house is an amazing thing.

And yet when these lights go there's a fearful emptiness. Because the more of the lights, remember Jesus said of his people you are the light of the world, the more that are taken away the darker this world becomes.

And it's a very solemn thing. And that's why the prophet was saying you're not grasping, the righteous are dying and no one is taking it to heart.

[16:34] And you will often hear people praying when a good man or a good woman is taken away, Lord bring up others to replace them. More lights, bring other lights to shine instead of them.

And so David here is talking as we've said and he's contrasting the righteous and the unrighteous. But you know another awful thing about those who are flourishing in their sin and prospering in their wickedness and not turning to the Lord is that they're actually going to make their judgment all the worse.

It's a solemn thought. Because at the end of the day what do we have? We say that so often because the Bible says it. What do we have that we have not received? Every single thing that we have in this life we have received from above.

Every gift and ability that we are given in order to get on in life we've been given from above. It's all from God given to us by God. And it's a great thing when we can acknowledge God as the one who has given us, the one who has opened the windows of heaven, the one who has given us the intellect to work, who's given us the abilities to do, the God who has enabled us to get on.

And how wonderful to be able to thank him for that. But the reverse is awful. To be taking and taking and taking and taking from God and never acknowledging, never giving him thanks.

[18:08] In fact, more than that, even denying his existence, saying there is no God. And yet the very God who is keeping you alive, because it's in him that we live, move, and have our being.

And that's reaping up, at the end of the day, a worse judgment for us. Because he's the God who has given us everything.

The Bible makes that so clear to us. So really the position that David is coming to hear is that rather than envying the godless, he's come to the place where he's beginning to pity them.

And he's saying, I wouldn't like to be in their shoes. I would rather be where I am. And there were periods, remember, in David's life where he was barely escaping with his life. He was living like a fugitive.

And yet he said, I would rather that than be in the place where I have plenty, but God's judgment over me. And you know, one of the things that the Bible speaks to us, and it's a very solemn thing, is that sometimes the godless, as they go on, they go on and on and on, rejecting God, turning away from God and still taking.

[19:23] And do you know how it's described? Like cattle, like animals being fattened for slaughter. It's a fearful picture. But that's what the Bible tells us.

And that's why David is saying, and the Bible says, don't envy those who are prospering. If you could see what's ahead, you wouldn't envy them for one single second.

But then, David, as so often does, he completely changes from that. Because he's saying, on the one hand, he said, I've seen a wicked, ruthless man, and he's spreading like a green bay tree or a laurel tree.

And here's this person, and he's so prosperous, he's so ruthless, and life is in his hand, and he seems to have everybody's life in his hand, and he's utterly ruthless, and there's nobody prospering like him, and all of a sudden he's gone, and I've been looking for him, been searching, he's gone, he's left everything behind.

See this empire that he's created, this empire that he's built, he's gone, and he's left every single thing behind him. It's a solemn thought that we can come to that place where, if all that we have is what this world is, then we leave it all behind, we take nothing with us but our soul.

[20:54] But then David turns it completely around to the other side, and he looks at the Christian, and he says, mark the blameless, and behold the upright. He's saying, take a note of the Christian.

You've been looking for a moment here at the ruthless person, the godless person who cares nothing for the Lord. Okay, turn around, look at the Christian, look at that person, look at that man, look at that woman, look at that boy, look at that girl, look at them, look at them, take note of them, because it's going to be the very opposite for them.

There is a future for the man of peace. Mark the blameless and behold the upright, or mark the perfect and behold the upright, as the AV translators.

Now, some people have a problem, and they'll say, well, I can't put myself in that picture of being the blameless or the perfect. I'm not like that. I'm full of failure and sin and whatnot.

Of course we are. Paul himself, who was as good a Christian as ever lived in this world, when you see his zeal and his, he says, Paul says, I have not attained to perfection.

[ 22 : 14 ] I'm striving for it, but I never will reach it here in this world. And Paul himself says, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death. But what we're talking about here, the perfect or the blameless, is a person who is standing in the only blameless, upright, the only blameless, perfect person who has ever lived in this world, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. And this is how it is that if we stand in Jesus' perfect righteousness, if we take Jesus as our own Savior, then as God looks on us, he says, you know this, you're perfect.

You're blameless. It's not a thought. Tonight as a believer, in God's sight, you're blameless. He has overlooked your sin because he has looked on them in Jesus Christ.

He has blotted out all your sin because he has put all your sin on Jesus. And that's so wonderful. That is what it is to be a Christian.

It's liberating. And so this is where our uprightness and our blamelessness is when we stand in Jesus Christ.

[ 23 : 36 ] But you know this, and here's the wonderful thing, if we are standing in Jesus Christ, in his righteousness, in his perfectness, in his uprightness, one day not only will his perfection be imputed to us, but his perfection will actually become a reality in our life.

life. We will shine like him. We'll be like him. A mirror reflection of Jesus, our Savior in glory. Isn't that an awesome thought?

A mirror reflection of Jesus. That's what his people are going to be like. The work has begun here. The great sculptor is at work, chipping away, molding away, hammering away, bit by bit, but come death.

Made perfect in holiness. Immediately into glory, resembling our Savior, mirroring our Savior. Isn't that amazing?

Well, it begins here. Mark the perfect. So David says, mark this person, keep your eye on that person, because their future, this is what he says, the future for that man is peace.

[ 25 : 00 ] Or as the AVC says, for the end of that man is peace. You couldn't have a greater contrast to the end of the godless and the godly.

One is peace. The other is no peace. Bible says there is no peace to the wicked. No peace for the wicked. Ever. That's a fearful thought.

But for the believer, there is peace. That is your end. That is how it will be. Maybe tonight as a believer, you might actually not have peace right at this moment. There is a level of peace that you have, that you might not even be aware of.

But you have. Every believer has a peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the fruit of justification. Because it tells us that, that through our being justified, we have peace with God.

The war is over. We've laid down the weapons of warfare. We've said to the Lord, enough is enough. I give in. And that's where our rebellion is over.

[ 26 : 06 ] We've stopped running away from God. And we started running to Him. And we said, Lord, I'm with you now. That's what happens when we become a Christian. So there is a peace has begun.

But that doesn't mean that every single day, every Christian is going to have this wonderful sense of peace. Because there are many things that can come into your life. There are many issues and disruptions.

And there can be mental issues. And there can be trials and bereavements and all kinds of things that can hammer you. And right now, you might not have a conscious sense of peace.

But let me assure you that deep down, deeper still, there is a peace that no person can take away. And when your end comes, you will know that peace.

Because you will be transported into that world of everlasting peace. And Spurgeon, in his own inimitable way, he said, Peace without end comes in the end to the passion of peace.

[ 27 : 13 ] That's beautiful, isn't it? I'll say it again. Peace without end comes in the end to the passion of peace. And again, he went on to say, with a believer, he said, it may rain in the morning, thunder at midday, pour in torrents in the afternoon.

But by night, before the sun goes down, it must clear up. And that's how it will be for you. Even if tonight, as a believer, you're in a bit of turmoil, the torrents and the gales and the rain will give way. And it'll come clear before the sun goes down. because your end is peace. Guaranteed. The Lord says it. Your future is one of peace.

And that is, that of course is how, how it is for the believer because we are people of peace. It's one of the, one of the things we pursue. A believer pursues peace.

As a Christian, you pursue peace. You don't produce, strife, pursue strife and friction. If you're a Christian tonight, it's inconceivable that you'll get up in the morning and say, you know what I'm going to do today?

[ 28 : 28 ] I'm going to cause division. I'm going in, I'm going in, I'm going to cause trouble today. That's not the way a Christian thinks or a Christian acts. If they do, there's something seriously wrong.

Because God's peace has come into your heart. your desire is to promote peace in your home, in your church, at work, wherever you are.

You are a peacemaker. Blessed are the peacemakers. So this is, this is part of who you are. But it's also how the, how your end will be. And we're told for the Christian that at the end that they will sleep in Jesus.

And sleep, there's two things that obviously come to mind. The first is rest. when you go to bed at night after a hard day's work, you enjoy your rest.

And that's where the heavenly rest will be. Where you will, you will enjoy the battle is over. The labors are over. All the struggle, the strife, the temptations, all these things, they're over.

[ 29 : 35 ] How wonderful that is. And there's also renewal. That's one of the other things about when you go to bed at night. That's how when you get up in the morning, you, you have to, if you get a good night's sleep, you feel refreshed, again ready to go.

Even if you've gone to bed exhausted, and you get a good sleep, there's renewal takes place through that rest and you're ready again to go. And so it'll be in glory.

We'll be renewed. And we're going to be serving Him there. Isn't that a great thought? Although there's rest, there's also service. Service doesn't stop here. We're going to be involved in glory as well.

So much that we don't know or can't understand about how that'll be. But you see, even our bodies are going to have a rest. They're going to the grave for a while.

And as we so often say, when the dust is filled in and the turf is rolled over, it is no more than putting the sheets on the bed, putting the doofy over, until resurrection morning.

[ 30 : 37 ] Then you get up, the body will rise again to be reunited with the soul and be prepared. It'll be the same body, but it'll be different.

That's exactly the description that Paul gives in Corinthians where he says, you plant a seed, but the flower that comes from the seed looks quite different.

So it'll be with our resurrection bodies. the seed, that flower couldn't be but for that seed. And so it'll be with our shells.

It'll be this body, this human body that we have where it'll be planted into the ground, but it will rise a lovely body fit for the new place we're going into glory.

A place of everlasting peace. No more worries. Isn't that wonderful? A world with no anxiety. Nothing to worry you.

[ 31 : 37 ] Nothing in the future. You know how so often we're saying, oh, see that? Oh, there's often things are way ahead of us. We worry about things that are never going to happen. We worry about this and worry about that.

Glory. Nothing. No worries. Ever. Ever, ever, ever. And we're going to be as alive and conscious, probably even sharper than we are right here, right now, throughout an endless eternity.

What a future. And that's what David is saying. Take note of every believer because that is their future. But also, think about those who dismiss God out of the picture and live their life only to themselves and irrespective of how they're getting on.

Unless they turn to the Lord, their end couldn't be more different. May we make sure then that when it comes time for us to leave this world, that we are right with God and that we will know His peace forever.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we pray that what we've been reflecting upon may indeed go into our hearts and minds that Your Word, which is such a challenge to us, may indeed challenge us that we may indeed think upon it, reflect upon it, listen to it, that we might seek to obey it.

[ 33 : 09 ] We pray, Lord, that You will bless us. We pray that You will bless us with health and strength in body, mind, and in soul. Lord, lift us up before downcast. Grant us Your grace and help us to experience the sufficiency of Your grace.

Do us good, we pray, and deliver us from evil, forgiving us of sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Let us conclude singing in the 23rd Psalm.

Psalm 23 from the Scottish Psalter, Tunis Climond, page 229. Psalm 23 from the Scottish Psalter, 2-2-9, The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, makes me down to lie in pastures green, he leadeth me the quiet waters by, my soul he doth restore again, and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, even for his own name's sake.

To the last verse, goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

Make that your prayer, that that last verse will be true in your life. Psalm 23, the whole psalm to the tune, Crimin. Amen. The Lord's my shepherd, for God's love, He brings me down to lie, in pastures green, he leadeth me, the quiet waters by, my soul he doth restore again, and me to walk the pain, within the paths of righteousness, in what is on his day.

[ 35 : 43 ] Yet, O, my walk, in death, I fail, yet will I fear not ill, for thou art with me and thy road and stop me comfort still.

My day, the love has furnished shed, in presence of my Lord, I have a God with oil and oil and might the broken cross.

goodness and mercy and mercy of my life shall truly follow me and in God's hands forevermore forevermore my dwelling grace shall be.

Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Babylon.