

# Asaph's struggle

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[ 0 : 00 ] To draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the poet of Psalm 73, got confused by the contrast of life.

Now, with his lips he confessed that God is good, but in his heart it was different.

In his heart he envied the ungodly. He saw that they lived in prosperity. The ungodly, the wicked, they seemed to be carefree and unconcerned about tomorrow.

For them life is now. And now seems to be forever. And they are doing well. Their wealth and power increased.

[ 1 : 06 ] Yes, the wicked seem to enjoy greater freedom. Greater freedom of movement and speech. They are their own boss. They decide for themselves what is good.

Yes, they have a great life. Being able to afford themselves a lot of things. They seem to live above the frustrations of life.

The life of the poet was completely different. He lived in difficult circumstances. He had to cope with the adversities of life. Now, Psalm 73 doesn't give special details regarding those adverse circumstances the poet experienced.

The aim of Psalm 73 is to present to us a general picture of a believer who faces the well-known temptation of looking at a greener grass over the fence.

What is now God's direction when his people are in such a mood? Let's listen to his word this afternoon.

[ 2 : 23 ] And I administer to you his words with this theme. That God makes a man of little faith seek his strength with him. And we have done three thoughts.

God makes him seek his strength with him. First in prayer. It is that first line. It is good to draw near to God. In the second place.

Also the Lord makes him to seek his strength in confession. The second line. That I have made the Lord Yahweh my refuge. And in the third place.

That the Lord makes this man of little faith to seek his strength in praise. I may tell, he says, of all thy works. So God makes a man of little faith seek his strength with him in prayer, in confession, and in praise.

Brothers and sisters, the psalmist started to compare his own situation with those of others. Who go their own ways.

[ 3 : 33 ] People who pursue their own plans. People who live for themselves. Their own goals. For their own interests. And he thought those people are well off.

It seems that they always get what they want. The psalmist didn't. And so in self-pity, he came to envy the success and the well-being of ungodly and arrogant people.

And he started to think. No, he won't say it out loud. He thought it's advantageous to live a life for self.

And so engaged in self-pity and questioning God's justice. In a way, he was filled with resentment. And in that situation, he could have easily joined the ungodly.

Through his little faith, because that is what it boiled down to. It was his whole thinking of his little faith. Looking at the things he saw.

[ 4 : 46 ] This poet came in great danger. In a situation of being overpowered by little faith, he almost, he said, he almost slipped. Wounded up.

Fell away from the Lord. But it didn't happen. Why didn't it happen? Because God knew him. God knew him. So he can say, God, indeed, is good. He showed it by keeping him from falling, slipping away.

God held the poet's right hand. God was his strength. In his grace, God made that man of little faith seek his strength with him. At first, as we already have indicated, at first, God was only near in his mouth.

Far from his heart. And then he nearly failed. Because he looked at the things he saw. But God made him turn to the things that are unseen.

[ 6 : 04 ] In God's sanctuary, he received again the right insight, as we read in verse 17. So in God's house, that means also through God's word and promises, the poet again lifted up his eyes.

So he understood again that God is the sovereign ruler. That God is in control of all things. In the light of God's revelation, he saw now how foolish, how stupid he had been.

To think that life away from God could be more advantageous. Now he understood. That's totally untrue. There are no perspectives.

There is no glory without God. Life without God doesn't have firmness. Doesn't have a basis. Has no future. At the end of their lives, the ungodly will discover that they have lived in a dream world. With dismay and horror, they will experience that there is a God in heaven. In his judgment, God will condemn them.

[ 7 : 21 ] Because on earth they have not lived with and for the Lord. So how vain and empty was all their wealth and importance. Those ungodly, those wicked men, they may have inflated themselves greatly.

Being puffed up by their own pride and wealth. By their own position. But God just pricks in them. And then they instantly are deflated.

And they tumble from their important places. They vanish completely. And so for them, no glory nor any strength is left.

And so a life without God brings total ruin. Everlasting perdition. This is totally different with you. When you live closely with the Lord.

Then the poet says you have life. And then you have perspective. That's what the poet of Psalm 73 comes to see again.

[ 8 : 31 ] In faith. He saw in you. That his life's activities must be seeking your strength with the Lord. In the past. In the past. Previously.

He had acted like a beast. He said. Being ignorant and foolish. But then he repented. This is the poet's repentance.

That he now wants to live with God. The ungodly and arrogant may want to live for their own interest. For self. But as far as the poet is concerned. He wants to be near God.

Yes. This is the only good thing for him. To be a faithful servant of God. Why can I say. That. The maker of Psalm 73. Wants to be a faithful servant of God.

Well. Note congregation. That he qualifies his life with the Lord. As. That he is. Drawing near. To God. Beautiful word. Beautiful expression. Drawing near to God.

[ 9 : 34 ] The word. The Hebrew word. Used here. Can describe. Different situation. Like. Drawing near. In war. Then.

Two. Armies. They make up. And they meet for battle. They draw near. Each other. The word also is used.

Of a husband. Drawing near to his wife. Here. It has the meaning of being. Or coming into the most. Intimate. Proximity. Of each other. On the other.

Side. The Hebrew term is also often used. For drawing near. As. In contrasted. With the word. For far off. Now the poet.

Uses this term. This word. In his life. With God. First. By using this term. By using this word. He wants to. Distance himself.

[ 10 : 36 ] As far as possible. From his. Stupidity. Of imagining. That he could live. A carefree life. Without God. Furthermore.

By using this word. He also wants to express. That. That. If you approach God. Then you must do so. Carefully. You must do.

Referently. Yes. That word implies. Every careful step. When man. Comes and goes.

Into God's presence. To present himself. Or his gifts. To God. As such. The word. The word is used. For example. In Exodus 3. There.

In Exodus 3. You find that. Moses draws near to God. The story. The burning bush. That. Moses draws near to God.

[11:31] Speaking to him. The same expression. You find in Leviticus 4. When the. When Moses approaches God. On the mountain. Mount Sinai. And finally.

In the Old Testament. Gifts. Or sacrifices. Offerings. Of the people. For God's service. Are described. With the same word. The Hebrew word.

Is. Korban. That is. Offerings. Sacrifices. In Hebrew. It means therefore. Offerings. Are drawing near. When you offer to the Lord.

You bring your sacrifices. Also. You draw near. Draw near. Draw near to God. And so. Drawing near to God. Is a repeated. Activity. Of worship.

Of listening to God. Listening to his word. To surrender. All things to God. To expect from God. All things.

[12:27] To depend. On God. Such as you understand. Such an activity. First and foremost. Takes place. In prayer. Then God's servant.

Draws near. He presents himself. To God. With all that he has. As. A sacrificing servant. Seeking. And finding strength.

With the Lord. Most high. This is. And must be. An ongoing activity. Of seeking strength. In the Lord. And that's. Why it is good. To read. In the King James Version.

And the. Ostrich Version. That it is an activity. That drawing near. Is a dynamic. Process. Many translations. They have here. To be near God.

A sort of. A situation. In. In rest. And yet. You are there. It is more. Not a static. Situation. A dynamic process. You all the time.

[13:25] You go. And you draw near. To God. An activity. Seeking. Finding strength. With God.

And therefore. Beloved. For the sake. Of your joy. And peace. Today. Tomorrow. This week. And always. Please.

You must not. Jump. The fence. You must not. Join the world. The ungodly. Don't merely. Look at the things. You see. The things. You feel.

Don't let your life's. Few. Be determined. By your actual. Situation. As you now. Experience. In this life. Consider. That truly.

God is good. For his people. Center point. Of our life. Is. It must be. Indeed. God himself. Not me. No. God. God himself. His grace.

[14:21] And mercy. His great love. His goodness. He restores. And establishes us. Always in faith. He continues. To make his face. To shine upon us.

He is gracious. And to us. He keeps his countenance. Upon us. And. He gives us. Peace. Look. Those. Spiritual things.

Just mentioned. Those. Unseen things. God. Multiplies. Upon you. Week. After week. Day. After week. Day. After day.

He is doing. He is multiplying. Those graces. Through Christ. The Lord. His son. That's why it is good. To draw near to God. In active worship.

Here in church. But also. Personally. In a family worship. Every day. In ardent prayer. To seek your strength. With your faithful God.

[15:18] He will give you. What you need. In our text. The poet says. In the second line. I have made the Lord. Yahweh.

My refuge. That is our second. Thought. It is a confession. Confession. It expresses. Who God is. For the poet. Now this confession.

Stands against. The same background. As his activity. Of drawing near to God. And so. We don't need. To repeat. What brought this. Maker of Psalm 73. To his confession.

After he has seen. His great error. The psalmist. Makes God. Now his chief desire. In the renewed. Joy. Of the communion. With God.

He is again. Convinced of God's faithfulness. He again. Sees the true. Character. Of God. That God. Is not. Unfair. For his people.

[16:14] That God. Is not. Unjust. That he does not. Favor. The ungodly. Over the godly. How could he. Ever have thought that.

No. It is exactly. The other way. That God. Protects his people. His godly people. That God. Protects him. By holding. His right hand.

By giving him strength. By providing. For all his needs. So he confesses. God. To be. His portion. The only.

One. He needs. In life. That's not what he confesses. The only one he needs. That is his holy covenant God. In those words. Of the second line. The poet shows. That he again. Has the right knowledge. Of God. For he uses. Two different names. For God. Yahweh. And Lord.

[17:11] Adonai. So Yahweh. And Adonai. The name. Yahweh. Is God's name. As he revealed himself. To Moses. In the burning bush. That name.

Yahweh. Means. That God. Keeps his word. He keeps his promises. He is the faithful God. You can fully rely on him.

He never lets you down. Never. The second name. Adonai. Denotes his lordship. His lord.

God is the almighty one. The ruler. He keeps all things in control. He also governs and guides things. According to his eternal counsel. And with him is nothing.

Impossible. He will establish. His sure promises. Of rest and peace. Of glory. Eternal joy. He is able. He is willing to do so. He is also able to do so.

[18:12] You see again. Here we are concerned. With things we see. No. First and foremost. It concerns the unseen things. Of God's power. All those unseen things.

Are again implied. By the term. The poet uses. Next. He confesses. The lord. Yahweh. The lord. God. To be his refuge. The psalmist.

Had been upheld. By his God. Strengthened by him. His presence. His experience. A new. By him. In his house. In the sanctuary. And in his responses.

That of a renewed confession. Of making God. His refuge. The original words. For refuge. Used here. Had the literal meaning. Of.

Taking shelter. From a rainstorm. As such. It is used. For example. In the prophets of Isaiah.

Chapter 4. And 6. Or also. Taking shelter.

[19:10] From any other danger. In high hills. As we read. In Psalm 104. Further. It is often used. Figuratively. Of seeking refuge.

And thus. Putting confident trust. Whether. In a religious power. Or in a political power. Now. This. Idea. Of taking refuge. May well derive.

From the common experience. Of fugitives. Or of a man at war. Than the adjacent. Nearby hills. Provided. A ready. Safe hiding place. Or a strong rock.

To which. The often. Helpless. Fugitive. Could hurry. For protection. And in this way. The noun. Place. Of refuge. Is used.

As a synonym. A synonym. A stronghold. Remember. From this morning. How in 1 Samuel 23. David sought refuge.

[20:10] In the strongholds. Of the wilderness. Then it clearly appeared. That God was his true refuge. His trust in God. Was not in vain.

God was the place. Of escape. We saw. He was even. The rock. Of escape. This truth is. Is clearly revealed.

So often. In God's word. Not only. That God is our rock. But also that God. Is our shield. For example. Or that God. Is the strong. A strong tower. Or that he.

Our cover. Shadow. Or. That we take. Refuge. Under his. Wings. Remember. How Ruth. Experienced God. To be her refuge. That she found. Shelter. Under the wings. Of the most high. And so.

[21:05] This is also. The confession of Psalm. The psalmist of Psalm 73. He seeks. Help. With God. Not with man. Not with himself.

Anymore. He applies. Psalm 46. That God. Is our refuge. And strength. A very present. Help. In time. Of trouble. All the things.

That you. See. May crumble. They may fall apart. They may come to an order. Nations rage. The kingdoms totter.

Everything. May be turned. Upside down. In this world. Yet. The believer. The godly one. Says. God. Is ever. The sole. Refuge.

For his people. God. Exist. As the shield. Of the cover. Of all. Who takes refuge. With him. With him. You have. Peace. And safety.

[22:03] And so. Congregation. The instruction. And encouragement. Of God's word. Comes to us. Take. And he. Shelter. With him. Feel safe. In his. Everlasting.

Arms. They surround you. For protection. Confess. Your faithful. And sovereign God. To be your refuge. Yes.

Now for the poet. Envy. Has turned to hope. Nothing can separate him. Now from God's love. Having reached assurance.

From what God is doing. For his salvation. The psalmist. Comes. To rest. In what God is to him. However. Unpromising. The situation.

Might be. He understands. Now. What the apostle Paul. Later on. Will say. To the Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians 4. Verse 18. 2 Corinthians 4.

[ 23 : 00 ] Verse 18. There. We read. From the apostle Paul. 2 Corinthians 4. Verse 18. That the things. That are seen. They are transient.

But the things. That are unseen. Are eternal. Now. There is no. Threatening. And jealousy. Anymore. With the poet.

Now. There is. Assured faith. In God. In whom. Is now. All his delight. He confesses that. God is my refuge. Having God.

As refuge. Doesn't make. A godly man. Passive. Confession. Of trust in the Lord. Doesn't make us. Idle. We have come to our third thought. That God. Also makes. The poet. Seek his strength. In praise.

[ 24 : 00 ] A godly man. Always. Praises God. That. He says. I may tell. Of all thy works. Here we must see that.

Drawing near to God. Indeed. Is not a static thing. It's. Very dynamic. Indeed. You do not take shelter. With God. So that you may continue.

That you may lead. A complacent. Or an apathetic. A self satisfied life. No way. In that case. The repentance of the poet. Would not have meant. Very much. A life with the Lord.

A life. That continuously. Comes into God's presence. A life. That continues. Confesses his trust. And faithfulness in God. That shows. That such a godly life.

Shows. Fruits. Of faithfulness. Then there is. New commitment. There is a new zeal. Along with. A new love.

[ 24 : 57 ] To God. We see that. The poet. The poet. Just. Can't remain silent. About what counts. In his life. Previously. When he had that.

Spiritual depression. So to speak. Previously. His life was soured. Paralyzed. Even. By self interest. All that now.

Has radically changed. After he has been set. Free. By God. Then he shows. His love to God. Then he. Wants to tell. Of all.

His works. His new commitment. Is to praise. And adore God. For his great deeds. For God's deeds. Those deeds.

Concern the works. Of his hand. And creation. His works. And salvation. That God. Has made everything. Beautifully. Beautiful. As a skilled. Master builder. And furthermore.

[ 25 : 52 ] That God shows. His greatness. His goodness. And grace. In the gospel of salvation. Through Christ Jesus. Our Lord. The marvelous.

Miracles. Of salvation. Worked. By our savior. In the works of. Redemption. And recreation. The psalmist. Knows. That in many places. Of his word.

The Lord. Has given the instruction. To recount. His mighty wonders. And just judgments. We must understand. Brothers and sisters. That it is the wisdom.

Of God's judgments. That in this life. That he does not. Guarantee to us. A life of ease. He guarantees.

To us. A life of. Peace. So what do we see? At a certain time. The poet.

[ 26 : 47 ] The poet was busy. With his own thoughts. Then for him. The best thing. Was that he. Kept silent. For his own thoughts. Weren't good. They didn't give him.

The right perspectives. Yet. The moment. He is again. He has been. Filled. By God's thoughts. That moment. He can't. Restrain his lips.

Anymore. Then he must speak. And he tells. God's. Great works. That newfound faith. Worked by. By God's spirit.

That gives him again. The perspectives. Of rest. And peace. His strength is. With God. New zeal. When we look at ourselves. When we rely on ourselves.

Then we don't have the right zeal. Very often. It is. A misguided. A misdirected zeal. But if we have. Our praise in God.

[ 27 : 45 ] Our strength in God. We have the right perspectives. And for us. As New Testament people. Our strength. And our peace is. What the Lord Jesus Christ. Established here on earth. Through his redemptive work.

That we have. Peace with God. Reconciliation. That God indeed. Is the rock. Of our salvation. He opened for us. The way. To God's sanctuary.

To his. Heavily. Sanctuary. From here. The way is. Open. Into that. Heavily. Sanctuary. And so. We must connect. Seventy three. Now.

With another. Important passage. Of God's word. Hebrews 10. In Hebrews 10. The New Testament. Author writes. Hebrews 10.

Let us. Draw near. The same word. Drawing near to God. Let us come into his presence. Let us draw near. With a true heart.

[ 28 : 41 ] And full assurance of faith. With our hearts. Sprinkled clean. Of an evil conscience. From all doubts. And little faith. You know. He also says. The writer to the Hebrews.

Said that. Our bodies are washed clean. With pure water. Let us hold fast. The confession of our hope. Without wavering. As it is.

As. The writer of the Hebrews. Has our psalm 73. In his mind. The same thoughts. Come. Up there. Let us hold fast.

The confession of our hope. Without wavering. Without doubting. Without. Engaging the world. For he says. He who promised. Is faithful.

And let us consider. How to stir up another. To. Spiritual works. For the fruits of faith. Let us stir up one another. To love and good works. The first work.

[ 29 : 40 ] The first good work. In our Christian life. Is praising God. For his greatness. His goodness. And grace. And in this way. Beloved. Despite our actual situation.

You might have weaknesses. Spiritual struggles. Repressions. You are little. Small. And yet. Despite of all. That outward situation. Despite. Despite what we see. Or feel. In our heart. Despite of all. The dents.

All the holes. In our lives. Our life. View. Our perspective. Can be anything else. Than that we say. It's great.

It's great. To be with the Lord. Our life is great. For it is full. Of God's works.

[ 30 : 38 ] He holds. My right hand. Through faith. That is. Walking. With God. Hand.

In hand. Reconfirming. Reaffirming. Yes Lord. Yes. Thou art good. To thy people. Praise be.

Thy great. And holy name. Amen. We pray. Happily.

Father. Father. We thank thee. That thou hast. Filled our lives. So greatly. That we have. So many. Graces. And mercies. From thee. Through thy spirit. And thy word.

Our lives. Are overflowing. Father. We thank thee. Of thy goodness. Thy grace. Thy mercy. Of all the. Those unseen things.

[ 31 : 39 ] That are so. So surely there. For thou art. The Lord God. Thou art. Yahweh. Adonai. The almighty God.

And father. And Christ the Lord. Thou art willing. To help us. In all circumstances. In all. Needs. That we have.

Thou art also. Able to do so. Father. We praise thee. For thy great gifts. And that we know. That thou holdest us. Always.

At thy right hand. And grant us. Faithfulness. That also. When we leave. The church. And that we start again. All our works. And duties. And tasks.

Also this week. That together. With all thy people. We may walk. Hand. In hand. With thee. And trusting ourselves. To thee. Having thee. As our rock.

[ 32 : 35 ] As our safe. Savior. In Christ the Lord. Taking refuge. With thee. Having shelter. Under thy wings. We praise thee. For thy rich mercies.

Hear us. Also when we know. And when we confess our faith. And the glory to come. When we. Will see what we don't see.

At this moment. But when we see. The restored. The renewed life. When the Lord Jesus Christ. Appears. Then we also see. Who we are.

Indeed. Children. Of thine. Receiving our great. Inheritance. Of eternal glory. Faith. Father hear us.

Again. We ask thee. All this. In the forgiveness. Of our sins. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.