

Singing when life doesn't seem fair!

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Date: 14 July 2024

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[0 : 00] So, we're going to read together from Psalm 73, which is actually Book 3 in the Psalms.

The Psalms is divided into four books as they were gathered together, and Psalm 73 contains a lot of Psalms by our author Asaph, and I will tell you a little bit more about Asaph in just a moment. For those who are visiting, we are looking at a series of Psalms under a general heading for the series called The Soul Song, because the Psalms were originally given to be sung, and they form part of the hymn book of the nation of Israel.

They're raw, passionate, full of very helpful, instructive teaching, lots of prayers, but not always prayers, as you will see from this psalm.

So, Psalm 73, this first psalm of Asaph, surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

[1 : 15] But, but as for me, my feet had almost slipped. I had nearly lost my foot hold. 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 the burdens common to man. They are not plagued by human ills. Therefore, pride is their necklace.

They clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity. The evil conceits of their mind know no limits. They scoff and speak with malice.

In their arrogance, they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore, the people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, how can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge? This is what the wicked are like, always carefree. They increase in wealth.

[2 : 15] Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure. In vain have I washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been plagued. I have been punished every morning. If I said, I will speak thus, I would have betrayed this generation of your children.

When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me. Till I entered the sanctuary of God.

Then I understood their final destiny. Surely you placed them on slippery ground.

You cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed. Completely swept away by terrors.

As a dream when one awakes. So when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.

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 being with you, I desire nothing on earth.

[3 : 24] My flesh and my heart may fail. But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish.

You destroy all who are unfaithful to you. 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. Amen. And the Lord will bless to us the reading of his holy word. Amen. Amen. So what do you make of that?

Quite a psalm. It's what we call an imprecatory psalm. Now that's an old-fashioned word, imprecation. To imprecate somebody is to call down a curse.

Like, I hope your bed is full of fleas. That apparently was an old curse, believe it or not. I wouldn't like that, would you?

[4 : 18] A bed full of fleas. You know, they curse. Somebody might curse your crops or curse your land or curse your family or curse your lifestyle in some way or other.

An imprecation is a curse, the calling down of a curse. And there are a number of imprecatory psalms, at least 18. And in those 18, there are 368 verses and about 75 of those may be called imprecation.

That's problematic for some people. How can a godly man call down a curse? Well, the apostle Paul did in 1 Corinthians 16. He cursed all those who rejected God. And by curse, we mean let God's judgment come upon them. So if anyone preaches a gospel other than the one you have received, said Paul, let him be accursed. Because the consequences of preaching a false gospel has eternal implications for people. And however erudite, apparently wise, apparently good, that individual may be, if he's proclaiming a lie, that lie is going to lead to the eternal damnation of people who otherwise would be saved. [5 : 50] So God's curse is called down. It has a place. I wouldn't suggest you go around and do it every day. That wouldn't be wise. You would need to be very clear that somebody was deliberately setting themselves against the face of God.

But it has a place. And it has a place here in these psalms. That's what makes this psalm, and the psalms like it, real. And it makes them raw and difficult for us to read and make sense of. So who is Asaph? Well, Asaph was a musician. He's mentioned as a chief musician in the tabernacle leading choral worship at the time of David. And David appointed him. He was clearly a man filled with the spirit, and he had great musical talent and ability. He not only played music, he also wrote some fantastic lyrics, and we have many of them in front of us.

Asaph wrote 12 psalms. And it is obvious from what we know of Asaph that he was a very godly man. He wanted God to be glorified in all things.

[7 : 01] And yet it's also obvious from reading this psalm that he was a man who questioned and was sometimes plagued with doubts. He raises the proposition at the start of this psalm that God is good to Israel, but effectively goes on to say, but he's not very good to me.

And that's a problem for us. God is good to Israel, but as for me, my foot nearly slipped. So he's a man who's suffering with grave doubts about God's personal goodness to him as his servant. And I'm going to talk about doubt and where doubt plays a valuable and useful place in developing our faith. If you have doubts, it doesn't make you an unbeliever.

It doesn't mean that you are somehow thinking unworthy thoughts about God. There's a balance here in this psalm between a man who is thinking worthy thoughts about God, God is good, but yet is looking at what he sees all around him and questioning how that goodness has been applied in his own life.

Why is it that if God is good, he is suffering and his life is in chaos and in a bit of a mess? Have you ever been there? Yeah?

[8 : 30] You've experienced that. It doesn't mean that you are being unfaithful. It does mean that in this world of suffering and pain and difficulties, you are experiencing what is common to man.

Trouble. Hardship. Difficulty. Hurt. Damage. All kinds of things that may come into your life. People like the idea of a perfect society and a perfect life with no problems.

We call it utopia. The utopian ideal is unrealistic, but desired. We hope that with a new government, society will reach perfection.

It won't. Never does. We hope with an increase in pay, our life will be comfortable and we'll be able to pay off our mortgage and never have any more financial difficulties.

Good luck with that. We hope that once the surgeon has completed the surgery, that we will no longer have any problems with our body and we'll function at our perfect best for a couple of hundred years.

[9 : 40] We will not. We all imagine that if we meet Mr. Right or Mrs. Right, life will be perfect, we'll never argue, everything will be bliss and our lives will be full of romance and joy like a Jane Austen novel.

It won't. But the desire for utopia is very real. We all have it. We all want that best life. But it is not achievable this side of heaven.

The Apostle Paul, in what is a wonderful passage in Romans 8, says, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been grown in, as in the pains of childbirth, right up to the present time, not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

[11:02] Yes. It's a great picture. The use of the imagery of a pregnant woman going through the pains of childbirth, waiting for her child to be born.

And of course, that's going to be a magical experience, but unfortunately, the pain and the discomfort that comes with that, I'm told, I wouldn't pretend to know, I've only observed from the sidelines, I'm told that is excruciatingly difficult.

Yeah? You're all nodding. The ladies are nodding. You take their word for it and don't argue. Yeah. It's excruciating. Paul says, life is like, for the believer on this earth, it's a bit like going through the pains of childbearing.

It will hurt. It will be painful. It will be uncomfortable. It will be difficult. There will be uncertainty. You're waiting for the arrival of something very special in your life.

The redemption of the children of God. You're waiting for that perfect earth, that perfect glory, forever with the Lord, without sin, without pain, without suffering, without death.

[12:08] You're waiting for that in this place of suffering and pain. And God, he says, has deliberately subjected the world to that kind of frustration or futility, however you translate it.

so that you might, from time to time, think, this is going to be my best life. Only to have something removed that makes it just as good as you thought it was going to be.

God has a purpose in doing that so that we never seek our heaven here on this earth. That's why he closed off the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned.

to prevent them living forever in a fallen world. There would be nothing worse, would there, than living forever in a fallen world where you suffer, where you have pain, where you have ongoing health crises, but they can never be resolved.

Where you have guilt and regret, but it can never be lifted. Imagine living in such a world. That would be hell. Hell. That would be hell. But heaven is not like that.

[13:15] Heaven is a place of redemption, freedom from all of those pains and all of that suffering, but in the present time, you're in a place of childbearing without the birth yet in place.

So, utopia is not achievable. It is an imaginary place, but it doesn't stop us seeking it from time to time. And crucially, it doesn't stop us blaming God when we don't get it.

Yeah? It's like, God, I trusted you for this. I believed in you, so I thought you said I would never become unwell. Well, he didn't actually say that, did he?

Not anyway. Oh, God, I'm on your side. I thought that would mean that my bank balance would always be in profit and I would never have any financial difficulties. He never said that either.

Oh, God, I'm on your side and you are my father, so you would never let anything bad happen in my life. He never said that. And yet, we behave as if he did.

[14:21] And so, when these things happen, we feel that he's let us down. But he hasn't. He never promised you a life free from the difficulties that everybody else in this world experiences.

There is no utopia this side of glory. That perspective's important because that's the perspective that Asaph loses. Surely God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart, but he's not good to me.

Therefore, he's let me down. He hasn't. You've just lost perspective. Now, we're not going to be hard on him. When you're going through the mill, it's very easy to lose perspective.

When somebody tells you God is good all the time, or when you sing it, which is why we sang it, if you're currently going through a real difficulty in your life, it doesn't feel that way, does it?

It's hard to sing, honestly, with integrity, when you might be feeling angry with God, or let down by God, or frustrated, or find you can't pray.

[15:24] It's very hard. And that's why I love this psalm, because this psalm is saying, it's okay to go through that. Lots of people have. Don't feel that you have to be hard on yourself.

Don't get the whip out and start to flagellate yourself because it's not something that is unique to you. Others have experienced it and have come through it.

And Asaph's going to help us come through it. Okay. So then, when life seems unfair, when life gets you down, what should we expect?

Well, the first thing is we should expect that we will live for a season in darkness, in some kind of spiritual darkness, what was once referred to as the dark night of the soul.

When you hit a wall in your faith and God seems far away, or you no longer hear His voice or feel His comfort, and everything seems pointless and hopeless, you are going through this dark night. [16:30] And every believer will experience it at some point where God will apparently hide His face and we will feel bereft. Asaph was in such a place.

He'd lost his perspective. Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart, He says. But then He says, as for me, my feet had almost slipped.

I had nearly lost my foothold. Why? Why was this the case? Well, He describes the rest of it for us in these first 14 verses.

And He surely exaggerates. If I look around at all of the ungodly people in this world, they never have any struggles. They're always fit and healthy. Their bank balances are full.

They've never got any problems. They're always happy. Well, of course, it's nonsense. There's nobody like that really. But that's what happens when you lose perspective. Everything gets exaggerated. What He's saying, in effect, is I sought to keep my heart pure and honor God.

[17:34] And I'm looking around at people who don't live that lifestyle and they don't seem to have it as hard as me. He becomes the standard by which He judges everybody else. Easy happens. We become self-centered.

So He's lost that kind of balance. But nonetheless, He makes a general observation that could be proven to be true. You could look at the lifestyle of the ungodly and compare your lifestyle to them. You could see their carelessness, their waywardness, their arrogance, and you think, why hasn't God done something about them? Why does He let them get away with it? Why doesn't He judge them?

This man who murdered those three women the other day, why doesn't God just intervene, save the courts, a job? It's very understandable that you would feel that way.

when people seem to get away with it and especially when you don't. Asaph then has a crisis of faith. He doesn't know how the goodness of God squares with what he is experiencing in his everyday life.

[18:46] And so in verse 13 he says, surely in vain I have kept my heart pure. In vain I have washed my hands in innocence. It's all been a waste of time.

Have you felt like that ever? This all feels like a bit of a waste of time. It's like when you're, you decide you're going to go out for a run or you're going to go on your bike and you're going to expend some energy for half an hour and you discover you buy these magical watches that you've burnt off 80 calories.

You think, wow, all that for 80 calories, my goodness. It's not even a tin of soup. All that effort following God and where has it got me?

You might be there. You're in good company. What is faith? Well, faith according to the Bible is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

And in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 Paul says, with that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

[20:05] Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Notice now. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal.

There's a little glint into resolving this problem of enviously looking at the ungodly and comparing your lifestyle to them. Paul says, this is what you need to do.

Don't look at what is obvious. Don't look at the externalities of the matter. Don't compare yourself to their life and think that they've got it made and you are somehow being held back by God.

Think about eternity. Think about what is coming. Or as the psalmist put it, I went into the sanctuary then I remembered their end.

[21:11] what is it worth Jesus says to gain the whole world but lose your soul. So what will you say to God on judgment day?

Will you say well you know I achieved notoriety and fame in this world. I have a fine house and a wonderful bank balance and I've lived a good life as best I could.

Oh yes I've been a little selfish at times. Oh yes I've heard a few people but you have to do that you know God to get forward in this world. Is that what you're going to seriously bring toward the almighty?

Is that going to be your appeal to him on the day of judgment? What will it profit you to have all of those things but to have neglected your soul?

What can you give in exchange Jesus says for your soul? The simple observation is this all of the things that Asaph envied of the wicked they could not take with them into eternity.

[22 : 17] They would not serve them in eternity. They would not impress the judge of all the earth who will judge our lives and will reward those who have kept their hearts pure while condemning those who have rejected his holiness.

Asaph lost that perspective but it would not alter the reality. It's very possible to look at the way humans achieve things and like Dionysius the younger one said after he conquered Syracuse do you not see how the gods favor those who commit sacrilege?

because they were able to sack the temples so therefore they assumed that God must approve. It's a basic theological error to think that what God allows he therefore also approves.

You know we fall into this sometimes don't we? It must be God's will because he allowed it to happen. Really? so those young ladies and their mother who were murdered the other day that was somehow God's will?

Nonsense. That was an act of moral evil which was diametrically opposed to the will of God. What God allows doesn't mean he approves.

[23 : 48] If we're living a life of sinful neglect where we indulge our passions rather than seek the holiness and the glory of God just because you get away with it doesn't mean God will always let you get away with it.

God is patient with us not willing that any should perish but that all will come to their senses or will come to repentance just as Asaph eventually comes to his senses and understands how he could never compare his life to the life of the successful wicked person that he compares himself to but he has darkness he has doubt remember when Thomas came to Jesus and he heard that Jesus was risen and he said I'm not going to believe this until I can actually see him and touch him and put my hand into his wounds remember what happened as he did that and as Jesus said to him Thomas stop doubting believe now it's really interesting that at no point does Jesus say look if you're going to doubt I'm not going to let you into my inner circle if you're going to doubt stay outside the door he didn't do that did he he indulged him in his doubting he never rebuked him indeed he showed great love and tenderness with his doubting servant come on

Thomas touch me and see a spirit has not got flesh and blood as you see I have come on find out how to assuage your doubts by coming into the presence into my presence and enjoying my company God is very tender to those who doubt he is willing to meet you in your doubts and say come and experience me afresh and then you will believe you will understand and that's what happens to Asaph he says I went into the sanctuary that means he went into the very presence of God and when he went into the very presence of God God revealed himself to him and he understood his doubts were assuaged in the presence of God now people make a virtue of doubts you know nowadays in the modern world if you have lots of doubts you're obviously a very sophisticated and thoughtful individual whereas if you just believe something you're obviously an ignorant fool and you need somebody to educate you and give your head a wobble and all of that of course that's a modern way of looking at life a hundred years ago if people had a certainty of belief or a certainty of faith we would have said they know what they believe they are people to be followed they've thought it through carefully now of course there's always a danger that the kind of beliefs we have are dogmatically held without any thought but there's an equal modern danger that we can't believe anything and we must be cynical about everything and hold everything with a certain degree of doubt and questioning well I've already shown you that doubts have their place God will appear to us and will convince us when we are going through our doubts he will do that and he will understand that but we must also be careful not to allow our perpetual doubting to be a reason for not believing sometimes we can just use doubts and questions as an excuse for never really dealing with truth imagine if Thomas would have come into the room and said well of course this could be a phantom a spirit I could be being deceived here I'm not going to touch him no no no this is all a trick he could have done all of that he had to engage with his doubts he had to be honest about it an honest doubter and so was Asaph an honest doubter prepared to be convinced by God

but also honest enough to tell God what his questions were I've met many people who say well of course this is really interesting I'll come and I'll dabble I'll sort of have a listen I'll have a read yes of course I will but you know that in your heart you have no intention whatsoever to believe it the questions and the doubts are just mere excuses for keeping God at a distance Anselm of Canterbury famously said I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe but I believe in order that I may understand yeah Thomas believed in order that he may understand my Lord and my God I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe but I believe in order to understand I remember saying on the very day that I asked Jesus into my heart I remember saying I believe but I do not believe in miracles and I remember the minister who prayed with me saying you don't worry about that you just believe and you know what [29 : 09] I discovered once I believed I had no problem with the idea of miracles because once I had reconciled myself to an almighty God the creator of heaven and earth who can do all things the idea of miracles well that's nothing it's nothing to an almighty God is it what seems impossible to my mind is possible to him once you believe your questions can be answered a refusal to believe means guess what you'll never get your questions answered C.S.

Lewis in Mere Christianity said faith in the sense in which I am here using the word is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted in spite of your changing moods that is why faith is such a necessary virtue unless you teach your moods where to get off you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist I like that you see we pay too much attention don't we to what we're feeling I don't feel this can be true I don't know that I could believe in an almighty creator who can do all things we have this sense that because we feel something must not be the case therefore our feelings are to be trusted in spite of whatever evidence others might present to us faith is the substance of things hoped!

for the evidence of things unseen Paul is not saying faith is a feeling! He's saying faith is based upon something really important the life the death the resurrection of Jesus real historical events that you can investigate and hold firmly to and know to be true God doesn't ask us to follow him when we feel like it he says sometimes you have to just ignore your feelings and trust trust now when you think about it if you think about love as a virtue which it clearly is you will know that you love your wife or your husband or your children but you will not feel that you love them every day I know this could be a terrible revelation very damaging to our children to know that but occasionally our children might upset us even anger us and frustrate us we feel nothing maybe we feel cross love but that doesn't mean we don't love them does it we wouldn't believe that love was just a feeling if we did none of us would be living together now because the feelings come and go love is a principle of action love is a commitment love is saying I'm going to stick with this person and I want the best for this person and I know they want the best for me love is committed it's active it's present regardless of feeling and so is faith just the same faith says I believe in God I trust in Jesus I know God is good in spite of what I feel is going on all around me now C.S.

Lewis had to put this to the test he wrote a book as I've said called Mere Christianity but he also wrote a book called The Problem of Pain and as a classic scholar he wrote this from the point of view of defending God against the charge how does God allow evil he wrote this book he preached a number of lectures and everybody said how wonderful it was but Lewis was married to a lady called Helen Joy Davidman and she got cancer and she suffered terribly and eventually she died of her cancer in spite of his prayers and he wrote a book called A Grief Observed a raw and personal testimony to his sense of loss and listen to his language meanwhile he says where is God this is one of the most distinct disquieting symptoms when you are happy so happy that you have no sense of needing him so happy that you are tempted to feel his claims upon you as an interruption if you remember yourself and turn to him with gratitude and praise you will be or so it feels welcome with open arms but go to him when your need is desperate when all other help is vain and what do you find a door slammed in your face and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside after that silence you may as well turn away the longer you wait the more emphatic the silence you will become there is no lights in the window it's very honest sentiment isn't it in the midst of his grief [34 : 15] God seemed so far away and yet when everything was going well God seemed so near so what had changed had God moved or had C.S.

Lewis come to understandably struggle with his feelings you see feelings and feelings it wasn't God who would change anything it was C.S.

Lewis who couldn't cope so well understandably with this early stage of grief in the loss of his beloved and precious wife so what happened well Lewis says this feelings and feelings and feelings let me try thinking instead from the rational point of view what new factor has H's death introduced into the problem of the universe what grounds has it given me for doubting all that I believe I knew already that these things and worse happen daily I would have said that I had taken them into account I had been warned I had warned myself not to reckon on worldly happiness we were even promised sufferings they were part of the program we were even told blessed are they that mourn and I accepted it I've got nothing that I hadn't bargained for of course it is different when the thing happens to oneself not to others and in reality not in imagination that's a very honest way of dealing with isn't it if he kept listening to his feelings

God didn't seem kind to him but if he thought about it God had never allowed anything in his life that he hadn't promised would and the question becomes which God am I willing to accept a God who will never inconvenience me a God who will never allow anything that hurts me or God as he really is a God who says you have a limited lifespan all your days are written for you before any of them come to be written in my book you'll not get one more than I planned and you have all of these human relationships and they're really important for you and you should enjoy them and you should love those people love them with all your passion and everything else but never believe that you're always going to have them in your life for the rest of time that's not going to happen!

why? And I had to come to terms with that emotionally still believing God is good to his people all of the time doesn't mean it doesn't hurt it just means that you're ready to face reality when we pray thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven we have to ask ourselves do we really mean it even if it means the loss of the person I love most in this world or even if it means that I do not have all of my dreams fulfilled that I had for myself there is always going to be darkness but thank God for C.S.

[37 : 43] Lewis thank God for his honesty thank God for Asaph thank God for their honesty there is always darkness but then there's enlightenment I remember their end I remembered that life is not the end of things that there is a world beyond this world where we will live forever and all of those wrongs will be righted and all of those hurts will be soothed and all of those scars and wounds will be healed and all will be perfect that is coming it is not now but I wait for it patiently and that's essentially how Asaph cured himself of the problem by remembering their end by going into the sanctuary by holding on to the things he believed and knew to be true so when Jesus says to us because I live you will live also that sustains and consoles me when

I face my own death or have to accept the death of somebody whom I have loved who has gone to be with Jesus I accept the reality of the word of God and I stand upon its promises and here is a solution to our troubles our fears our doubts and everything else you can only deal with them as you stand upon the promises of God that's why scripture is so important reading memorizing scripture getting as many of the promises of God into your head as is absolutely possible and holding on to those allowing the truth of God's word to sustain you through every trial and through every difficulty that's how ultimately Jesus told us to live Mark 8 34 38 if anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever wants to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it what good is it for a man to gain the whole world yet forfeit his soul or what can a man give in exchange for his soul if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this sinful and adulterous sinful generation the son of man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his father's glory with the holy angels in other words when you're tempted to envy the wicked and wish that you could win the national lottery and have millions in the bank and never have any problems again just remember that none of those things will save you remember what really saves you me and my words if you have Jesus you have what you need for eternity and without

Jesus whatever else you have will not save you in eternity you need that enlightenment to understand that Jesus is your greatest treasure and if you have him you have all that you need and as long as you live your future life with that in mind when difficulties and trials and hardships come your way you will get through it because you have that heavenly treasure and you have that divine perspective on life it will get you through he will get you through to whom else shall we turn you have the words of eternal life and we have come to know that you are the holy one of God so darkness enlightenment and then confession asaph says when I think back to the time when I doubted the goodness of God I was like a brute beast what a foolish man I became you know

I stopped thinking rationally that's what a brute beast does a brute beast is just led by instinct needs food needs to procreate needs to sleep and as long as it has that environment it's happy it's fine it doesn't philosophize it doesn't rationalize it doesn't have to deal with all of its questions it's not what a brute beast does humans do all of that but when we are driven and led by the no's when we are led by our feelings and our desires and our instincts we become like animals and asaph is saying just stop and think and use your brain accept reality as it is trust in the things you know hold firm to the promises of God and repent of unworthy thoughts about him it's alright to doubt it's alright to question but it is not alright to curse

God it is not alright to demand that he meets all of my desires and all of my demands and tells me exactly what he's doing because after all he is at my beck and call and must do whatever I say now somebody in the bible did that remember Job in chapter 9 and 10 of Job he says I wish I could call God to account I wish I could bring him to a courtroom and then I would get somebody to stand between us and then we'd have a good old argument and I'd tell God why he was really nasty to me and how it was so undeserved and he ought to explain himself to me that's exactly what Job does he calls God to the bench now needless to say God doesn't turn up for a while Job's friends turn up and say well Job it's because you're sinning he says no no I've heard that one before I'm not doing anything wrong that I haven't already done before he's not denying that he sins but he's saying sin is not the reason for this something else is going on and it's really not fair

[44 : 02] I've lost my children I've lost my riches I've lost my health everything has been torn down and torn apart and God needs to tell me what he's doing and then God turns up and says okay Job where were you when I created this universe and did I take you into account did I ask you for some advice about how we could run this universe together and do I need your wisdom and your understanding and can you tell me how to do it better now at no point does God say to Job and this is why you're suffering he just simply says to Job trust me trust me I made all of this and it all runs and it all works and nothing's really out of control neither is your life you may feel it is but it's not what does Job do he repents he falls down on his face and he covers himself in ash he says in effect you're God and I'm not and although my life seems so chaotic and out of control

I know that really you've got it it's in control and it's all going to work out for my good and for your glory what a perspective on life all things work together for the good of those who love God who are called according to his purpose somehow that helps with the chaos and the pain and then lastly next one next one next one adoration the psalmist comes through all of that and then he says 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 being with you I desire nothing that is on earth my flesh and my heart may fail but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever those who are far from you will perish you destroy all who are unfaithful to you 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 when you're suffering when you're in pain when your life is chaotic and everything falls around you in a complete shambles and as it seems to you mess you reach out your hand to God next slide Josh you reach out your hand to God keep going one more you feel for his hand Tim Keller said that Tim Keller said that when he was dying of pancreatic cancer you feel for his hand you don't have to understand why he's allowing it to happen to you you don't have to pretend that it doesn't hurt you don't have to say that you've got no doubts or questions you can acknowledge that you feel pain and grief and sadness but you feel for his hand because you can't cope with it alone it's impossible only the Lord can sustain you at such times only then can you know that even though your father in heaven allows this affliction he has not abandoned you he will never leave you or forsake you it's like Jesus on the cross from his perspective it was my God my God why have you forsaken me the reality though was that the father was there feeling his pain with him in his suffering ready to deliver him to glory and that will be for us too I cannot guarantee what your future will bring I cannot guarantee that you will die comfortably!

in your bed without pain I can guarantee you that if you reach out to your father and feel for his hand he will be with you and doesn't that raise a hallelujah in your heart and if it does not there is something wrong with your heart and you need to have the enlightenment of the faith to be able to say to Jesus to whom else shall I go you Jesus have the words of eternal life life Nab