



## WORSHIP

### SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Alive In You, Cornerstone, He Shall Reign

## WELCOME

Have you ever felt cheated in some childhood game or sports? How do you normally respond to those who treat you unfairly?

## WORD

### PSALM 73:1-3, 15-20, 25-28

*<sup>1</sup>Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!<sup>2</sup>But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. <sup>3</sup>For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. <sup>15</sup>If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. <sup>16</sup>When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight. <sup>17</sup>Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. <sup>18</sup>Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. <sup>19</sup>How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!<sup>20</sup> Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form. <sup>25</sup>Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. <sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. <sup>27</sup>For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. <sup>28</sup>But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.*

All of us, sooner or later, will come to a realization that the world is not fair. We basically tend to think this way: when bad things happen to bad people, that's okay, and we expect good things to happen to good people. However, it becomes problematic for us when we see bad things happen to good people. What's even worse, we see good things happen to bad people! This we consider to be unreasonable, unjust, and plainly put, unfair.

There are many things in life that we deem to be unfair, and when we encounter these, how do we process our situation? **Psalm 73** tells us of a similar experience of a psalmist, Asaph. He was a musician appointed by King David to head the musical worship division of the temple, and he wrote valuable lessons in this psalm. How was Asaph's perspective when life seemed unfair? What can we learn about having the right perspective from Psalm 73?

### **1. CHECK YOUR PERSPECTIVE (V. 1-15)**

The psalmist began with a declaration of truth about God's goodness (**v.1**). And yet in **v.2**, he shifts the tone to express his struggle. Notice that the psalmist's perspective here is focused on earthly things, particularly in what has been causing him problems: the life of evil people and the way they seem to be blessed. If we'll talk about "fairness", that definitely didn't sit well with the psalm's author.

As he expressed his concerns (**vv.4-7**), he seemed to have had a hard time understanding God's terms of fairness...wicked people seemed to have no problems! He described them in detail as he lamented, and we can tell that he was focused on people. Aside from obvious evil, he also took note that they were rabid boasters (**vv.8-11**). He emphasized that these people even sin with their mouths, saying wrong things and blaspheming the Lord. Towards **vv.12-15**, we can see clearly why he was jealous of the

wicked. Have you ever had that kind of experience? Sometimes, do you ask yourself, "**... is it worth following Jesus Christ?**" You might have realized at one point that even if you don't compromise, don't cheat, and you remain faithful – when you look at your life, you are hurting and have problems, compared to your friends who don't follow God, who are corrupt – everything in their lives seem to be okay...and that just seems UNFAIR!

This was the stark problem of Asaph in Psalm 73. He concluded that life was unfair based on what he saw, and he knew that if he continued in this line of thought that he will end up sinning against God. He knew what he needed to do: he needed to align his perspective and recalibrate his thoughts and heart.

### **2. ALIGN YOUR PERSPECTIVE (V. 16-22)**

Many times, we look at life not seeing the big picture. We jump to wrong conclusions because most of the time, our perspectives are not aligned with truth. For the psalmist, he expressed this recalibration of perspective in **vv.16-17**.

He entered the sanctuary of God – which was another way to describe WORSHIP and focusing on God. When he entered to worship God, his perspective was suddenly changed! He perceived the end of those prosperous wicked people. You see, our perspective can be very narrow and temporal. But God helped him to see the big picture; not just what's happening today, but more importantly, in the future. Many times, our perspective is all about temporal things, but not eternal.

We need to learn to see things from a bigger perspective, the perspective of God, and that only God can help us. When we worship God, it usually includes the study of Scripture. When you do this, you begin to see God's revelations in His Word. An

## WORD (cont'd)

eternal perspective comes when we study the Word of God. The right perspective comes when you begin to pray and focus on Him and His will. These past few days, we've been reading the Bible and fasting. Times like these allow us to realign our hearts to the heart of the King. You get to focus on God – His promises and His greatness. The change of perspective from temporal to eternal also spells a huge difference in our outlook in life. Eternity is such a very long time, and we need to get things right for eternity, rather than just getting temporal things right. Asaph saw what grim future awaited wicked people that he initially was envious of (**vv. 18-20**).

You might wonder why God allows evil to continue. **2 Peter 3:9** and **Romans 2:4-5** tells us that the Lord's purpose in being patient is to draw people to repentance. He could have easily wiped the wicked out of the face of the earth, and yet being the gracious God that He is, He lets them thrive to give them a chance to repent and change the direction of their lives.

### **3. DEVELOP ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE (V. 23-28)**

From **vv. 21-24**, Asaph finally humbled himself and admitted that his behavior was uncalled for and based on his experience, was not helpful at all. He took comfort in the fact that God was committed to stay with him, hold him and guide him that he began to thank Him for he knew that he was continually in God's

presence (**vv. 25-26**). Isn't that a wonderful layer of comfort? The assurance that we will remain in the love of God through it all will enable us to face our battles, our lack, our disappointments.

Death or the thought of dying has an amazing power of "altering" our desires, according to Oswald Chambers. Indeed, it forces us to think of the eternal perspective or the big picture. Jesus told of a parable in **Luke 12:16-21**, where an earth-bound future is nothing compared to our eternal days. Are we neglecting eternity in the way we spend our time on earth?

Towards the last verses of Psalm 73, Asaph realizes that the presence of God is a benefit that folds in not just in the sense of protection, but also in guidance and enlightenment. **1 Corinthians 2:9** tells us that nothing compares to what God has in store for us in heaven, and John meticulously tried to explain the vision of heaven shown to him in **Revelation 21:3-6** and **18-21**– the jasper, gold, the unending day, and most importantly, the glorious presence of the Almighty God. In the last verses of Psalm 73, Asaph contrasts two endings – the destruction for evil (**v. 27**), as emphasized in **2 Thessalonians 1:9** as the loss of wellbeing (eternal destruction), compared to the safe refuge of those who belong to the Lord (**v. 28**). May we choose to remain in His presence, our ultimate good, and focus on Him when we encounter unfair treatment from the world!

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

*(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)*

- 1. Self-Check.** What experiences have you encountered that you felt were unfair? How did you process it?
- 2. Setting It Right.** Asaph recalibrated and aligned his perspective with God's. As you do this, what new perspective of this "unfair situation" are you able to see? More importantly, what eternal impact do you think the Lord wants you to achieve?
- 3. Living It Out.** What principle will you apply in your life after hearing this message?

## WORKS

### **PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION**

Pray that God will work in our hearts and the hearts of the people we pray for—including the "wicked" ones. Show care by taking the time to listen to those who have been treated unfairly. Share how an eternal future with God awaits all those who put their trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

### **WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS**

#### **I. Thanksgiving**

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

#### **II. Country and the World**

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

#### **III. Church**

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

#### **IV. CCF Facilities**

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

#### **V. Personal Concerns**

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends