

# WHEN LIFE ISN'T FAIR: PRIZING GOD IN THE FOG OF DISILLUSIONMENT

From Psalm 73  
08/18/19

## INTRODUCTION

1. Opening illustration: first time driving in a blizzard
2. Transition: As disorienting an experience driving in that blizzard was to me, I think all of us struggle at some point with feeling disoriented at some point in our faith walk. [post-graduation difficulties]

The flurry of one thing wrong after the next can really get to us, can't it? Well, I have some good news: you're not alone. Life circumstances can quickly become an overwhelming blizzard. And, if we're not careful, coming toe to toe with "what shouldn't be" can lead us into a fog of disillusionment and bitterness. It did for today's psalmist and it might be where you're at even this morning. Even so, Psalm 73 invites us into truer and deeper worship as it reminds us of this important point:

3. **Proposition:** Because unmet expectations in this life can lead to disillusionment, right worship requires that we acknowledge our stumblings, draw near to God, and shift our gaze to find ourselves satisfied in Him alone.

## BODY

1. **Confession (vv. 1-3)** – there's lots about this psalm that I have loved for a long time, but one thing I came to love this week is the psalmist's honesty. I'll unpack this more in a bit, but right off the bat, he leads it off with a confession of the goodness of God on the one hand and his personal failure on the other.
  - a. God's goodness: "God is good to Israel (those who are pure in heart)"
  - b. Personal failure: "My feet came close to stumbling... for I was envious of the wicked"
  - c. Right worship requires that we acknowledge our stumblings
2. **Life's not fair (vv. 4-12)** – moving into verses 4-12, the psalmist shifts his attention away from his personal confession and onto what had been bothering him: the prosperity of the wicked. [wealth disclaimer]

Prov. 3:9-10	Honor the LORD... so your barns will be filled
Prov. 8:18-19	Riches and honor are with [wisdom]
Prov. 10:4-5	The hand of the diligent makes rich... he who sleeps... acts shamefully
Prov. 14:24	The crown of the wise is their riches

The wicked are...	Yet...
Violent (6)	Prosperous (3b, 12)
Overly imaginative (7)	Painless death (4a)
Mockers of oppression (8)	Fat (well-fed) (4b, 7a)
Proud (9b)	Untroubled (5)
Mockers of God (9a, 11)	Always at ease (12)

- a. So what gives? This shouldn't be. Things aren't supposed to be this way. This is not fair/right. This life should be more fair than it is if God's Word is true, shouldn't it?
  - b. Where does that leave me?
3. **Why should I be fair? (vv. 13-16)** – Now the psalmist gets brutally honest here, which I greatly appreciate.
    - a. Maybe this whole "leading a righteous life" thing isn't really for me. I'm trying and life is STILL HARD! I continue to feel like I'm being stricken and chastised [by God]
    - b. Ever feel like that? It kinda feels like driving in a blizzard or a dense fog, doesn't it? Nothing seems right and shouldn't some things seem right if I'm leading a righteous life?
    - c. (vv. 15-16) - It's good to pour out our vexation to God, but there's wisdom in wrestling through it with him before posting our feelings on Facebook.
  4. **Eternity is fair (vv. 17-20)** – In this section a corner is turned. The light bulb goes on and perspective is gained.
    - a. Perceived the end of the wicked: their life of prosperity is a dream. And they are in for a rude awakening.

- b. Principle: present realities ≠ eternal realities<sup>1</sup>
  - c. An eternal perspective is not only about rejoicing in the justice of God on evildoers, it's *first* about drawing close and being near to the LORD.
5. **Resting in God's eternal fairness (vv. 21-28)** – in these verses the psalmist jumps back to summarize where he was and where he is now.
- a. Embittered heart => senseless, ignorant beastliness
  - b. “Nevertheless I am continuously with you” – This is less about what Asaph did and more about what God did. Can you fathom the patience and power of God!
    - i. YOU have taken hold of my right hand
    - ii. YOU will guide me
    - iii. YOU will receive me to glory
  - c. You know what changed first for Asaph so his perspective could be recalibrated? His circumstance? Nope. His gaze. In order for him to discern the end of the wicked, he first needed to draw near to God in His sanctuary. We need that too, don't we? Our gaze needs to move off the blizzard, off the fog.

All this other stuff that's going on around me: the temporary success of the wicked, my current hardship? Not important. Instead, our gaze needs to shift onto the road. Onto God. The only thing that matters is knowing (experientially) the nearness of God. That's it! [Fog lights illustration]

And this is why Christ came to die for the sin that separates you from the only thing that matters: God. Not only did Christ come to die for us so that we can be near to God, Christ embodied what it was to live a life near to God in the face of “what shouldn't be.”

He is the strength of my heart. He is my portion. He is my road in my blizzarding life.

## CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

Because unmet expectations in this life can lead to disillusionment, right worship requires that we (1) acknowledge our stumblings, (2) draw near to God, and (3) shift our gaze to find ourselves satisfied in Him alone.

1. Where is your gaze today?
2. Does your soul long to be near to God? Is He your portion and refuge? Do you tell of all His works?

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<sup>1</sup> Tremper Longman III, *Psalms* in TOTC, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press: 2014)