

Psalms: Gardens of Prayer

Psalm 73: The Garden of Learning

Psalm 73 = Garden of Learning = Song/Prayer for the *Head* (Intellect)

- Prayer is a place for thinking and listening.
- Prayer will help us think more clearly and accurately.

Psalm 73:

1 Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, *my feet had almost slipped*; I had nearly lost my foothold. 3

For *I envied the arrogant* when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.

5 They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills. 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. 7 From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits.

8 They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. 9 Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. 10 Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. 11 They say, "How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?" 12 This is what the wicked are like--always carefree, they increase in wealth.

13 Surely *in vain have I kept my heart pure*; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. 14 All day long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning.

15 If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed your children.

16 *When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me*

17 till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

18 Surely *you place them on slippery ground*; you cast them down to ruin. 19 How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! 20 As a dream when one awakens, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.

21 When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, 22 *I was senseless and ignorant*; I was a brute beast before you.

23 *Yet I am always with you*; you hold me by my right hand. 24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

27 Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. 28 But as for me, **it is good to be near God.** I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Prayer: The Garden of Learning (Psalm 73)

I. Orientation: God is _____ to us!

He desires us to be _____ in heart! (v. 1)

The Question: *Why, then, is the world in such a mess?*

Two possible answers:

A. Something is wrong with _____.

B. Something is wrong with _____...

1. what is _____ us. We need *education* to outgrow our animal past

2. what is _____ us. We need *freedom, money & power* to get all the things we dream for our future satisfaction.

3. what is _____ us. We need to be _____ because we are sinners.

The Problem: *We tend toward disorientation in our thinking.*

The Solution: _____!

It affirms the basic Judeo-Christian orientation: God is _____!

II. Disorientation: Our “feet are slipping”... (v. 2)

A. Toward the _____: They have it made! (vv. 3-10, 12)

B. Toward _____: We waste our time being good! (vv. 13-14)

1. We know we are wise.

2. We know we are owed something.

C. Toward _____: He doesn't _____ or else He doesn't _____. (v.11)

III. New Orientation

A. Toward the _____

1. They are in big trouble. They are headed for ruin! (vv. 18-19)

2. They are like a dream. Their life and values are “unreal”... (v.20)

B. Toward _____

1. “I was / am... grieved... embittered... senseless... ignorant...vv.21-22

2. We are in need and in debt, not wise and owed.

C. Toward _____

1. He is with us always, holding on to us! (v. 23)

2. He guides us out of our disorientation and on to glory! (v.24)

3. God is our real need and passionate desire, now and forever! (v.25)

4. When we _____, God doesn't! (v.26)

IV. The Turning Point, The Special _____ of Reorientation...

Real understanding comes out of God's _____. (vv.15-17)

1. not instead of human effort but in addition to it!

2. as we meet with God in worship

3. as we meet with God in prayer!

a. In prayer we learn where to go: The _____ is my refuge.

b. In prayer we learn what is best: To be _____ God. (v.28)

Our human tendency toward *disorientation* in our thinking--calling the wrong things good and desiring what isn't, making trivial things most important--will not be remedied by thinking harder or better but by the unfolding revelation of God which comes to those thinking hard and listening well in the “sanctuary of God”, the *Garden of Prayer* which is always the *Garden of Learning*.