

PSALMS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 73 as we continue our study through the Word of God. We are told that this Psalm was written by Asaph and if you remember, Asaph was David's worship leader, (I Chronicles 25:1, 15:16, 19). Also, this is the first of eleven Psalms in a row that were written by Asaph or his descendants, Psalms 73 through 83.

Now, as we shall see as we go through these Psalms, they cover a long period of time. Thus, Asaph could not have written all of them, but the family name of Asaph continued on as they oversaw the music or worship ministry. Keep that in mind as we go through these next eleven Psalms, not all of these Psalms were written by Asaph himself, some of Asaph's descendants, using the family name of Asaph, wrote some of these Psalms.

Here, in Psalm 73, we see Asaph wrestle with a problem that all of us face from time to time. And what he learned from these times is something we should take with us, as we will see. It is the struggle of why the wicked prosper and the righteous struggle and as you will see, this is a perspective issue or I should say a loss of perspective for a time for Asaph. Let's begin reading in verse 1 of Psalm 73 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

PSALM 73**VERSE 1**

1. Asaph starts out on solid ground, that God is good. We need to start out and finish upon a solid foundation. First of all we know that God is good! There is no darkness in Him at all! Don't ever forget that fact. Asaph tells us that God is good to Israel, which means governed by God. Yes, God says that Israel is the apple of His eye but keep in mind that God is good to those who are governed by Him, and that includes you and me and every person who has given their life to Jesus.

The problem comes when Asaph says that this is for those who have a clean heart and that is the problem. We have a heart problem and apart from Christ, it can't be fixed. In Ezekiel 36:26 the Lord is speaking of the Jewish people and what He is going to do in their lives and this is something that He does in every person who comes to Him. Listen to what we are told, **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”** You see, God gives to us a heart transplant, a new heart and thus, we can come before Him, not in our own righteousness but the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith!

So this is the foundation he is standing upon and it is a good one. Spurgeon put it like this, “The writer does not doubt this, but lays it down as his firm conviction. It is well to make sure of what we do know, for this will be good anchor-hold for us when we are molested by those mysterious storms which arise from things which we do not understand.”

2. Now there is one problem as we will see as we move into verse 2. The problem arises when we begin to add other, non-truths to that foundation and that foundation is weakened. You see, he says God is good, and then will say in verse 2, “**But . . .**” That is a big mistake as we will see! You can’t say, “God is good, but . . .”

VERSES 2-3

1. Notice what Asaph did here that caused his problems. As Asaph took his eyes off the Lord, he focused them on the wicked, and he became envious of their prosperity. He was so envious of what they had and he didn’t have, his faith in the goodness of God was almost destroyed, he began to slip because he was not standing on solid ground. This is something that many Christians struggle with and the reason is they have taken their eyes off the Lord and focused it upon what others have!

It is as Boice wrote, “If God is in control of things, the plans of the wicked should flounder. They should even be punished openly. The godly alone should prosper. But that is not what Asaph saw, and it is not what we see either. We see scoundrels getting rich. Utterly degenerate persons, like particularly vile rock musicians or movie stars, are well paid and sought after. Even criminals get rich selling their crime stories.”

But when you really think about it, when your focus is not on the Lord, and it is truly foolish to do that, but it is easy to fall pray to these things and weaken the foundation you are standing on. Spurgeon wrote, “It is a pitiful thing that an heir of heaven should have to confess ‘I was envious,’ but worse still that he should have to put it, ‘I was envious at the foolish.’” A powerful lesson that we need to learn!

VERSES 4-9

1. As he takes his eyes off the Lord and is focusing on the wicked, he is seeing a distorted picture and coming to some wrong conclusions! He is saying that the death of the wicked is painless. They are strong. They are not troubled. They are proud and arrogant about the good life they have. Everything is going great for the wicked and this was just eating away at Asaph. And of course this was not true but it is easy to get a distorted picture when you look at life apart from the Lord!

2. Asaph is saying that they have more than they need and they seem to get even more. Not only that but they are proud of the way they can oppress others to make money, they boast about it. These are the ones who are respected, get on television, write books, get quoted, and-so-on. They seem to have it all, at least in the eyes of Asaph and for some of us. Why is that? It is because we know the truths of God found in the Word of God and then there is the, ***BUT . . . !***

VERSES 10-14

1. The idea here in verse 10 is that the cups of the wicked are overflowing from what they have taken from others. In other words he saw that God's people were being squeezed and drained. Not only that but he tells us that the wicked man lives in prosperity and ease as he takes from those who don't have.

2. Now the conclusion for the wicked is that they feel God doesn't care what they do. But they are mistaking the patience and longsuffering of God for God not caring or that God does not know what they are doing or He can't do anything about it, and worse of all, that God condones or accepts what they are doing! Never mistake the longsuffering of God with any of these wrong conclusions. As the Psalmist said in Psalm 86:15, **“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.”** Make no mistake about it, judgment day is coming and you can continue in your wickedness until the very end, but you will stand before your maker one day in your own righteousness, which are like filthy rags!

3. Now when we take our eyes off the Lord we seem to spiral farther and farther away from the truths of God, we fall far away from God and that is what we see here with Asaph! He is now saying that there is no real benefit in doing good, there is no real benefit in serving God!

I guess that is true if this world is where your treasure is at, for that is where your heart will also be. And you might as well eat, drink and be merry, because this is all there is for you. But if your treasure is in the Lord, looking towards eternity, you will not be sorry. And I will guarantee you this, all those who have died outside of Christ, if they had the chance to do it all over again, they would live for Him! But you only get one chance, and that chance is while you are living, for in death, there is no second chance. And think about this life, as blessed as we are, even during those difficult times, this is the worst it will be for us. It will only get better as we go to be with the Lord. For the wicked, this is the best it gets for them; everything else is downward for eternity!

4. As Asaph fell into this major pity party he was throwing for himself, he was blowing things completely out of proportion. The wicked are not always blessed. They are not always healthy. They do die in pain like everyone else, and-so-on. And as people begin to fall into this trap, they begin to exaggerate what is really happening to them, just as Asaph was.

5. Not a good place to be in for Asaph but notice as we read on how he rectifies the wrong perspective he has! This is important for us to learn and apply to our lives!

VERSES 15-17

1. As much as Asaph was trying to deal with those issues on the inside, he did not go around and stumble others by telling them God isn't good. That is important for all of us to understand. You see, as we wrestle through issues, don't go verbalizing all your doubts, because God will answer those things, and if you speak these lies to others, you will cause them to stumble over an issue that was not really an issue.

And like Asaph, it may not be easy, this was hard to deal with for Asaph, why the wicked prospered and reconciling that with the goodness of God while he was going through some heavy trial. It was a real problem, but notice where he found the answers to his questions!

2. He went to church! You see, he couldn't see until he put his spiritual glasses on, you might say. It is when he got back into fellowship with God, into His Word, that he saw the whole picture. And as you come to church, it should also be a time where God is revealed to you more clearly through His Word. And Asaph is now saying that the wicked are not getting away with anything, for in the end God will judge them. You see, he is looking at life through the eyes of eternity. Don't become near-sighted. Look at the whole picture.

One writer put it like this, "What then did the psalmist do? The answer to some will seem perfectly childish. He went to church. . . . Just what others got out of this service we are not told. But the psalmist came into possession of certain gripping convictions that steadied him and enabled him to walk in the after days with firmness and assurance." (Chappell)

For us as Christians, we should be in church, we should come to worship God because as we do God will answer those questions we have upon our heart, He will speak to us. Paul said in Hebrews 10:24-25, "**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**" You see, going to the house of God, to church you might say, he could gain understanding about what he saw, he could gain a correct perspective of things!

Now he saw the end of the wicked, they will not get away with anything. We should not covet what the unsaved have, we should mourn and weep for them because their end is eternity in the Lake of Fire apart from God! We should rejoice because God has saved a wretched man like me, like you and we will be with Him for eternity! You see, we need to get a correct perspective and that is done as we come to church, hear the Word of God, pray, be in fellowship with other believers. May we not forsake the assembling together with other believers!

VERSES 18-20

1. You get the picture of the wicked hanging on a thread over the fires of Hell! Jonathan Edward's used these verses in his sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." And how true that is, they are walking on unstable ground, dangling over the pit of Hell without Christ. Spurgeon put it like this, "Sinner you may fall *now*, at once. The mountain yields beneath your feet, the slippery ice is melting every moment. Look down and learn your speedy doom. Yonder yawning gulf must soon receive you, while we look after you with hopeless tears. Our prayers cannot follow you; from your slippery standing place you fall and you are gone for ever. *Death* makes the place where you stand slippery, for it dissolves your life every hour. Time makes it slippery, for every instant it cuts the ground from under your feet. The *vanities* which you enjoy make your place slippery, for they are all like ice which shall melt before the sun. You have no foot-hold, sinner, you have no sure hope, no confidence. It is a melting thing you trust to." Again, we should not covet what they have, we should let them see the abundance of what we have, ***JESUS!***

2. Now here in verse 20 Asaph sees God as sleeping now, but one day He will awaken and deal with the wicked. But God is not asleep, He is aware of what is going on. You see, He is patient; He is longsuffering, desiring all to turn to Him and be saved. Peter put it this way in II Peter 3:9-10 as he said, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”** Don’t despise God’s longsuffering, for where would you be without it?

VERSES 21-24

1. You might say that the light went on for Asaph and he saw things through the eyes of God instead of the eyes of flesh! You see, as Asaph looked back at where he was at he saw himself as an animal with no ability to reason. But when he came to his senses, when the pity party was over, he saw how foolish he was.

And we must understand this, as His children, He guides us down the ***RIGHT*** path. That doesn’t always mean the easy path, but the one that is best for us. And at the end of that path He will receive us into glory!

What joy that should bring to our lives! Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 4:16-18 as he wrote, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

Perspective is everything and to have a correct perspective of things you need to go into the house of God, you need to worship Him and be in His Word. And it was out of that we see Asaph have a correct understanding of the glory that was awaiting him. And think about it, what more do you really need than to know that God is with us. What more do we really need than to know that God’s hand is upon us. What more do we really need than to know that God’s counsel is there for us. And what more do we really need than to know that heaven awaits us! Perspective is everything and a correct perspective for that matter!

VERSES 25-26

1. Asaph was thinking, “Lord, what was I thinking? How foolish I was. Keep me focused upon You so I won’t lose sight of You with all that I see with my eyes! Help me to put on spiritual glasses so I can see clearly!” And when you think about it, who else or what else are you going to turn to, trust besides the Lord? There is no one, for everything else is vain, it is empty.

2. Now it is possible that Asaph could have been very sick at this time. Verse 26 seems to indicate that. And out of that sickness he is feeling, “What good is it to serve God?” But we must never forget what Paul tells us in Romans 8:28 as we go through times we just don’t understand what good will come of these things. He said, “**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**” Don’t lose perspective, look to God!

VERSES 27-28

1. All those who are spiritually unfaithful to God, will perish. But we, as Christians need to *draw near to Him*, and as we do, as we go through trials we need to *put our trust in Him*. It is out of all that we can then, accurately and faithfully *declare to others what God has done* in our life. If you don’t draw near to God, if you do not trust in the Lord, you will not be a witness of Him, at least not a good witness!

2. As we have seen, Asaph started out in confusion, slipping in his walk, but then gets re-focused by drawing near to God, fellowshiping with Him. And thus, His despair and pity are replaced with hope and praise unto the Lord. I like the way that Spurgeon sums this up for us as he wrote, “It may seem good in the worldling’s eyes to go his way to his wine cups, and to make merry in the dance; it may seem good to yonder truster in an arm of flesh, to seek out his friends and his kinsmen, and entrust his case to their discretion; it may seem good to the desponding to retire in melancholy to brood over his sorrows, and to the dissipated, to endeavor to drown all care in vanity, but to me, says the psalmist, it is good, preeminently good, that I should draw near unto God.”

Don't let the things of this world cause you to lose the correct perspective of things. Draw near to God, be in His Word, come to church and worship Him, be in prayer. If you want to be any earthly good, you better be heavenly minded!

PSALM 74

This Psalm was written early on in the Babylonian captivity as the Southern Kingdom of Judah was carried away to Babylon, beginning in 606 B. C., with the final siege of destruction and deportation occurring in 586 B. C. That means that this could not have been written by Asaph, but by one of his descendants. And in this Psalm we see the Psalmist lament about the destruction of Jerusalem and God's apparent silence during all of this.

As we read through this picture in your mind what was going on. The city was smoldering. The citizens were sobbing. The Temple was destroyed. Jerusalem was wiped out. And the Psalmist, watching everything go up in smoke, his mind in a haze, wrote this song of instruction. Let's dig in and see what the Psalmist has to say.

VERSES 1-8

1. This is interesting to me because they are asking God why He has done this to them. They have forgotten about the prophets that warned them that if they continued in their rebellion against God that they would be carried away into captivity just as the Northern Kingdom of Israel was. They had a false sense of righteousness and were blinded to their sin. Because of that they came to the faulty conclusion that they were the innocent victims of God's wrath.

2. Now before we come down too heavy upon them, we see this happens in our own life. God warns us, and we refuse to listen, and as judgment comes upon us, we wonder why God is doing this to us. God loves us too much to let us continue in sin and He will do everything possible to get us back on track because we are His children!

3. Now we see the massive destruction that was going on as the Babylonians leveled the city of Jerusalem! The Temple that Solomon built, where the Shekinah glory dwelt, was destroyed by the Babylonians. The city, the walls, and the Temple were completely destroyed by the Babylonians. And in their victory the Babylonians raised their flag and the Psalmist can't believe that God would allow them to do this in His city, the city of God! But God did warn them and they refused to listen and judgment came!

VERSES 9-17

1. The Psalmist continues to complain that God is not stepping in and delivering them from the hands of the Babylonians! He says that the glory of God is no longer leading them. There are no prophets in the land. And that wouldn't matter, they were not listening to them anyway and had put many to death, imprisoned others. And they had no idea how long this captivity was going to last. At this time Jeremiah was in Egypt, and his writings may not have reached Babylon or been circulated as yet, for he tells us that the captivity was to last 70 years. And later on, Daniel, living in Babylon, has this information from Jeremiah. The prophet Ezekiel was also taken captive to Babylon.

And for the Psalmist, he just can't understand why God is allowing this and he is very upset. He is telling God to get His hands out of His pockets and do something! In fact, he goes back in the history of the Jews and speaks of the power of God and is wondering why He is not helping them now! How can God, who has done many great works for the children of Israel, not help them in their time of despair? How can God be silent to their cries, he just can't understand it! The reason is really very simple. It is as Isaiah said, "**Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**" Isaiah 59:1-2. That was the problem, not with God but with the Southern Kingdom of Judah and many refused to see it that way and they blamed God! What a lesson for us to learn!

VERSES 18-23

1. As you read this you can see that he is portraying Judah as innocent before God, and for no reason God has forsaken them. It is God's fault and not theirs! That is a dangerous place to be. You see, he has forgotten their idolatry that caused the judgment of God to come upon them. They were sacrificing their children to the god Molech in the fire. They were into all kinds of idolatry and yet, they still went to church thinking that was fine and it wasn't, judgment has come!

And think about it. They broke the covenant, wanted nothing to do with it and then when they are in trouble they are asking God to honor it. Sin had separated them from God and brought this judgment upon them and God had warned them over and over again, they just refused to listen!

2. And in the end, I like what the Psalmist does. He is basically saying, "Lord, save us for your name." You see, when you would defeat a nation, they believed their god was superior to your god. And this is important, whenever we sin against God; we give the enemies of God an opportunity to mock God. Nathan told David regarding his sin with Bathsheba that, "**. . . because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme. . .**" II Samuel 12:14.

3. Now this is not a very uplifting Psalm, but it is one that comes from the heart and shows us how truly blinded we can be to our own sin. We can be so blinded to our sin that we see ourselves as righteous and God as the one who is unfair. If you ever feel that way, understand this, you are wrong! God is always righteous, He is always just, He is always fair.

4. Now for some, this may not seem fair, how can God do this? But, as you will see in the next Psalm, that question is answered!

PSALM 75

This Psalm speaks of God's righteous judgment, according to His plan and His time frame. That is what we need to understand, God is not unfair. In all that He does it is righteous, it is the right thing to do, there is no darkness in God at all. Thus, if judgment comes, there must be a reason. So let's look at this Psalm that speaks of God being the Judge!

VERSE 1

1. As you look out at this world you see the hand of God. And yes, sin has distorted God's world, but even with sin we see the works of God and it encourages us that He is near. Not only that, but as you read the Word and see the things happening in the world, you can't help but see that we are living in the days the prophets spoke about. You can't help but see that the Lord's return is drawing closer. We don't know the day or the hour but we are living in the seasons they spoke of. As Jesus said in Matthew 24:36, "**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.**" Look up for your redemption is drawing near!

VERSES 2-3

1. God is speaking here and specifically I believe it is Jesus that is speaking in this section. And what I want you to notice that it is according to His time that He will judge the people and not according to our time frame. God's timing is perfect and He will make all things beautiful in His time and that is going to happen!

VERSES 4-5

1. The horn represents power, defiance. The wicked love to boast and mock God and the Lord is saying that you need to change your ways, you need to humble yourself before Me! You see, one day the armies of the world will gather together in the Valley of Megiddo to fight against the Lord and His Anointed, but it is no war. The creation can't stand against his Creator and win! Thus, humble yourself now in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up. If you refuse to be broken by the Rock you will be crushed by Him!

VERSES 6-8

1. God is sovereign and if you desire to live in rebellion against Him, you will find no help no matter where you look. Now what is interesting is that the Psalmist speaks of no help coming from the east, west or from the south, but he does not mention the north, why? It is possible that this is where the invading armies usually came from, the north. Or it can speak of God's dwelling place as Isaiah 14:13 tells us, "**For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north.'**" This is speaking of the rebellion of Lucifer but notice it speaks of God's place to the north!

Also, we are told in Psalm 48:2, "**Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King.**" So both may apply to what the Psalmist is saying here and I think that they do.

2. The Psalmist then moves on to God's cup of judgment and we see this spoken of in Revelation 14:9-11, where we are told, **“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.’”** Also, in Revelation 6:17 we read, **“For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”**

And so, where will help come from? Not from the east, west, or south. And as we have seen, there is no mention made of the north, because that is the direction the enemy will come from. Only *God* will be able to deliver His people.

VERSES 9-10

1. Here's the thing. God will let man only go so far before He steps in and rights the wrongs that are being done. And when God steps in He will cut down the wicked and raise up the righteous. Our victory is in the Lord!

PSALM 76

As you read this Psalm, I feel as do many others, that this Psalm was written after one angel wiped out 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night, giving the Southern Kingdom of Judah victory without a fight. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was outnumbered and yet God took care of those odds and He defeated the enemy, one angel that He sent did the work! (II Kings 19). Never lose hope because God is with us!

Now this Psalm can be divided up like this. In verses 1-6 we see the fame of God and in verses 7-12 we see the fear of God. So let's dig in and see what the Lord has for us!

VERSES 1-3

1. Judah spoke of the Southern Kingdom and Israel spoke of the Northern Kingdom. Salem and Zion speak of Jerusalem itself and it is here, in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, in Jerusalem, that God wiped out the powerful enemy. With one angel He wiped out 185,000 Assyrians, giving King Hezekiah the victory.

2. I like how this Psalm opens up. **“In Judah God is known.”** Another way to look at this is “In praise God is known!” Judah means praise and we are told that God inhabits the praises of His people. May we be a people who love to praise the Lord!

VERSES 4-6

1. This is speaking of the sleep of death, for one night we see one angel wipe out and destroy 185,000 Assyrian soldiers without a fight. Make no mistake about it, the Assyrians were a brutal people and thus, looking at this through the eyes of the world, the Southern Kingdom of Judah had every right to be fearful. But look at this through the eyes of faith, there truly was no reason for them to fear for God is more than able to deliver them! You see, the focus needs to be on Almighty God and not on how powerful the enemy is.

2. And as I have said, these first 6 verses deal with the fame of God. The wonderful things that He has done and what encouragement that gives to us.

VERSES 7-9

1. Now those who love the Lord should fear Him, not fear in that of a slave to his master or a criminal to a judge, but a respect, a reverential fear. Also, to be afraid of God doesn't mean we shrink away from Him or we back off from Him, but rather to be afraid of doing anything that would grieve or hurt Him. Now, on the other hand, those living in rebellion against God were and should be terrified at the power of God.

I also see this looking ahead to a future time. I am speaking of the time when the Lord will defeat His enemies in His Second Coming. You see, the King of Assyria, Sennacherib and his men are a type of the Antichrist and his men. And just as easy as Sennacherib's army was defeated, so too will be the army of the Antichrist.

VERSES 10-12

1. Man can try as hard as he wants to fight against God but he will never win. In fact, in his rebellion he is fulfilling the plan of God, just as Satan did when he thought he defeated God by having Him killed on a cross!

2. Now here's the thing. God is longsuffering, He restrains Himself from wiping man out, but the grace of God will not last forever for the unrighteous. Don't be foolish and miss all the grace that God has bestowed upon you because you are still here. It is as this story goes,

A hundred years or so ago, Robert Ingersoll, a famous outspoken atheist, challenged an open-air preacher at Hyde Park in London. The preacher spoke of the beauty and glory of God. Now, as he was doing that Ingersoll shouted out, "I propose a test right now. If God is real, let Him prove Himself. In thirty seconds, let Him strike me dead." Thirty seconds passed and nothing happened. "See?" Ingersoll mocked. "God is not real."

The preacher said, "Mr. Ingersoll, do you really think you can exhaust the patience and mercy of God in thirty seconds? That is just preposterous!" That is our God, gracious and merciful! These verses, 7-12 focus on the fear of God, for both the saved and the unsaved!

3. And as this Psalm concludes it does so by speaking of the Kingdom Age when the Lord will reign.

PSALM 77

This Psalm could also be written during the Babylonian captivity. One hundred thirty-five years after the Assyrians were thwarted in their attack, the Babylonians would destroy Jerusalem. This time they would not be delivered. This time, Jerusalem would go up in flames.

VERSES 1-3

1. Here we see the Psalmist cry out to God and in the Hebrew the phrase, “**And He gave ear to me**” is that God “might give ear to me.” In other words, it didn’t seem like God was listening to his cry. His city is in rubble. His Temple destroyed. People were killed and it seemed like God was silent.

The burden was overwhelming and it seemed he tried to do everything to get God’s attention, but He was silent. There was no comfort. It seemed that God had turned His back on him.

2. It is always good to seek the Lord but especially in times of trouble as we see here with the Psalmist. J. Vernon McGee wrote, “I received a letter from a man who had lost his position. He would never listen to our program until he was out of a job and had nothing to do. It was then that he got right down to the nitty - gritty and trusted the Lord as his Savior. It is well to cry to the Lord in the time of trouble.” Sometimes God will use those times of trouble to get people to look up to Him. We need to be careful that we don’t get in the way of God working in that persons life!

VERSES 4-6

1. He is so devastated about this time he couldn't sleep. In fact, he is blaming God for this terrible case of insomnia! And he is trying to encourage himself by remembering how God delivered him in the past, meditating on the good times, so he could be strengthened in the present situation. But it does not seem to be working. And now he is going to speak forth six questions that seem to be unbelievable to him and yet, they seem to be true! Let's read on and see.

VERSES 7-9

1. Notice what he is saying about God. First of all he wonders if God has cast them off, forgotten about them forever? Of course He hasn't, it was their sin that separated them from God, God did not move, they did!

Secondly, is God not going to favor them any longer, have they lost the favor of God? Again, that is not true; God loved them too much to leave them in that condition!

The third question is God's mercy over, has it ceased? God is very merciful, that is not the issue. His mercy is new every morning but they refused to repent and look up!

The fourth question is related to the promises of God, have they failed? Of course they have not failed, God is faithful and what He has promised He is more than able to bring to pass! The issue was not God, but their sin as I have said.

The fifth question is related to God's grace, has He forgotten about His grace towards Israel? God's grace is unmerited favor, it is not based upon what man has done but it is fully and totally based in God. So God's grace stands.

And lastly, the sixth question is related to God's anger, has it grown so much that He is no longer tender towards Israel? Again, God is patient, He is longsuffering, but He will not leave His children to continue in sin. He will chasten them so they repent and get right with Him because it is what is best for them and truly for us!

Folk's, when we are going through difficult times, it is easy to say things about God that we don't really mean, that are not really true, as the Psalmist has done. Be careful for it is easy to continue down this path of despair.

VERSE 10-12

1. He speaks of being in anguish, overwhelmed at what he is seeing but then he speaks of taking his eyes off the situation and placing them upon God, meditating, remembering the faithfulness of God. That is so important for us to do!

It is as we are told in Lamentations 3:21-24, **“This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’”**

2. Now it is easy to become depressed as Christians. Satan loves to use his double-edged sword of doubt and discouragement in our lives and we become depressed. How can we overcome times of depression? The Psalmist tells us to remember what God has done in the past. Allow that to encourage you and strengthen you. And then, talk of His wonderful deeds. You see, you can't help getting ministered to as you are sharing Christ with others. It is a blessing and it gets our eyes off of self and onto the only one that can help, the Lord!

VERSES 13-20

1. The Psalmist goes back and remembers God's awesome deliverance of His people from Egypt. Remember the story, as they left Egypt God lead them to a place where they seemed to be trapped. On one side there was a mountain range. On the other side there was a mountain range. And there was no way you were going to get 2 to 3 million people through those mountain ranges. In front of them was the Red Sea and from a human standpoint, you were not going to be able to cross the Red Sea and get to the other side. And then, coming up behind them was Pharaoh with his men to capture them.

And as you read this story in Exodus you may wonder why did God do this? Why would God lead them into this trap? There truly was no place for them to run to. There was no place for them to scatter. And as you look at this you can clearly see that their backs were up against the wall. There was no way out!

And when it seemed hopeless God showed them where to walk, as He parted the Red Sea. If God did that back then, surely He could deliver me from my problems today, even though I might not see His hand working at this time. And when I look back I can see His footsteps that were guiding me all the way! God is able to deliver His people today just as He did back then, do not forget that! What a great, loving Shepherd He is!