

The Math Just Doesn't Add Up

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Bible Text: Psalm 73:1-19

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I did find it fitting that he had Mr. Leek pray for the offering for the roof repair. Absolutely, right? Mr. Reinhardt's got jokes still. He had them when I was in high school. Still got them. A lot of memories coming back. I'm glad they didn't do guys in that physical fitness test because I wouldn't have been up there and I'd be running the lake tomorrow because I didn't meet the qualifications. So I do have to say any English errors today, I say it comes from my seventh grade English teacher, Mr. Schrock. I don't know how that happened, but it did, so. Gotta find my tape up here to stand in the right spot for PTF, right? A lot of memories coming back in PTF, but I'm glad to be here tonight.

Would you take your Bible to Psalm chapter 73? Psalm 73. I told John I'm going to do something I don't normally do and I'm going to try to stay in this chapter, this one place, the entire night. It doesn't normally happen. I'm normally all over the place, but I want to be mindful of the time tonight. I remember sitting in math class and we were always taught you check your problems, check your answers. I was sitting at home the other day and my girls were working. I'm like, "Oh, you'd better get that checked right." Mrs. Wright, "You've got to circle the answer." Or it was a box. Box it. You've got to box your answer. And I remember, I mean, the idea of checking your work is to make sure there's no issues with the problem, that the problem works out. Of course, I could have the problem incorrect and I still made the check work. And I remember sometimes sitting up there in room 428, I had the desk almost always right in front of Mrs. Wright's desk. I don't know why. No idea. But I remember sitting there sometimes and I had manufactured the check to work out. And we'd be sitting there and she'd be over there grading and of course, when she calls my name, the whole class has to know. I'm sitting right in front of her. "Jim, come back to my desk." And I can, I'm talking about her. I don't know that she specifically said this, but I can remember a teacher saying this. "Jim, look at this problem. The math just doesn't add up." Well, yes, it does. The answer's there. The answer's...it adds up. But the math just doesn't add up.

I'd like to look at this text in Psalm chapter 73. I've entitled the message tonight, "The Math Just Doesn't Add Up." I'm not gonna read all 28 verses. If I could encourage you to do so, it's a very challenging passage, a very encouraging chapter. What I'm going to do tonight is go through the verses, verse 1 through 18, and try to portray a thought to us tonight on this idea of the math just doesn't add up.

Let's go ahead and ask the Lord's blessing on the message as we open tonight.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for this place. We thank you for the church, Fairhaven Baptist Church. What a blessing it is to us, to my family, to our ministry in Pennsylvania, Lord. It's such a blessing to us to be able to come back here and appreciate what you are doing here so much. And for the school, Lord, what a blessing it is to have a Christian school, and I'm so grateful for all that it means to us, to my wife, to myself, and all the investment that was made in us, that is, the return on that investment may not ever be known here on this earth but Lord, we see it and we appreciate it so much. And I just ask that you would be with this message tonight, would you use me to speak boldly what you would have us to hear tonight. Lord, allow what's done in this place tonight through the reading of your word and through the preaching, may it be pleasing in your sight. May we give you the honor and the praise and the glory. In your name we pray. Amen.

Sometimes in life as a Christian, I think back to the time when I was just a little child, maybe you can remember, we're not going to go into the difference in car seats of little kids of today and back then but I can remember our little light blue Toyota that we had the two-door, you know, we'd crawl in the backseat as little kids. Before that, mom and dad would place us in the car seat back there and as you're sitting in one of those seats, you look out the window as a little child, and all you can see out the window is the light blue sky, maybe the little fluffy clouds. You don't see all the world that's going on in front of the car, all you see is that bright blue sky. And I think as Christians so many times, we think to ourselves, just like that little child in the back seat looks out, and as they grow older, then they begin to see the trouble and the problems that are involved with mom and dad driving the car. When they get their license, they realize how much they actually don't want to drive. They wanted to all the way up until the time they sat behind the wheel, and now all of a sudden they freeze. And so I think as Christians we look and we think to ourselves, well, everything should be just like that light blue sky, just perfect, no problems no pressures. But then as we get older we begin to see that, can we use the term the math just doesn't add up.

We come to our text here, and I'm going to try to explain this tonight. Here in this passage, we see in verse number 1 and 3, as we open this, we see that there's a deduction that we see. That child in the back seat looks out the window and all they see is that beautiful sky but we know there's more to it. Here it says, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." We know God's good. Children, teens that are in here, you know in the deep depths of your heart that God has given you good parents. Parents that are in here, you know God has given you a good church. We know as a church, God is a good God and we see that here in verse number 1. But then in verse number 2 it says, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." Even though we know the fact that God is good, we truly believe it in the depths of our heart, our feet begin to get weary underneath of us to the point that we're nigh unto slipping.

And as we look at that, we think, well, God is good, my feet shouldn't be slipping. We come to verse number 3 and we begin to see the discrepancy in our mind that is allowing our feet to slip. We know God's good but our feet are slipping wide because in verse number 3 we read this verse, "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." Verse 3 through 9 gives us a description of the foolish and we see this discrepancy begins here in verse 3 and it's the fact that sometimes when we look outside of our life at the wicked, at the foolish person, it seems that they're at complete peace. They do the things that they do, and it's almost as if they have freedom from trouble, and especially they have a calmness; they're free from suffering even though they're going on the path of the wicked. Do you see that the thought of the math doesn't add up beginning to come into play? I'm living a Christian life. It should be all nice and beautiful. My feet are slipping though. They're over there doing their own thing and they're just fine.

And then we look at verse number 4. So we saw the peace of the wicked. We also see the punishment. Boy, I mean, they're wicked. They should have extreme punishment. God's fist of wrath should just come down on them just like Sodom and Gomorrah and destroy them off the face of the earth but in verse number 4 it says, "For there are no bands in their death," meaning there's no pain, there's no excruciating agony going on in their death. They just die a normal death, a peaceful death. It says, "but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." Their death, they've lived in prosperity and now they die in peace. How can that be the case? The math just isn't adding up. There's no agony in their death. They've enjoyed this world and they live as if there's no special alarm about the life after death. They die just as if nothing's gonna happen. They do not suffer as much in death as maybe in your life you see a good man suffer during their death. They're in pain, they're in struggle, they're in agony, and then you look over here and this foolish person dies and they don't experience any pain. They just go. And that's not adding up. And you begin, you allow yourself in your mind to get to the point that you start to question, is God really just in his dealings with men?

And you come to verse number 6, not only do we see the peace of the wicked and the punishment of the wicked, but then in verse number 6, we see their pride. "Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment." They are proud, they are haughty, and we have been taught all our life, pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. They should fall flat on their face, yet they do not fall. They put on ornaments and trappings of pride. Their clothing and their adorning are all indicative of a proudful heart, yet they stand just fine. They always imagine themselves to be better than us and in today's society, they will let you know that through the term bullying. "You're not as good as us. You're just one of them Christians, and we're going to make you know it."

And then in verse number 7, it continues, it says, "Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish." Boy, their prosperity begins to come into your view. They have the fruits of high living. They're used to the Miller life, the exciting life. Isn't it interesting how all commercials out there portray everything grand and glorious? And maybe you see that commercial, you've been trying to live as a Christian, you're trying to

live right, and you're trying to live strong, your kids, you're trying to keep them on the right path, and you're just not seeing it add up right. They seem to not even have to toil. You're a slave in a way, you're working, you're pushing through, they have more than their hearts could desire and it looks to you like God has not given you the desires of your heart.

Then you see in verse number 8 and 9, not only these things so far, but then you see their portal of wickedness. "They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth." So not only are they living this way, but now their mouth, they're allowed to speak as vulgar as they want to you and say all the things that they want to you. And it's interesting, when our ears begin to hear that and we're in this mindset, we start thinking to ourselves, "Well, maybe they're right. Maybe they are on the right path and I don't know what I'm talking about." We allow this discrepancy to build up inside of us.

They disregard God, and if that's not enough, then they turn and curse God. They even seem to set themselves above the law of God. They act as if there were no one in heaven or on earth to control them and it becomes that it's right in your face and verse 10, we saw the fool there from verse 3 to 9, but then we see ourselves. The picture from the psalmist is drawn back to ourselves and it says in verse number 10, "Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in wickedness." So we see the one side of the equation here, then we come back to our side and we begin to question inside of us, "Is there a just God?" I look at my life and you think to yourself in this particular instance, "I'm lacking some things. They have everything they want and I'm lacking. My car's breaking down, my hot water heater's going out. This is going wrong. I'm just trying to live right and all these things are going wrong. They're not living right and they have everything they could ever desire."

Let's bring it to school. "I'm trying to live right and I'm getting in trouble and they're doing their own thing and they seem to get out of it every time." Parents, teens, I'm thankful that I had that dad because there are times that I looked at my friends and I thought, "I'm trying, I'm at least trying a little bit to do right and they have no regard and their parents let them do it and they're not getting in trouble. And then here I am, I do something little and I get in trouble." I remember it to this day. I don't even know if my dad remembers this. We were in the gymnasium playing a basketball game. I'm sitting on the bench. I did well at that. That's why I ref basketball because I knew I was never going to get paid playing. I'm sitting there watching the game and all of a sudden here comes my dad across the inline. Oh boy, what's he doing? He wasn't coming to sit down. He gets to the end of the bench and he goes...Oh no. Somebody say a prayer for me. "Go home," had some issue to take care of, and then he says, "Okay, go back to basketball." Now I gotta walk in there, sit back on the bench, which doesn't feel good anyway, and then all the guys are, "What was that all about?" Don't worry about it, mind your own business. And in my mind, I think to myself, "Why did he have to do that? It's not making

sense. I'm getting in trouble. To me it may not seem like a big deal, but other people are doing far worse and they're not getting in trouble. Why do I have to have that dad?"

And you start in that passage, verse 10 through 12, maybe you allow your mind to get to the point that you ask the question, "Is God really watching what's going on here? God, do you really see the whole problem here? They're doing well in their sin and I'm here trying to live right and I'm not." And you allow yourself to go to that question of is there really any advantage of being a Christian? Things just aren't adding up.

And we get to verse number 13 through 16, and we see that discrepancy in the problem leads to a despicable fall. Let's read verse 13 through 16. It says, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me." Have I been a Christian in vain? The math's just not adding up. Is there really no advantage All my efforts to be pure and to be clean and to be holy, and this is the answer to the problem we see. In being a Christian, it seems as if I've not obtained favor to God. I might as well have just gone about my way, living my own sinful life, and enjoyed it, right? The mind begins to pull us down real quick through that. Nothing is gained by all my painful efforts of self-discipline. I've received no more blessing from God. I've not received any less favor of God than the wicked. I mean, they're doing well and I'm not.

And these thoughts drag us down, we see that in verse number 15, and let me throw this out there, parents, if you allow yourself to go down this path, it's going to affect your children. It says that there in the end of verse 15, "I should offend against the generation of my children." Verse 16 again, we see that the math is just not adding up, "When I endeavored to comprehend this or explain it to myself, it was too painful for me to think about. I can't think about it. It added so much painful labor and toil and burden." And we allow ourselves in the midst of a good, godly family, in the midst of a good, godly church, to think to ourselves, "This just isn't fair. They've got all they want, and I'm stuck here." In the middle of parents who love God and may not be perfect, children, they're trying to raise you right. In the middle of a pastor in a church that cares about you, in the middle of God's goodness, you feel like a prisoner that can't get out fast enough. Maybe a teenager's here tonight thinking to yourself, "If I can just make it two more years, I'll get out of this miserable prison." And then one more year, and then six months, and then just one more semester, "If I can go that long, then I can go out to the movies like everybody else and watch what I want to watch. They do it, and they're just fine. They can get away with murder and I'm here with that parent that gets on to me about everything. Why can't I dress like that? Why can't I show every area of my body that I want to and seem to still be happy? Why can't I hold a girl's hand and kiss her before I'm married? I mean, they do it and they're just fine. Why can't I listen to rock and roll? Those people listen to it, they're immoral and they're happier than our youth group is. They can get in a car and go wherever they want without a chaperone and do whatever they want to do and they don't have anybody that even holds them accountable, and we have to stand in a line in the Christian school and act like Christian robots; you do what you're told when you're told to do it." And we begin to think to ourselves, the math just doesn't add up.

Can I say it this way? It will never add up in your mind. It won't. As you grow up, it's a matter of looking out and seeing all the good things of the world and thinking in your heart, "They're so happy and I'm so miserable here." Maybe you're an adult and you're seeing those things and thinking, "I'd love to go that direction." There's a lot of things in this world that look appealing to the eyes and to the flesh. You think to yourself, "Why can't I have it too? I'm so restricted." The answer to this problem is in verse number 17. It will never make sense to you, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." When you allow yourself to get to the point that you realize it's not going to add up, they are going to do what they want to do, until you get into the sanctuary of God, it will never make sense to you.

Can I illustrate it this way? I learned from the preacher last Thursday night that you've got to have visual aids on Thursday night. Mr. Joe. All right, so. Uh oh, look at that, there we go. It'll work, it'll work. All right, so we have our umbrella. Look at that, look at that. It's all right, we'll fix it later. So our umbrella visual aid, okay? Visual aid takes imagination on the listener's part too.

So the umbrella represents the security in the presence of God and here's what parents do, for the longest time, all growing up, you hold that umbrella over your kids and they're under God's protection. And church has an activity for the kids, so you push them there. They have a school, so you push them under that umbrella. You're holding it for them. Then as they begin to get a teenager, and maybe college, you begin to try to give them the umbrella and you're pushing them under the umbrella, but you're trying to get them to hold it. So they're here under the umbrella, but they're doing exactly what this passage says, they're looking out there and seeing that that looks more enjoyable. So guess what we start doing as young people? We start saying, "I know God's protection's here. We know it's raining over there and it's dry under here but that looks more fun than here, so I'm gonna do this." And the parent says, "No, get back under there." And the parent tries and the parent tries and the parent tries. You're not here as a parent tonight because you don't want your kids to live right, you're here because you want your children to live right. You want them to grow up and live for the Lord.

And I'll stop and say this, I'm encouraged to look at this church and see how many parents have kids in the school that they graduated from the school. Can I embarrass you all? If you graduated from the high school and you have kids in the school, could you stand up? That's an encouragement to me. It's an encouragement to my family. I hope that's an encouragement to your pastor. I thought about that when I was flying out here and I think I came up with a couple families but there's a lot more than I thought. You see the importance of this and you want it for your children. Teenagers, they see the importance and they want it for their children.

Under the sanctuary of God, you'll understand it. The problem is we do this, "Mom and dad, I don't want that. Mom and dad, I don't want that." And they bring you back and they put you back under it. "No, I don't want it. I want what they have." And we allow ourselves to go away from the sanctuary of God, from the presence of God, from the

blessing of God, and go after what we want. It will never make sense to you until you get in the sanctuary of God. Then will you understand it. My life turned around, I'm so glad that the Lord brought this finally to me before the tassel turned as a high-schooler. I'm so glad my parents pushed me and pushed me and pushed me to where it eventually came into effect as a senior in high school, that I had to get there. But guess what? Didn't solve the problem for me. More preaching did not solve the problem for me. More church did not give me the answer. More special music did not give me the answer. It was not until I went and learned to get alone with God, then I understood that they're going to have their blessing, they're fun times, but sin is only pleasurable for a season. Their end is a slippery slope. Then I understood it. The world, when I got ahold of verse 17, that I went into the sanctuary of God, then I understood the end, I came to this conclusion about this problem: the world had nothing to offer me. There was no enamor for me in those things. The music that they had, I wanted nothing to do with it. The world, those people that were in that situation, I finally got to the point that I pitied them because I saw their destruction coming.

You understood their end. The truth of the equation is in verse number 18, "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction." Their end is a slippery slope. Their end is sudden destruction. The only thing that is going to balance this problem out in your life is to learn to get alone with God. Adults, that's the only thing that will help you understand how America and all the mess that's out in America can continue and worse here. "God, why don't you come back? Lord, it's so wicked. Why don't you just come back? The last days, it's gotta be the last days. You're coming back," and I'm looking forward to him coming back. But when you learn to get alone with God, then that's not gonna matter. I beg you tonight to do one thing. Every single person here, if you've not done it, would you please learn to get alone with God? Find the place that you can say, "That's where I go. That's my sanctuary, for God. And when I go there, I know God is going to meet with me."

God wants to meet with us, go into the sanctuary, and once you get there, guess what? It'll all make sense. And when you come out, I remember this, when the Lord finally allowed me to get it, I can remember, and I've heard people talk about other people, I call the result of this the "it factor" because it's hard to explain it. The staff, have you ever said, "I think that person's got it"? The "it factor." When you get it, you'll know that it only comes from the Creator. You won't be able to explain it. People will begin to ask you, "What happened? What was the change?" It's hard to tell you unless you learn to get alone with God yourself. There is no potion that I can give you. There's no vaccine for this. I can't put it inside you. Your parents can't give you a pill that will help you to understand it. It only comes from God and spending time with him.

The Bible says we're fearfully and wonderfully made. God wants us to have happiness, doesn't he? But can I say from Genesis, the first book of the Bible, the devil has always put a counterfeit to that happiness and that counterfeit that's out there will ignite something inside of you, just like being with God will ignite something in you. That counterfeit will ignite underneath of you, but it'll cause you to dishonor the Lord. And remember this, nobody lives in this world and lives for this world without coming to the

end and having days and moments and periods of time that they wish they never lived. I think about this often when I'm preaching to our church and some folks will say amen, some folks don't, but you can sense that they're with you and then all of a sudden it seems like some adults just quiet down. And you start looking at those adults and think to yourself that maybe some of them are thinking, "I wish someone would have told me this when I was younger. I wish I would have learned to get ahold of this when I was younger. If someone would have told me this, I wouldn't have had to be in those situations that I wish I never lived that day." The parents that are here of you young people are begging God that you would grab ahold of this, that you would grab ahold of the fact that there's only one person that can balance this equation out for you in your mind and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. The insanity of this world will never make sense to you until you learn to get ahold of God.

I think of that song,

"O soul are you weary and troubled
No light in the darkness you see
There's light for a look at the Savior
And life more abundant and free."

You know that chorus? Would you sing it with me?

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace."

Stop looking out there and wanting that. Learn to get into the sanctuary of God and the math will then add up.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the fact that we can come boldly unto the throne of grace. I pray that we take full advantage of that. I pray that you'd speak through the message, Lord. I pray that you would do what I cannot do, and that is to touch hearts and to convict us. I ask that you bless the rest of the remainder of the service this evening. We thank you so much for your goodness to us. In your name we pray, amen.