

W511_Why_did_this_happen_to_me.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a tape recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is number 11 of a series entitled Spotlight. This title was definitely purposely chosen. Because it is not always possible for folks to. Continue the series unbroken. And so may possibly say, well, it's no good me going to that meeting where they have the tapes and this is an attempt to meet that I think necessarily requirement so that they may feel that although like links in the chain they may be in some measure linked yet each one can be taken separately. It so happens that this evening this is a leak. A definite link with number ten. Number ten of the spotlight was held last time. And it was that perennial question which most of us have met and some of us have found in our own hearts. Why should this happen to me? Have we sought to show that in the Scriptures it tells you that God had an end in view. You have heard of the Patience of Job. You have seen the end of the Lord or as it is put in the epistle to the Hebrews. No, chastening is pleasant. Nevertheless, afterwards, it has a purpose, an object, and a goal. Well, I felt somehow that the spotlight was turning attention to the experience of a man who has written about this. Because it's one thing to say the end is the thing that makes it tolerable. It's another thing to say we know how we can attain to that end and the knowledge of it.

[00:01:52] So that will be more or less the subject which ISAF in the 73rd Psalm will help us to reach. So will you turn with me to the 73rd Psalm? And written by a man named Assaf, who has written others beside this. And the first thing. The first thing that I want you to note is, is this. There is a word that occurs three times in this town. Translated by three different words, but all very comparable. I mean, as much as ISAF has used the same word three times to divide this experience up, that is surely the first thing that we should note because it's a part of our witness. That we build our doctrine upon what God has said and what God has said is the actual word used, however good a translation may be. So will you look at the these verses? The first one Truly. And then you will find the same word in verse 13, verily. And it is repeated for the third time, surely. Now, you see, he didn't say those three different words. He said one word three times over. Now, I'm not suggesting that the literal translation of this word should be what I'm going now to suggest, but in the sort of way in which we might speak fairly freely in our English idiom, you get the sense of it by using this word after all. Now, after all, in our use of the word means to say, you know, I've had to change my opinion.

[00:03:43] He said, After all, God is good to Israel. But you may say to him, but surely, Asaph. You belong to the Hebrew people. You have all the testimony of the way in which he blessed Abraham and led the children of Israel out and brought them into the land and gave them their King David. Oh, he said, I wasn't quite sure about it. After all, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. Would you say, Well, if he's good to Israel, surely he would be. Are you going to say good? We mustn't say that must be. Surely he would be good to those who have a clean heart. He said that's just the trouble. That's just the thing that puzzles me. So he goes on, he says, As for me, my feet were almost gone. My steps had well nigh slept. So you see it come to a point when he was losing grip. And the trouble was, as we were going to see, he was envious when he looked at the wicked and they didn't seem to be judged and puzzled or perplexed as some of God's children are. I don't know whether you are listening to me are saying, Oh, I've never been in that position. Friend. You are an exception to the general rule. For this, very few of us can look back on our lives and say we haven't sometimes wondered why this should happen to me.

[00:05:12] Well, that's what he's dealing with. And isn't it good to think that God hasn't given us? A book to study where every body that is absolutely perfect. We shouldn't find very much echo, should we? We are not glad that Abraham stooped to tell a white lie, but he did. He said, You know, if these people in Egypt know that I'm your husband, they won't bite. Off with my head to take you. Now you say you're my sister, for you are my sister. Can't you see it? Have you never done it yourself? Friends. You got near it sometimes, possibly when you have been in a fix. There's Abraham, who believed almost the most incredible thing that God had said, suddenly revealing that he wasn't absolutely spotlessly perfect then. And that we think of a man like David. The wonderful way in which that man has been used of God in some of his songs. But look at the way that man fell. Murder and adultery. Committed by the man who was chosen to be the king of Israel, a man after God's own heart. So you see, it does us good not to be glad that people sin and people fall. But those who did sin and those who did fall can nevertheless be restored. For if that weren't a possibility, there's very little hope for any of us. So he said, After all, after all, my cogitations and wanderings and perplexities, after all, God is good to Israel.

[00:06:58] Even the statues are of a clean heart. But as for me. And noticed the change. As for me, I said I wasn't always quite sure. My feet were almost gone. We shall notice

presently that he'd be so glad when he said almost. He didn't. He never absolutely fell right away, for somebody was holding his hand whether he knew it or not. But my feet were almost gone. My steps had well nigh slipped and he said, I'll tell you why I was envious. You read the New Testament. It gives a warning to those who are envious and covetous, those who think that suffering in this world is a strange thing. Peter told them It wasn't a strange thing. He said, It's happening to your brethren in the world. And one of the reasons that we saw last time was that there's an indication in the Scriptures that we're living in a world where there's a war on. And we happened to be here in the midst of this battle that's going on between right and wrong. And one day. The prince of this world is to be cast out and his angels with him. And the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. And all this cogitation and wonder will be over. But meanwhile, we must remember he is the prince of this world and the God of this age.

[00:08:28] And there are no light titles. You're told that even Michael the Archangel in the presence of this one, Durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said the Lord rebuked thee. We are deploying into the hands of the evil one if we minimize him and we don't want to be always talking about him. Devil doped but is a fat. And this man said, my steps almost went. He's got to tell you. He knows why presently. But he's got to get somewhere before he gets that assurance. And you and I have got to get there and know it for ourselves. Otherwise, we shall many a time wake up and discover we are more or less walking in the steps of Asaph when he said. I began to wonder. He said I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. And you can't close your eyes. I'm not going to use anyone's particular name. But in the newspapers today, a certain person who was in parliament. And concerning whom there were some very shady things said has come into millions of pounds. And you might say, well, look at that. The wicked prosper. Yes, but you see, it's only for a brief period. Until that day comes. And then joy, real, transparent, unalloyed joy cometh in the morning. The other part of that text, I must quote, of course, weeping may endure for a night. Don't say it must, but it may.

[00:10:15] Weeping may endure for a night. But joy cometh in the morning. So it says the reason why I was envious. There are no bands in their death. On their strength is firm. They're not in trouble as other men. And one of the things I believe we noticed in the reference in the epistle to the Hebrews when it said about chastening. It says that

it's the father that chastens the child. And if you have no father chastening you, you may be illegitimate children. And you see a little child who is under the discipline of his father may be envying the little ragamuffin out there that nobody bothers about at all. But there's an afterwards with regard to that. Follow those two children and see them until at last they attain manhood. And then you will see that nevertheless, afterwards, it yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who exercise thereby. So we have here they're not in trouble as other men. Neither are they plagued as other men. Therefore, Pride compasses him about as a chain and violence covers them as a garment. It all dressed up with his little brief authority. The chain and the garment. And many of them are in high places and many of them ruled with rigor. The true child of God. But once we learn the lesson that he's here. We do not envy them. And we'll go on to let these men tell us how he came to his conclusion.

[00:12:05] He goes on to speak about them further that I stayed out with fatness. They have more than heart could wish. There I stand out with fatness. What a picture of the bloated one who seems to be gathering to himself all the produce of the earth. There are so many whose eyes are standing out because of famine and disease and want. But there are these apparently with nothing to stop them from getting all the best that the world can give to them. They are corrupt. They speak wickedly concerning oppression. They speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens and their tongue walketh through the earth. You could see these are the boasters, the blasphemers, the ones who do not submit to any control. They are the masters. Therefore, his people return hither and waters of full cup are rung out to them. The waters of a full cup are rung out to them. They don't get away with it like these people do. They're not in trouble like these people are or these people are not in trouble like they are. I mean, at the same. And so it protects them. It perplexes man. And they say, How does God know? There is a feeling of being forsaken. There is a feeling that. The big left. To be forgotten. How does God know? And is there knowledge in the most high? Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. They increase. Enriches. They prosper and they increase.

[00:14:04] I have met you before and I was glad to think of the response of the old chap who was sitting at his garden gate. Just a little cottage, just a little pittance. Very, very little to show. And he drew his attention to the folks who were going by in their cars and enjoying their life and everything. And he said, Oh, well, he said, God is my father.

Heaven is my home. I can have the rest. We are very glad of the amenities of life. But don't let us. Wear them as feathers. Let us walk humbly with our God and walk lightly. And this man endured this. And then he said, I had a great difficulty. He said, if I say I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. And when I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. And I looked at Moffatt's translation of this. And sometimes by putting it in a little different language, it helps you. He puts it this way. I had been faithless to my family. So I thought of it, thinking to fathom it. I thought of it, thinking to fathom it. But surely it surely did trouble me. Till I found out God's secret. Viewing their latter end. And that's where we've come at last. Then understood I their end. You remember we were speaking about the end for the Believer. Well, these boasters, these wealthy ones, these wicked ones, they also have an end.

[00:16:10] And he said, I began to see that I was envying that which was passing. And I had within me that which is the evidence of the permanent. So now we come to the. Next occasion. He says in verse 13, the next occasion of this word translated verily or truly or surely, when he said, I looked at all this prosperity and the wicked getting away with it, you know, I came to this conclusion. Verily, after all, I'm going to suggest that rendering again. After all, I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in Innocency. What's the good of it all is it does seem to be the evidence that God cares or knows. In fact, the question is now being mooted. Doth God know? Is there knowledge in the most high? And then, as I said just now, he used one of the very words which contain the answer. Verse 14, For all the day long have I been plagued and chastened. Every morning. And the New Testament says if you have a father, you must expect to be chastened. And it also says now I know no chastening at the time is grievous, is joyous, but rather grievous. And I don't know whether you were ever bad boys and girls when you were young. But I know what it was to have so many stripes that Mother couldn't get rid of them. When I was in the bath at the end of the week.

[00:18:00] And when I receive that chastening at that time, I didn't think it was something to be joyous about. Nevertheless, afterward, I didn't do the same things again that I got that latter paid for. And the very fact that I had a father who took me in hand. Was a blessing that I didn't realize at first, but I do now. And so the chastening is a part of the discipline that you and I must expect if we are walking through this wicked world and we have a father who is watching over us, that we don't get contaminated. There's an afterwards in store. And then he said. Fury. After all, it dawned upon him. I

understood. I understood their end. I look far enough? After all, thou did set them in slippery places. Do you notice? He said my feet had well nigh slipped. But look at these people now that I've been envying to their feet. Well, nigh slip. Let's go on. Surely thou did set them in slippery places. Thou casts them down. A destruction. Who is it? My feet will now slip. But these. They went right down to destruction. No hand was holding them up in the slippery path that they were walking. All friends is a difference. We may be walking in the dark. We may be walking in a way that we know not, but there is one who walks with us who has given us this statement. I will never leave thee.

[00:19:48] Neither will I forsake thee. And although I've said it before, I say it again. That in that Greek statement there is piled together five negatives which would not be possible in English but is allowable in the original. So to help us to realize that we should never be in this predicament. So he says, After all, I envied them, didn't die. And now I see they were in slippery places and the cast down to destruction. How are they brought into desolation? As in a moment. They are utterly consumed with the terrors. Harris Ben's viewpoint is changing, isn't it? At one moment, he's envying the very people. The next one is seeing a bit more clearly that they're not to be envied. That is the position which they might envy if they only knew. And what we want to say all I want to get to that, too. I want to know where I can get that lesson. So we'll go on and follow the teaching that Assaf has started and continue with his psalm. How were they brought into desolation? As in the moment, they are utterly consumed with terrors as a dream where one awake it so. Oh, Lord, when thou wakest thou should despise their image. A very difficult verse to interpret. And this researcher say, you see, when that day comes, when that way that they date, that day comes the day of resurrection. And standing in his presence will be the real thing.

[00:21:31] And the rest of it will be set aside as a bad dream. Thus, my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins. I just wonder whether some folks know where their reins are in the Old Testament use of the term. Not that it matters. So I suppose very much. But it's the kidneys. And there's another word that sometimes we haven't quite realized, and that is that it speaks about the liver under the title of weight because the liver is the heaviest organ of the body. But it says, Wake up my glory. The word glory. There is the weight. Wake up my liver. And the river has two meanings The one who has the liver as an organ in his body and the person who lives as one said. Is life worth living? It depends upon the liver, physically and spiritually. But that's by the way,

the rains are the kidneys. So foolish was I and ignorant. I was as a beast before thee. Now, when a man gets the deposition. He's brought very low. But possibly we have to be brought pretty low in order that we may be raised up in the true sense or we see how wrong I was. To be envious of these people. How wrong I was to think that he had forgotten me. How wrong I was to take that attitude. Nevertheless. I am continually with it. Always coming back, friends. Nevertheless, in spite of all I've said, I'm so sorry for it.

[00:23:23] I'm continuing continually with thee, and thou hast holding me by my right hand. He said, I now know why I didn't slip completely as these others did. I almost slipped. But he was always with me. He never left me. He was continually holding me by my right hand. And so we have the restoration of this man. To his full trust. In the God that he doubted for a time. Well, we haven't quite got to the end of the story. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee. Thou hast hold on me by my right hand. Now he takes a sort of vow. He takes a sort of new resolution. Thou shalt guide me. With thy counsel. You see, he'd been objecting. To the counsel of God that it was regulating his life. He was comparing himself with others that were not comparable. But he said now. I take this new point of view. Thou shalt guide me. We thought cancel. And then what? They're getting to the word that is the key word in Hebrews. Nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth up the fruit of righteousness. Afterward or friends. I think one of the things we remember is so far as you and I are concerned, as an afterwards, if this were the be all and the end all here. As as he put the one who said that this is that this life would be all at the end. All here we jump the life to come.

[00:25:18] But he says there is a life to come. What's all the difference? There is something afterwards and when it afterwards comes. Darkness is dispelled. Death is destroyed. We find ourselves in the image and likeness of our risen Savior. Oh, what a difference. Then that little pathway and its little sufferings will appear. Here are the apostle. He could speak about sufferings, couldn't he? But if ever a man gives us a list, that's almost impossible to believe, it's the list of the things that men went through. And yet he said our light affliction, which is but for a moment. Think of it. Beaten with rods. Shipwrecked. Day and night he been in the deepest said in prisons often so on robbers whatnot. Our light affliction which is but for a moment. Why could he say that? Was he insensitive? No. He'd learned perspective. I want all of you to that, because I've had some struggles with that in the early days. But he saw spiritual perspective. He says in comparison with what the Lord has stored for me, said Paul, the affliction is light and in

comparison with it, eternity it. It's but for a moment. And not only so, it is under his care. The light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory. Notice I left out the end there. It isn't in the original. And there is a figure of speech which is called Polysyndeton. That means many ends piling them up one on top of the other.

[00:27:18] And the other side of the story is Asyndeton no ends at all. He goes straight away through it worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory. You see the light affliction? The weight of glory. How can I be compared? But for a moment, eternal. Oh, Paul, you've been where I went. Yes, he said I have. So let's get there, Fred, shall we? Thou shall guide me with thy counsel. And afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? Well, if I could say that. What about ourselves? The risen and ascended Christ whom we are own and acknowledge as our redeemer and Savior. He is said to be at the right hand of God. Ever living to make intercession for us. And if we are going to take that as it's written, we are never. After these care. We may not always be sure or always be conscious. But we are never forgotten. He knows the way that I take. And when he hath tried me, says the scripture writer. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. So there's an end, you see all the time that has God has in view, which if only we can see, will stop a good many of our wanderings and murmurings. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. Haste hath you have changed your opinion on Earth? There were these folks who were piling up their money bags and you were envious with them.

[00:29:18] I always said Yes, I know, I know. I've learned something. And so we get these three words. Truly. Verily. Surely, after all, that did set them in slippery places. My flesh and my heart failure. Yes, I say it's good to recognize the weakness of self because if we don't, we're apt to put our trust in our own ideas, our own plans. But when we are conscious of how weak we are and that he is our strength even as our redeemer, my flesh and my heart findeth. But God is the strength of my heart and my portion. Forever. You see, he was looking at these folks with their portion. Oh, he said, I see this. They have their portion in this life. But what? What's that when compared with. He who is by portion forever. Whenever we come to the crisis. How did he. How did he get to know this? Where did he go to get this instruction? Let's read on. For now, they. They that are far from thee shall perish. There is destroyed all them that go warring from thee. That. In contrast with that. But. It is good for me to draw near to God. Now, we

know in the New Testament how that is opened up. We have boldness of access into the presence of God through the faith of Jesus Christ.

[00:31:14] We have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. The middle wall of partition is broken down, the veil is moved, and we can go now in a sense that Isaac never could. For he was dealing with a shadow tabernacle and we are dealing with the true. But nevertheless the shadow had its at its meaning. And when at last he said these words. It is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God. That I may declare all thy works. And the only place that ISF could use the terms to draw near. Was that place that God had already prescribed through Moses. The holiest of all. Is it there? Will I meet with thee and commune with thee from above? The mercy seat and the mercy seat to us is retranslated in the New Testament by the word atonement or propitiation. And we have access into the presence of God Himself through the mediation of our Savior. And it's there we sit in His presence and we get the answer to his problem and to our own. So there we have this song, a sort of second statement from the one that we've been dealing with in our last Spotlight study. Why should it occur to me, What have I done that this should happen to me? Here's this man comparing his lot, apparently with the wicked who prospered until I went. Until I went into the presence of God.

[00:33:08] Then understood. I. He ain't this isn't this isn't going into a college or an institute or a school. This is going into the presence of God. And there this particular understanding will be attained. I don't need, I'm sure to press the moral. That when we have these problems, as we must beat them in life. There. Our otter is waiting for us. If we compare ourselves with those around us, possibly we may sometimes be moved with envy. If we love, we think our footsteps. Our footsteps almost slipped and we compare ourselves with them. We should be glad that he holds us still by the right hand. I did, would we go into that presence and realize we have access there through the blood of our savior who died, that we might be forgiven. Who died. That we might know him and rejoice in his love. Here and experience it forever. I think we can look upon the poor, wicked, wasteful, wanton world with different sight. Instead of envying them, we say, I couldn't think of changing place with them for anything that this world could give. All, may the Lord grant unto us that if we've entered into in any sympathetic understanding of Isaac's original problems, as most of us must, may we go with him

with his surely or truly or verily these three times and say, After all, after all, it God is good to Israel, to those who are of a clean heart.