



All Is Well

Psalms Series



DISCUSSION

Read the following excerpt from an article written by Courtney Reissig on the Desiring God website:

“Have you ever longed for something you don’t have only to find out that someone you don’t like has gotten what you so desperately wanted?

Do you find yourself suffering when evil people continue to succeed? Are poverty, loneliness, sickness, loss, strife, or other suffering your closest friends, and yet your sinful neighbor seems to have none of them? Or maybe the prosperity of the wicked is waiting for you when you open your computer or scroll through your phone. A woman who complains about her children announces that she’s pregnant with another, while you wait for just one positive pregnancy test. A man openly lusts after other women, yet he gets engaged. A person you know is dishonest in her work receives another promotion, while you are stuck in a job for which you’re overqualified. You simply can’t escape the injustice of it all.

Like never before, we can see what almost anyone has in all its jealousy-inducing glory. Social media reminds us that evil still prospers, while we, the righteous, languish in our lack. Twenty-four hour cable news reminds us that evil often wins, while innocent people suffer unspeakable horrors.

We want, but we do not have. We feel like we deserve it, but it goes to someone far less deserving. We work hard for it, but it is still escapes us. All the while, we see the dishonest, the cheat, the liar, the glutton, and the sexually immoral getting what we feel is owed to us.

(Why Do Others Get the Good I Deserve? By Courtney Reissig, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-do-others-get-the-good-i-deserve>)”

Can you relate to the sentiment expressed above? Explain

EXPLORE HIS WORD *In Psalm 73, Asaph shares a personal testimony of how he worked through this exact same issue. Open your Bible, ask God for wisdom, & encounter His word so that He can speak to your heart.*

ENCOUNTER *Read Psalm 73.*

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- 1) Write down any first impressions & basic observations.

- 2) Who is Asaph? (see 1 Chron. 6:31-39; 15:16-19; 16:4-5, 37; 25:1-2)

- 3) Read vs. 2, and vv. 13-15 - Consider the implications of Asaph's words in light of his God-given role.

- 4) What are the specifics of Asaph's complaint?

Check Out How Solomon Restates This Same Problem:

Ecclesiastes 7:15

I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

Ecclesiastes 8:14

There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

ENGAGE THE WORD

1)

Review vs. 12-14.

Was Asaph right to expect that the wages of righteous living should be temporal blessings (particularly, health, wealth, peace, and prosperity), and the wages for wickedness should be immediate judgment or cursing (particularly, poverty, sickness, brokenness, and ultimately death)? Are the blessings of God earned and deserved based on our good works, or are they undeserved outpourings of God's grace, given to both the righteous and the wicked? Cross Reference the verses below to help you answer the question:

Scriptures showing that God rewards righteousness:

Psalm 112 Praise the Lord!

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,

who greatly delights in his commandments!

2 His descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches are in his house;
and his righteousness endures for ever.

Deut. 28

28 If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth.

2 All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:

3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

4 The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks...

8 The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

15 However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you:

16 You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. **17** Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. **18** The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. **19** You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. **20** The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him.

SCRIPTURES Showing God's grace & mercy towards the wicked:

Matt 5:43

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor[i] and hate your enemy.' **44** But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Luke 6:35

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Psalm 145: 8 The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. **9**The LORD is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works.

2) Is there a difference between the common grace, mercy, or general kindness of the Lord vs. His divine favor & blessing? Explain.

3) How do you resolve this issue? How would you encourage someone who is on the verge of losing faith because of this problem? (See The verses below and on the next page, to help you answer this question:

Hebrews 12:6-8

6 "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts."

7 Endure your suffering as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? **8** But if you do not experience discipline, something all sons have shared in, then you are illegitimate and are not sons.

James 1:2-4

2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, **3** for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. **4** And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2 Peter 3:8-15 ...the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

8 Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day. **9** The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; when it comes, the heavens will disappear with a horrific noise, and the celestial bodies will melt away in a blaze, and the earth and every deed done on it will be laid bare. **11** Since all these things are to melt away in this manner, what sort of people must we be, conducting our lives in holiness and godliness, **12** while waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God? Because of this day, the heavens will be burned up and dissolve, and the celestial bodies will melt away in a blaze! **13** But, according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness truly resides.

14 Therefore, dear friends, since you are waiting for these things, strive to be found at peace, without spot or blemish, when you come into his presence. **15** And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation...

Rom 8:18 For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the coming glory that will be revealed to us.

2 Cor 4:16-18

...**16**Therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, yet our inner self is being renewed day by day. **17**For our light and temporaryaffliction is producing for us an eternal glory that faroutweighs our troubles. **18**So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal....

4) 1. Notice what Asaph says about how God fulfills his desire & compare it with Paul's statement in Philippians:

73:25

Whom do I have in heaven but you?

I desire no one but you on earth.

73:26 My flesh and my heart may grow weak,

but God always protects my heart and gives me stability...

73:28 ... God's presence is all I need...

Phil 3: 7-9

7But whatever was an asset to me, I count as loss for the sake of Christ. **8**More than that, I count all thingsas loss compared to the surpassing excellence ofknowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ**9**and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God on the basis of faith....

5) Is there anything in your life that you desire more than God right now? If someone who didn't know you personally were to observe your daily practices & habits for a couple of weeks, would their answer to that question be the same as yours? Explain.

EMBRACE HIS WORD

1)

Take some time to be quiet before the Lord and ask what next steps he would like you to take as a result of your interaction with His Word.

2)

What does God want you to do in light of what you learned in this passage? Ask Him for His grace & mercy and make a commitment to obey.