

Only a Fool Would Envy the Foolish | Psalms 73

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn with me, if you would, to Psalm chapter 73 and verse 1. Psalm 73 and verse 1. A lot of times we are jealous of and envious of and bothered by the prosperity of wicked people that don't know Jesus.

And the Bible says in Psalm 73, here's a fellow, a psalmist, and he is bothered. And he's bothered that the foolish are prospering.

And you have to be a fool to be envious of foolish people. And you and I know that we are not because we have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

We're not fools. Fools say in their heart, there is no God. We certainly don't say that. We know there is a God. And we are excited about that. I want you to read with me Psalm 73.

This is a beautiful psalm. I hope you read the psalms. Hope you make a habit of it. But we're going to read it, one verse each, until we finish it. Read with me and put emphasis where you should. Are you ready?

[1 : 00] Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. As for me, my people are strong. My steps, the Lord have us lived.

For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. There are no hands in their head, but their strength is firm.

They are not in trouble as other men. Neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore, I am not in trouble as other men.

Their eyes stand out with fatness. They have more. One of y'all just laughed. I'm going to punch you.

That's luxury. I mean, just because I'm fat. I noticed I heard that. See, it says, their eyes stand out with fatness. Where have I lost my place? This is really not going good.

[1 : 57] What verse am I supposed to be in? Thank y'all. Their eyes stand out with fatness. That's why I couldn't see my fatness. Their eyes stand out with fatness. They have more than heart could wish.

They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression. They speak lawfully. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.

Therefore, his people return hither, and the waters of the full cup are run out to them. And they say, how does God know? Is there knowledge in the most time?

Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. They increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innancy.

For all day long have I been played, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against a generation of thy children.

[2 : 54] I am not to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Surely, thou hast set them in so few places, thou castest them in the night into destruction.

How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? They are utterly consumed with terrors. I have to dream when one awake is full of the Lord, and now he waits, thou shalt find their image.

Thus, my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. For foolishness was I, and in ignorant, I was as easy to support thee. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee.

Thou hast holden me by my right hand. I shall guide thee with thy counsel, and afterward receive me for the Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee?

And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. I bless you, and my heart faileth, but God is a champion of my heart, and my worship is forever. For lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.

[4 : 01] Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee. But it is good for me to come here to God. I have to trust the Lord God, and I do care of all of our sins.

Father, help our people, help your people, help us as a church tonight to look beyond Wall Street, beyond property, and beyond hospitals and health, and beyond all that, and know that the real important thing is that we know you, and you know us.

You have saved us. You have made us your own, and because of that, we have victory. And I pray, God, that you would bless your people, encourage your people, excite your people, and God, help strengthen your people that may have let COVID or some other kind of junk in their life.

Make them envy lost people and doubt your goodness. And I pray tonight that we would all focus on how good you are in Jesus' precious name. Amen. You are dealing with a guy that is very disillusioned.

Look, if you would, in verse 1. He knows what you know. He knows that God is good to God's people. He said, boy, God is good to Israel. God is good to those that have a clean heart.

[5 : 18] But I got the problem. There are people around me that are wicked, and they're the ones that are prospering. Look at verse 2. As for me, my feet were almost gone. My steps had well nigh slipped.

I know the Bible. I know the principle. I know God is good. I got messed up, though, because I've been looking in the wrong places. And the true personal problem is that we spend so much time comparing ourselves with lost people, with the wicked, instead of comparing ourselves with what the Bible teaches.

You know, one of the biggest problems in most of our lives is we're looking at each other and thinking about what you're doing or what you're getting or how it's going for you. And I'm spending very little time looking up to Jesus and finding out what's going on in his life.

I ought to know what the Word of God says. More than I know what I see happening in your life and in the comparison. Look at verse 3. The wicked seem to be enjoying fine delights.

Verse 3. I was envious at the wicked. I saw how they prospered. Lost people seem to have a better life than born-again people, he thinks.

[6 : 29] He's looking at them and saying, I notice things are going real good. Fact is, they perish well. They die well. Look at verse 4. When they get ready to die, they're strong. He said, I know that preacher told you that when a guy, a lost man dies, he's scared to death and everything's terrible and he's all messed up.

But I don't think that's true. I watched them die. They seem to die pretty good. They don't seem to have any problems in their death. They seem to still be strong. And I'll be honest, they don't seem to be plagued like other men.

Look at verse 5. They don't get in trouble like other men. You know, save people. We got junk we deal with. You ever notice they don't have any junk? Everything goes good for them. Boy, they got a good life.

He's looking around and he's considering that. And he sees their prosperity. He seems that they are eating up with pride because of how good it's going for them. Verse 6. Pride surrounds them like a chain and violence covers them.

He said, boy, they're doing good. And he said they prosper like nobody else. In verse 7, their fatness, that is literally how much money they got. It's literally how much success they're enjoying.

[7 : 38] It's how good life is going for them. He said, boy, it's going really, really good for them. And they have more than anybody could ever want to have. Boy, it's really going good for them.

And they get plumb presumptuous in their relationship to their sin. Look at verse 8. They are corrupt. They speak wickedly. They speak loftily.

They're like, hey, I don't need your God. You're weak. I don't need your God. I'm stronger than you. If I was weak like you, I'd go to church. If I was weak like you, I'd serve God.

But look at me. You don't have a good life. I got a good life. You got God. I got money. You don't seem to have it as good as you think you do. The psalmist is like, you know, I think he's right.

I'm going to amen him on that. See, they speak against God. That's who they're attacking. And he's listening to that in verse 9. He said, they set their mouth against their heavens. They just run God down and run down God's people.

[8 : 37] And it's pretty easy to get pretty upset about it. And he says, people actually listen to them as they mouth against God. They end up with the same attitude. Look at verse 10.

Therefore, his people return hither and waters of a full cup are rung out to him. He said, you know, they talk bad and everybody ought to walk away from them. They ought to listen to their criticisms. They'll listen to their smart mouth.

They'll listen to their pride. They'll say, I don't have anything to do with it. I separate myself. That is what they do. They go right there with them. So I've been having to fight my doubt. Look at verse 11.

He said, I've been having to fight my doubt. I begin to wonder. Does God know what's going on? They want to know. Does God know what's going on? I wonder. Does God know? Verse 11.

Does God know? Does God look at that guy? He's rich and he's got a nice car and he's got a nice house. He's got a nice bank account. He's got a nice retirement and he doesn't like God.

[9 : 33] He talks against God. Does God not know what's going on? God, where are you? What are you doing? Maybe I have wasted my life worshiping you.

Verse 12. Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world and they increase in riches.

Boy, it's too good for them. I sacrifice. I tithe. I get to missions. I don't enjoy the pleasure of sin and the pleasure of this world.

I try to live right and do right. They got it going good. They do everything wrong. My life's not so good. He says, I worry that God doesn't care what's going on.

Look in verse 13. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain. God, I got right. I tried to live for you.

[10 : 29] I tried to honor you. But what a waste. They got the good life and I got the bad life. Things going good for them. They're not going good for me.

I washed my hands. I got right with you. Honestly, believe in there was some value to serving you. I mean, I heard John 10, 10. A thief comes but for to steal and to kill and to destroy.

But I've come that they might have life and life more abundant. No, they got the abundant life. Lost people got the abundant life. We don't have the abundant life. Who drives a better car? They do.

Who lives in a better house? They do. Who runs the world? They do. I think I've cleansed my hands in vain. Cleanse my heart in vain.

Verse 14. I have had trouble all my life. I'm just telling you the truth. My life stinks. My life stinks.

[11 : 27] And it hurts. I'm wounded. Verse 15. If I say, I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

I don't want to say what I'm really thinking here, God. I did what I'm really thinking, God. You ain't all that good. You don't really take care of us. That lost man, he's got a happy marriage.

And look where I am. That lost man, his kids are doing right. Look what mine are doing. That lost man's car didn't break down up in the Carolinas. Mine did. I'm the one that's got the bad life here, God.

And when I think about it, Lord, verse 16, it is too painful for me. It's too painful for me.

I will tell you that I have known more people than I could ever explain to you that think like that.

[12 : 31] I heard a man that I love very much say, if I didn't tithe, we could have a boat. And we could have more fun, but we go to church.

They got a better life, but we're going to go to heaven one day so we can suffer here for now. And if you're honest, some of you have been thinking that.

And COVID hits and junk happens and life gets messed up and we begin to have a self-pity party. We begin to think, maybe God's not so good.

Maybe God doesn't hear prayer. Maybe God doesn't answer prayer. Maybe God doesn't take care of us. We look around the room. We figure out who's prospering. And we even say stuff like this.

Yeah, but they don't give like I give. They're not as faithful as I am. And they're not as righteous as I am. And that's why they got a better life than I do.

[13 : 33] That's where he got to. It was pretty hard on him. He knew that biblically in verse 1 that God's good to good people, supposedly.

But I read that in the Bible, but I don't experience that. I read that in the Bible, but I don't experience that. To be blunt, honest. As I look around and I consider what's going on in life, I'm kind of slipping off the truth.

I'm kind of doubting what the Word of God says and starting to believe what I think. I've been on the Internet, you know. I've been learning on the Internet about the richest people are.

And I've been learning on the Internet. You know, they do good stuff. And now I'm beginning to wonder if it's God. I don't know how many hundreds of times I've been told over the years when you witness to people, if they got any money or any education, church and God are for weak people.

Mentally deficient people. People that can't on their own. And I've almost believed that, he says. I go down to verse 17. He finally begins to focus on the divine.

- [14 : 48] He starts to look towards God. This has got to be one of those singular verses that just screams at us.
- He said, until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then I understood their end. You need to circle that word until.
- Now, remember this. I grew up in country churches. And in country churches, they'd say stuff like that. Yeah, when them lost people die, they cry out to God.
- They're scared. They're holding on to bed. Solomon said, that ain't true. I watched them die. They're fine. I thought everybody died and going to hell and get scared to death.
- That's not true. I've been watching that. So that ain't true. So the end wasn't their dying. It's where they're going. It's what life will be.
- [15 : 45] And I get messed up and you get messed up because we don't stay in the book. We stay in the comparative business. We don't decide what we believe based on what the word of God says.
- We decide what we believe based on what Facebook says. We don't decide what we believe because we got along with God and spent time with God and meditated on the word of God.
- We compare us where I work. They all got vacation homes. By the way, bless God. If I had to tithe so much, I'd have a vacation home.
- Fact is, my tithe is as much as a payment on a vacation house. Come on. You know that. Come on. Tell the truth. But he says, I want to acknowledge that God's in control.
- Verse 18. Surely, thou did set them in slippery places. Thou castest them down in destruction.
- [16 : 47] How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? They're utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream, one awaketh.
- So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. He says, I'm beginning to look around. I'm beginning to realize it's really not about how much money you got.
- It's really not even about how healthy you are. Really not even about how happy your family is. It's about, do you know God? Do you understand who God is? Do you acknowledge God Almighty?
- He said in verse 18, you might underline, thou. God deals with the wicked. God says, you wicked people ain't getting away with it.
- Y'all can act all haughty. You can act all proud. You can act all lifted up. But you're not getting away with it. God, you set them in slippery places. It looks good right now.
- [17 : 52] But they better be real careful. Then he said, they didn't just, they're not just trying to stay upright. You'll throw them down into destruction. Verse 18. He said, you'll bring them to desolation.
- As in a moment, it'll be over. In the New Testament, I read the story of a rich man and a guy named Lazarus. And if you'd have walked by, you'd have been like, that rich guy, that's a guy God's blessing.
- That guy's got a good house. He's got servants. He has live music when he wants it. That beggar at his door. I wonder what he did. I wonder why God doesn't like him.
- And in a moment, maybe no bands in his death, as the King James calls it here. Maybe no problems in his death. But in hell, he lift up his eyes, begin torment.
- And the other guy, as he died, some angels showed up. He said, come on home, buddy. Father's waiting on you. And took him home.

[18 : 58] You can say amen right there. That's pretty sweet. They were in slippery places. The other guy's utterly consumed. And God will despise their image.

Then the man is convicted of his sinful attitude in verse 21. Verse 21, he says, my heart's grieved.

I was pricked in my reins. I was convicted. I felt God poke me in my heart. Because I was foolish. I was ignorant.

I was as dumb as an animal. Look at the verse. Foolish. Ignorant. I was as a beast. I'm as dumb as a donkey.

When I think like I've been thinking. Boy, God, you've convicted me. I came down here to the sanctuary. I came to be alone with you.

[19 : 57] Opened up the Word of God. Thought about the Word of God. Got thinking about what truth is. And pushed away all the stuff everybody's saying. And pushed away all the stuff I've been seeing.

And pushed away all the stuff I've been feeling. And can I just make you mad? You need to stop all the feeling junk. You need to stop all.

I know. I know. Young people, it's on your feelings. But feelings will get you in trouble. But facts will keep you straight. I can feel whipped and beaten and losing.

But I can know this. I serve a God who's in charge. He's going to take care of me. In verse 23, he commits himself to the Lord. Nevertheless, I'm continually with thee.

God, you've been holding me by my right hand. Even when I was slipping. Even when I was doubting. Even when I was backsliding. Even when I had a bad attitude.

[20 : 56] You still hung on to me. Boy, what a God. Amen. So, you know, you and I, we've all been there. If you're honest, we've all had our moments. But our Father's like, oh, I didn't leave you.

I saw you slipping. I saw you slipping. I saw you struggling a little bit there. But I didn't let go of your hand. God, you guide me with your counsel. And you will afterwards receive me into glory.

He ends the psalm being fully dedicated to the Lord. Before I read these last verses here and finish this psalm.

It is one thing to know verse one. And another thing to be living in the verses that follow that. Because you're not based on truth. You're based on feeling.

The bad thing and the good thing about vision people, you people, is you know the truth. I really think you do. I think you're a very Bible literate group.

[22 : 00] But this guy said, oh, truly? Truly? I know it. I know. God's good. I memorized my Bible verse. I know what it says. But God, let's be honest with you. I ain't feeling it.

I know what it says. But it ain't working with me. I ain't feeling it. I think that's what he's saying. And God has convicted him. Brought him back.

And now he's saying, the Lord, you're my only desire. Verse 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? God, I'm in a sanctuary and I'm thinking about it.

There's nobody but you. Nobody but you. There's nobody but you. And when I look around on earth, I don't want anybody but you.

My security's not found in my wife. Not found in my bank account. Not found in my children. Not found in my health. You could circle in verse 25.

[23 : 04] Thee and thee. You know what he says? He said, God, I got to look it up in heaven. Ain't nobody up there I want but you. Thee. He said, God, I looked around on the earth and I figured out something.

Ain't nobody I want but thee. I just want you, God. I just want you. It's a beautiful thing. How many times do we come to the sanctuary? I never call this a sanctuary.

I call it the auditorium. But this afternoon I was looking for some people. And I said, does anybody know where these folks are? And they said, they're in a sanctuary. And I was like, where's that? Because I know you high church people like the word sanctuary.

It's okay with me. I'm not against it. But you know where the sanctuary is? That's in the presence of God. And he said, God, I'm going to make you the only desire I have.

Verse 26. He makes a decision that God is his strength. He said, God, I am weak. My flesh and my heart, they fail.

[24 : 03] I don't do too good. But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. How much you meditate on God?

He's sweet. He's kind. He has never left you. He is full of mercy. He's long-suffering. He's full of grace.

He's the most wonderful. You couldn't. There's no way anybody could come up with anything near as nice as God. He's everything. He said, boy, God, I know.

And he said, God, I know the deluded, they're going to die. Those wicked people, they're going to die. Look at verse 27. For lo, they that are far from thee shall perish, and you will destroy all of them that go after other gods.

Just for a Bible study real quick. Whoring here is not a sex term. It's a love term. When you don't love the God of heaven, any other gods you love, that's like a sex thing.

[25 : 13] You're not being faithful and loyal. He's a Jew. He says, among my people, y'all aren't loving our God. You've been looking at the lost neighbors in the other countries.

The ones that serve Baal or Ashtaroth or some of those other wicked places. And you've been thinking about running towards them. Stop going to whoring. They'll perish, and God will destroy them.

And he ends the chapter, Psalm, in verse 28. He declares, I trust God. It is good for me to draw near to God.

I have put my trust in the Lord God that I may declare all thy works. Now, I'll end. Let me just briefly say something to you.

Let me just say, wives, listen to me. You can't live on your husband's love for Jesus. You need to get in a book, go to the sanctuary, and draw near to God.

[26 : 18] Church members, wives, you can't live on your church, on your husband, on a Sunday school teacher, the discipler. You need this book. And you and I got to say, it's good for me to draw near to God.

Let me tell you this. I'm not the only one. There's a bunch of people in this room. We've read the Bible through a lot of times. But we keep making trips there. We ain't quit. Ain't planning on quitting.

Because I need him. I need to draw near to him. There are ladies and gentlemen in this room that teach the Bible, love the Bible, know the Bible as well or better than I ever will. But they keep going back.

He said, it's good for me. How often do you spend time alone with God? Stop depending on the pastor. Stop depending on the Sunday school teacher.

Stop depending on the person that discipless you. And you go draw near to God. Get in the book. Memorize the book. Spend time in prayer.

[27 : 22] And then you won't be so upset when you say the rich man who in just a few seconds will be in hell. And you may be the poor man laid at his gate.

If you know Jesus, the poor man was the rich man. And the rich man was the poor man. Spire his forward of prayer. Father in heaven, I ask you to work in your people tonight.

I'm going to ask you, God, to do a miracle. And to really touch some hearts. I ask you, dear God, to call some people to draw near to you.

They've been slacking off on seeking you in the word. They've been seeking Facebook and Instagram and TikTok and a bunch of other junk.

And they don't spend time in the book. And I'm begging you, dear God, to call your people back to your word. Holy Spirit, you're the one who does the drawing and the working. And I'm asking you to do that right now.

[28 : 24] With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. If you're honest, you've been slacking off on your Bible. I'd like to call the ladies first. I'd ask you ladies to get out of your seat and say, I am going to spend time in the word of God.

I am not going to depend on my Sunday school teacher or my husband or family devotions. But I am personally going to draw near to God. Would you make a decision right now?

Gentlemen, would you make a decision? Young people, students, missionaries, laymen, deacons, pastors. Let's be people of the book.

Look, it is good for us to draw near to God. We can't know truth and follow feelings. Father God in heaven, I pray you'd work now.

I pray your name would be glorified. And I pray you'd draw us to your book. And I'll give you praise. With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, you can pray there in your seats. You can pray at the front. Whenever you finish praying, you can stand and sing with Stephen as he leads us in this song.

[29 : 30] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.