

The Blues of Worship

Psalm Appeal – Part 3 of 9

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Psalm 73

Many Christians are unhappy because they suffer from righteous indignation. Envy bites. Psalm 73 is the first of twelve psalms by Asaph. It expresses spiteful distress: peeved, miffed, ticked off, enraged, alienated, envious, or jealous. Compare it with Psalm 37 written and sung by Asaph's "blues brother," King David. (2 Chron. 29:30, Neh. 12:46) A glory of biblical inspiration is that God includes the blues: worship songs about being angry at church. Jesus has stories like that. Remember the story of Martha's anger boiling over in the kitchen and into the living room because her sister Mary was at worship instead of working on the soup?

The biblical baseline of truth.

¹ *God is indeed good to Israel, to the pure in heart.*

The source of worship disruption: righteous indignation.

² *But as for me, my feet almost **slipped**; my steps nearly went astray.*

³ *For I **envied** the arrogant; I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

- Aristotle considered "righteous indignation [as the] mean between envy and spite... righteous indignation is distressed at instances of undeserved good fortune." (*Rhetoric* II:9-11)

⁴ *They have an easy time until they die, and their bodies are well fed.*

⁵ *They are not in trouble like others; they are not afflicted like most people.*

The false assumption that wealthy arrogant make: God's justice is in a coma.

¹¹ *The wicked say, "How can God know? Does the Most High know everything?"*

The false bargain envious believers make:

¹² *Look at them—the wicked! They are always at ease, and they increase their wealth.*

¹³ *Did I purify my heart and wash my hands in innocence for nothing?*

- Recall the parable of Jesus about the unexpectedly generous landowner and the disgruntled workers in Matt. 20:1-16, cf. Isaiah 5:1-7.

What happens when we meet God in worship:

¹⁶ *When I tried to understand all this, it seemed hopeless* ¹⁷ ***until I entered God's sanctuary. Then I understood their destiny.***

Worship clarifies which ground is sound and which is slippery.

¹⁸ *Indeed, You put them in slippery places; You make them fall into ruin.* ¹⁹ *How suddenly they become a desolation! They come to an end, swept away by terrors.*

²⁰ *Like one waking from a dream, Lord, when arising, You will despise their image.*

Instead of bitter boiling, worship cools us as we perceive three truths: God's presence, God's patience, and God's affectionate hold on us in Christ.

²¹ When I became embittered and my innermost being was wounded, ²² I was stupid and didn't understand; I was an unthinking animal toward You. ²³ Yet I am always with You; You hold my right hand. ²⁴ You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me up in glory.

Finally, worship restores a biblical worldview and emboldens witness.

²⁷ Those far from You will certainly perish; You destroy all who are unfaithful to You.

²⁸ But as for me, God's presence is my good. I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, so I can tell about all You do.

My Next Step today is to...

☐ _____.