

W504_Psalm_73.mp3

[00:00:02] Let us. Right. Our God and father. We do thank thee that we come into thy presence, not with glibness of speech. Not with a show of wisdom. Not with any pretense of understanding, but as children come to a father. And Lord, there's not a father ever lived on earth that has filled out that name. As thou doest to us. And so we come to thee with this holy boldness made ours through thy beloved son. I need that son of thine. We, thy children are fully accepted. I'm just. I care. Guided day by day. And we all see that if we learn our lesson this evening, it may be that precious one that whatever the outside circumstance may appear, nothing can separate us from God. Our Father, nothing can imperil our trust in him. Nothing can come our way apart from his consent. And so we ask thee for grace to be able to stand fast, hold fast, and wait patiently if needs be for thee. We pray our meditations upon thy word so that we may not only be sound in doctrine and sound in practice. But I have a sound mind in connection with the things that have to do with our life, our walk, our peace and circumstances. And we thank thee that thy word caters for every department of truth. It is true from the beginning and true right to the end. And so we commit ourselves in thy glorious presence this evening, believing for certain that everyone who comes to thy word with an open heart and a desire will get the answer of peace.

[00:02:05] Be pleased to give the answer of peace to everyone now who is listening and everyone who shall presently use this tape recording. That whatever else they may be in the teaching of thy word, they may experience that peace of God that passes all understanding. And these things we ask in the name and for the sake of him, who loved us, gave himself for us. The Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. The passage of Scripture I want to read this evening is the last chapter in the Book of Job, and that is chapter 42. Any difficulty in finding the Book of Job is immediately before the book of the Psalms. This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is number four of the series entitled Spotlight. And we've already had three of these before us. We are not necessarily confining ourselves to any one particular aspect of truth, for that's the very nature of a spotlight. We never know what's coming next. When you think of the scriptures going right back into the Old Testament, 2000 years ago, 3000 years ago, it might occur to a person and say, Well, how could a book of such antiquity have any bearing upon modern life? All the scientific advances, all the things that go to make up

our life now would perplex and be a mystery to anyone who lived right back before the days of Christ.

[00:03:52] True enough. But there are some things that remain unchanged and that is perplexities. Difficulties to interpret why this happens and why that happens. I've heard people almost not quite, but almost quote scripture, although they didn't believe it and know it. Why should this happen to me? What have I done? Never heard it, Friends. Perhaps you've said it yourself out loud or in your heart, and that is with us all the time. The problem and the answer. Now in the Book of Job, which we have read, we have two statements. He said in chapter 23, I look forward. He's not there. I look backward. I cannot find him on the right hand. On the left. You hide it himself. But he know is the way that I take. And in 19th chapter he says, I know that my redeemer live it. And I think if you've got those two texts as yours. You are a blessed people, if you can say with job in all the perplexity of his experiences. I know that my redeemer liveth. I think you could say. And he now is the way that I take. You'll then remember that James, who speaks about tribulation and temptation. He says, You've heard of the Patience of Job. Have you seen the End of the Lord? What? I want to take a little line like that this evening.

[00:05:35] The spotlight is not on Joe particularly, but it's on a man named Asaph. And he did write back in those early days writings of the Psalms and the psalm that we're going to consider is Psalm 73. Psalm 73. And the first thing which is necessary for us to do now, some of you know this altogether beforehand. But we must not assume that everybody does. So we start from the beginning that there is a word in this Psalm 73, in our authorized version. Which is translate in three different ways in the one Psalm. And although they are very similar, yet the ordinary English reader may not be hit by the fact that it says it three times over. So first of all, make sure that we've got this in the first verse, truly in the 13th verse verily, and the 18th verse. Surely, truly, verily, surely. Well, they're obviously very similar. Now, the next question is why are they introduced? Because a word is not really a thing that's in a dictionary. It's something which is in use and meaning. Why should he start off with a word? Truly? Surely obesity. Well, the man. Had been perplexed. The man was up against a problem. And this is what he writes as a preface. After it's all over. If you have ever written a book, you know full well that the preface is not written first or though it's printed first. The preface is written after the book is finished.

[00:07:30] So he says, Look, I'm now telling you, then I'll go over the ground with you and I'm going to suggest a more colloquial translation of these three words. Instead of saying truly and emphasizing truth, I've got to put it this way more as we should say it today. After all, are you look after all God is good to Israel. Even though such a sort of a clean heart, would you say that sounds as though he doubted it a bit? Well, look at the next verse. But as for me. My feet were almost gone. My steps had well nigh slipped. But after all, I've learned my lesson. I think presently, he says. Verse 13. After all, I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in Innocency for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened. Everybody. You see it? All that man is passing through an experience which many a child of God to take an echo. You believe God? You believe in the efficacy of prayer. You trust in the intercession of the risen Christ. I get circumstances pile up until you seem as though your fate is almost threatened. And if you sight it, you are listening to the. I've never heard such a thing. Well, I don't know whether to sympathise with you or be sorry for you because the generality of folks never go through this pilgrimage without having some of the experiences which are on that first pilgrimage of the people of Israel.

[00:09:22] Coming out with a high hand. The bed you see opening in front of them. The Bering Sea closing behind them and swallowing up their enemies. So they land on the other side and Egypt is finished. And they come. To the wells and there is no water. You think of that? Think of the shock after all that experience in a first aid wilderness. To be led by God. Pillar of cloud by day or night. Led by God. And the wells were empty. Then what was the next experience? They came to another set of wells and they were bitter. But what's God doing? Well, wait a minute. God said, take the branch of that tree and treat the waters with it. And the waters that were bitter became sweet. Now, as far as I can see, that's symbolic in its meaning. The bitterness of wilderness experiences are not going to be rectified by anything that man can do. But the tree. Throughout the Scripture continually has a reference to the work of Christ. Perhaps you know already that Peter never speaks of the cross of Christ, in spite of the fact that some people would think I'm making a mistake. You know, I never like a mistake or should I say hardly ever. Well, you know, but he doesn't. He speaks of the tree. The cross is spoken by Paul, the tree by Peter. And it means to us the cross.

[00:11:09] It's only when we appreciate the fact that we're a redeemed people and that we have been cut off from the world so far as trusting it to guide us and supply us that

we begin our pilgrim pathway on the right step. And so they did. Well, now God doesn't bring affliction after affliction upon us. The next thing is they came. To a plantation of 70 palm trees and 12 wells of water. And I was interested to hear our brother, Oscar Baker, on one of his fetes saying, there you are, the 70 nations there mentioned, and the 12th tribe people, Israel. The 12th tribe, people of Israel gave the water to the nations represented by the palm tree. So you see there is abundance in the scriptures in its types that we can see almost at a glance where once there pointed out to us. And so we go on through the whole of that wilderness journey. The temptations in the wilderness were not temptations to sin. They were temptations to trust. And sometimes you'll discover that there are temptations in the Bible have been misunderstood. The temptations were. Can God supply in a wilderness? Can He give bread from heaven? Katie, give flesh to eat. You see? And when that begins to gnaw at the spiritual vitals of a person, then his walk becomes shaky and his faith is dim. But we come back to this Psalm 73 for here's a man writing his only experience with a little touch of guidance for ourselves afterwards.

[00:13:02] So come back again then. Psalm 73. But as for me, my feet were almost gone. Watch that, friends. We shall see in a guide coming presently. Your feet almost gone. But let's be. Let's be true friends. I never have gone completely. Sometimes the father allows us to do a little snip. To help us to remember that if we weren't holding his hand, we should have gone completely. That's a part of our drilling. That's a part of our necessary lesson. But they almost is a precious thought, isn't it? Nobody with their hand in the father father's hand will go completely over the edge. Almost. But not quite. As for me, my feet were almost gone. My steps had well nigh slipped. Well, nigh slipped. He's not boasting now, you see. He's beginning to say, if God had not held me, I should have been just like the wicked. Steps would have gone well. Nice. Slipped. And why was he in this attitude? Well, friends, even in this life, you don't walk with your feet. You walk with your mind. If you don't believe that and you don't think where you're going, the feet will sometimes betray that you're not in command. And so here my feet, my steps had well nigh slipped for her. For her is the reason I was envious. At the foolish. That was the thing that was upsetting this man.

[00:14:57] He was now beginning to lose control, slipping. And. Almost gone. Simply because envy and entered into his heart. Why does he envy? Why was he envious of the foolish. He explains it in the next sentence. When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Now, I think. If we were honest and look back over our lives, most of us would say at some time or another this thought has entered, if only for a moment. Look at me. Look at the things I've Abbey to put up with. And yet I'm trying to stand for God and His Word and look at so and so. He is getting more than heart could wish. But afterwards, would you sit back and think, especially in the presence of God? Yes. I couldn't end with him now, but for the moment it has an effect, let's be honest. I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Say there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. I suppose that means to say that even in the hour of death, some of them have gone without apparently a tremor. They are not in trouble as other men. Neither are they plagued. Like other. Therefore, pride compasses them about as a chain and violence covering them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness. That's not a very good thing to happen to a person. But it seems to indicate that they were not abstemious. Their eyes stand out in light with fatness.

[00:17:06] And I may have more than heart could wish. They asserted it. They got more than they want. And he is this man saying, I've sought to walk with God. I've sought to stand for the truth. And look at me. They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression. They speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens. And that's very true today, friends. This idiom out of those who write and speak or even live, who now defy the heavens that declare the glory of God. And the book that he has left to buy to guide us. They sit down at the gates, the heavens and their tongue walk through the earth. These are figures of speech which I think we could appreciate. Pride, Arrogancy. We've got it all. We know all there is to know who's going to intimidate us. Why should we be afraid? Therefore his people return hither and waters of a full cup are rung out unto them. And they say. How does God know? And is there knowledge in the most high? They taught them You're trusting in a vapor. Perhaps they don't say, How does God know? They may say there is no God. Or perhaps if they admit there is a God, he is so far off he doesn't care. And you could easily sit down with a person and say, Look, there are so many million in the Earth today. And this earth is so small comparatively with the universe.

[00:18:57] That it has been likened to a grain of sand on the seashore with just a little mark on it. You got to go and find it. You say that exaggeration? Well, they've got a vast universe and God is upholding it all. I get that self-same God says. The other sparrow falls to the earth without the father's knowledge. And it even, you know, gives you that

little bit of arithmetic. Is an odd sparrow, by the way. It reckoned up. At odds that are thrown in if you buy so many and even the odd spare. Is known by the father. Anybody listening to me who thinks they're a bit of an odd sparrow? Well, if you don't think so, perhaps somebody else does. But still, there's comfort there. Friends. The Odd Sparrow. Is known by the God who upholds heaven and earth and a vast distances. That we cannot comprehend. So he says. They say, How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the most high? Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. They increase in riches. They prosper. In the world. But this poor world and all its riches is doomed. There is a prosperity which is associated with a world to come. He shall see his seed. He shall. Prosper. He should be satisfied. But that's in the day that's coming. We are journeying home. We're not there yet. And so he says again, the thing that troubled him in verse 13.

[00:20:54] Verily. Now this is. Well, he says, this is where I reached after all. I seem to have cleansed my heart in vain. Look at all these people. They're standing out in fatness. They have more than heart could wish. They got a multiplication of riches. And I seem to have been forgotten for all the day long. Have I been plagued. And, you know, sometimes when a person least thinks it, he expresses something which is true. And that's what Isaac did, he said. All day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. Chastened. Jason, where have I read about that? Well, in the epistle to the Hebrews, which ISAF hadn't read, of course, but it refers to the same person, The same Lord. The same book. He says, if your children and you've got a father, you'll be chastened. What? I don't know how far that's true in every family. But it was in the family in which I was brought up. Friends. I had a father, and this particular person was chastened. Occasionally, I'll give my father credit that he didn't like doing it, but sometimes he said, I've saved this up so long, you've got to have it. And I did. And the scripture says no chastening for the present seems joyous. And I can agree with that too, because I would naturally have dodged the chastening if I could. But he says. But afterwards? Afterwards, it yielded the peace of all fruits Of righteousness.

[00:22:36] To whom? To those who are exercised thereby. So after I thought over the chastening I had. I thought I better mend my ways and not do that anymore. Well, that's only the very slight way of saying what we have to do. Repent. So the very fact that this man could say he was chastened. Made to say that he had a father. It's the unchastened child that has it all his own way. And naturally, a child who's got a father

who says, No, no, no, you don't do that. He's envying this youngster out in the street that does whatever he likes. But only if that child only knew. The one that's out in the street doing whatever he likes is on the road to perdition. But the child who has a father and stops him sometimes is being guided and ultimately blessed. So this man's coming to it. You see the words come into his heart. For all day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. And if I say I will speak thus, if I talk like this, behold, I should offend against the generation of my children. And when I thought to know it, it was too painful for me. Shall we try this confession? He up to a certain point. We've been walking with him because most of us can sympathise with him. Now he comes to a stop. He makes a definite statement that a change.

[00:24:16] Was too painful for me. Until. Until what? Until you turned over a new leaf. I said no. Until what? Until I went into the sanctuary of God. Friends. That's the only answer to life's riddles. There's nobody else could answer them. There's no other place to find an answer. But if you could only go into the sanctuary of God and in that presence, confess your weakness, admit your defeat, and ask for pardon. Peace and victory. It's there, but nowhere else. This is redemption now being applied to this man's disabilities. Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I therein. Surely is this word again, after all. Thou did set them in slippery places. Thou cast them down into destruction? How are they brought into desolation? As in a moment. They are utterly consumed with terrors. This is a different aspect, isn't it, now? Just now. He was murmuring because they seemed to have it all their own way. Now he sees it from the angle of God. Now he sees it from the Tabernacle. The mercy seat. The atonement. The redemption side. And he's got a very different story. They are brought to desolation as in a moment. They are utterly consumed with terrors and as a dream when one awakes so. Oh, Lord, when thou wakest, thou should despise their image. A difficult verse to put into modern terms. It almost looks forward to the day of resurrection. And in that day the choice will be very different from what the world would expect in that day.

[00:26:27] Thou shalt despise their image when one awakes. Thus, my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins. The reins are mainly to do with the kidneys. It's a rather remarkable fact that the various organs of the body are more intimately linked together with the person than we are apt to do today. Some may be puzzled as to why it speaks of the bowels of Jesus Christ. Well, it's only because the battles are so

intimately related with our feelings, as most of us know it sometimes. And I think most of you have been told the story, which I'll mention again because of this. Some years ago when I was at West Kirby in the home of Dr. Moss that many years ago. I was sitting in the sitting room and Dr. Moss had his wife there and she was sitting the other side and a knock came from the door and a lady put her head round the door who was not only a patient but a friend. And she looked across at me and she said, Oh, we needn't be reserved in front of you professional men. And why she went 19 to the dozen about stuff I ought not have heard, you see. Well, when I did get a chance to break in, I said, Do you know the psalm which says, Wake up my glory? She looked at me.

[00:28:00] I said, THATRILLIONALLY is referring to your liver. The word weight of glory is in the scriptures, and the liver is the heaviest organ of the body, like the crude word for the lungs is the lights, because they're the lightest organ in the body. And when you say Wake Up My Glory, he was referring to the figure that is attached to glory in the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament. Wait. Where she got puzzled over that. And when the doctor called to visit her, she said, Who was that? And when she discovered that estate. She had a touch of humor and she was a wealthy woman. So she said that £15 and says, give him that for his fee. Now, don't you try that on again. You may not get the fee, but you see it was money stressing this, that those organs of the body that God has given us are all making up this living soul, this living person. And although we don't talk about them in ordinary, everyday conversation, they've all got their place. And so he says here. So that's my heart was grieved. Now we're so used to using the word heart that we don't realize that's one of the many terms as someone parodied once, he says, the young man said to his sweetheart, I love you with all my pump. Well, that's not quite so romantic, is it? But that the heart is a gorgeously wonderful pump with valves and in and out movements of liquid.

[00:29:34] But it also represents affection. So the liver can refer to something which is of weight, and the bowels can refer to something of intense feeling. And so we are body, soul and spirit, and we ought not to divide them with a complete whole in the mind of God with all this interchange of feeling. And so he says here. So foolish was I? And ignorant. Now he's talking about himself again. Friends. I was as a beast before thee, always condemning himself now for his attitude of mind. We won't interfere with him, God knows. But he's got a right about turn now, hasn't he? I think you're right about turn for every one of us. Whenever we're up to our neck in trouble to go into the sanctuary of

God. And if you'd only go there, then you'll get the answer of peace. If you go anywhere else, you get the answer of perplexity. So we go on. Nevertheless, here's one thing that's true, whether it's Old Testament or new. That God never leaves us. We may leave him. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee continually, all the time. What? All the time. You were worried and perplexed and grumbling. And murmuring and afraid? Yes. I may not experienced it, but it's a fact. In the New Testament we have these words I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. But it doesn't follow that the person to whom that said will never leave the Lord or forsake him for a time.

[00:31:19] Because that's happened over and over again. But not him. So he says, I am continually with thee. Thou hast hold me by my right hand. Don't you see why the difference between him and these other poor wretches? My feet had almost gone. My steps had well nigh slipped. But surely thou didst put them in slippery places and cast them down. What a difference. Always said if I had my deserts, I'd have gone down with them in that slippery slope. But I've continued here with thee. And was held by hand. And that's the reason why I scuttled the feet and slipped a little bit. But. I never let go of him. And he never let go of me. This is true for the day frames, not only in day. It's truth for all time till the day come when there are no more possibilities of slips or slidings in beings or whatnot. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee. Thou hast holding me by my right hand. And it begins to take courage. And he looks forward now. So we may all, from today's experiences, learn the lessons and then put them into practice. Thou shall guide me with thy counsel. He'd been rather guided a bit by his own observations. But he wasn't able to put two and two together in the sense that God could. He came to wrong conclusions.

[00:32:59] He didn't see far enough. He didn't know the depths to which these other folks would descend. He didn't know the misery that may be associated with eyes standing out in fatness and more than heart could wish. We only see the externals. I'll often think of the old chap sitting at his garden gate and somebody trying to make him a bit envious as a very lovely motor car went sliding by. And he said. God is my father. Christ is my savior. Heaven is my home. They can have the rest. It's nice to have these other things in this life, but. They're incidental. They can have the rest. And so here he says. Thou shall guide me with thy counsel. And what afterwards? Afterward receive me to glory. What a change has come over this man. Complaining and murmuring and wandering and envying the wicked. And now he says. Thou shall guide me with thy

counsel. But if he's going to be guided by the counsel of God, even though his foot slips a bit, he's safe. He's on the right direction. And afterward. When it's all over. Receive me to glory. Well, no member of the Church of the one body can say more than that. For that's our hope that when Christ, who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory. I don't say it's the same glory. So there's a glory of one calling and another, but it's much the same in parallel.

[00:34:43] Again, he expresses a truth which he learned by going into the sanctuary of God, whomever in heaven. But the. And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. You're just saying the very opposite. From what? You were troubled about all this, as I know. But that was because I was in the wrong place. There's still plenty of riches enjoyed by the wicked. They're still immune from many sufferings that I shall have to endure. Perhaps, but always, he said. I wouldn't change places with them now for anything. He said, in spite of all that. There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. He satisfied at last filled with a satisfaction which is anticipating the day of glory, when it will be wonderfully true. He says My flesh and my heart faileth. He recognized that to know boasting here is there but all remember the buts in Scripture. God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For lo they that are far from thee shall perish. Thou has destroyed all them that go abhorring from thee. Horrible word, But what a light it throws upon those who are far away. Now he comes to the end. But it is good for me to draw near to God. It's good for you to friends as well. And for me. I have put my trust in the Lord God. That I may declare all thy works.

[00:36:26] And so he's not only going to be satisfied and sit down, he's going to be satisfied and stand up and tell others. And that's the way the witness goes. A person who has never experienced any of these things can never quite assure the one who is suffering that what he says is not empty words. But the word sympathy is the word. Soon, together with Patti, means to feel like pathology and so on. It means to suffer together. So if you have been passing through any strange experience, trying experience, and you have received this consolation by at last going into the presence of God in the sanctuary of God and being assured. Then you can speak out of a full heart. So would you look at Psalm 73? Just remember those three occasions. Surely. Verily and truly. For they are the keys that open the book. And the book is a well worth is well worth our study for it's true for all time until we are received unto glory. Now we bring this meeting to a close by singing hymn Number six No Future but Glory. Lord Jesus,

have we? How bright is the prospect of being with thee? Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy to the only wise God, our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.