

PASTOR'S NOTES Psalm 73:1-22

A man with a new perspective

Over these three Sundays, (last Sunday, next Sunday and June 19th) we are working our way through an man's (Asaph's) account of his spiritual journey, drawing lessons for ourselves from his experience. Last Sunday ("A man with a Problem", Vs 1-16), we saw how the apparent comfort and prosperity of those who ignore God and His Law (Vs 3-12), and the troubles of his own life as one who tries to please God (Vs 13,14), led him to a place where he was almost ready to give up believing (V2). All that stopped the landslide of his faith was the strong conviction that he should not do or say anything that would harm the faith of others (v15). That was a principle he held to firmly despite his own disillusionment.

In today's section of his story, Vs 17-22, we discover another principle he held that lead to a change of perspective....about the 'prosperity' of the wicked (vs18-20).and.... about his own 'purity of heart' (V13, Vs 21,22)

PRINCIPLE, V17 "I entered into the sanctuary of God".

He firmly held to the conviction that however spiritually "down" he felt he ought to continue to meet with God's people in the Temple for worship and fellowship. See Luke 4:16; Hebrews 10:25. At the Temple he gained a new

PERSPECTIVE on things. *No doubt he saw other people at worship who had greater troubles than his own, and was prompted to re-think his own attitude. *At the Temple he would have heard God's Word read and explained, e.g. that the Lord's covenant with His people ("I will be your God and you will be my people") does not mean that we will be spared the trials and troubles of life in a fallen world, but rather that He will give His people His presence and strength to bear them. See Isaiah 41:8-14; 43:1-5; John 16:33. *He also gained a new perspective on the ungodly (vs18-20), that they live in a false paradise. When God "awakens" (V20) from his seeming inactivity against evil, all that they have trusted in will be seen as "fantasy", and "destruction" and "terror" will be their lot, (v19).

He also gained a new perspective on *the state of his own heart (Vs 21,22). It was not sin to be perplexed by the seeming contradictions of life (V16), but he had allowed doubting God, envying others and bitterness of spirit...ugly qualities, to fester within. He saw now that the roots of sin went deep into his heart, (Jeremiah 17:9). So, his confession before the Lord (Vs 21,22) was humble, honest and specific - as our's must be if we are really to find forgiveness and renewal.

General confession is appropriate when we meet together for worship, but in our own quiet times of prayer we cannot be satisfied with "Lord, You know what a sinner I am". HE does!, but the question is "Do WE?"... not until we name our specific sins, humbly acknowledging their ugliness in God's sight, and honestly seeking a renewing work of the Holy Spirit in the depths of our heart!