

GOD IS MY PORTION FOREVER

TEXT: PSALM 73:23-28

Introduction:

1. Psalm 73 is “A Psalm of Asaph.” This is the second Psalm (the first is Psalm 50) ascribed to Asaph, and the first of eleven consecutive Psalms that bear his name (Psalm 73—83).
2. The theme of Psalm 73 is the present prosperity of the wicked, and the sorrows of the godly (cf. Ps. 73:3, 12-14).
3. Godly believers as well as heathen philosophers have all been puzzled over this. This is the great theme of the book of Job.
4. This morning, I would like to limit my exposition to the last few verses of Psalm 73, but will begin by giving a brief summary of the chapter.
5. Psalm 73 begins with the psalmist declaring that, “Truly God is good” (73:1).
6. Then, from verses 2-16 he states his struggle. He was “envious at the foolish” (73:3).
7. Then, beginning at verse 17, Asaph finds deliverance from his dilemma. He describes the terrible judgment of the ungodly in verses 18-20.
8. In verse 21, he confesses his “heart was grieved.” He was convicted – “pricked” in his reins. He admits he was foolish and ignorant (73:22).
9. Asaph condemns his own folly, and concludes the Psalm by testifying of the goodness of God (73:23-28).

I. GOD IS CONTINUALLY WITH US (PSALM 73:23a).

1. We see a great contrast here (73:22, 23). Man is born with a depraved nature; he is “as a beast,” and yet the saved man is continually with God (73:23).
2. The famous evangelist George Whitefield annoyed many of his listeners when he declared that “man is half devil and half beast.” In fact, many men are about 99% devil and 1% beast.
3. The Christian man has two natures, and as long as we are in this world there will be conflict (73:22, 23).
4. Spurgeon said, “It a continuous paradox: the flesh allies us with the brutes, and the spirit affiliates us to God” (cf. Romans 7:14-20).

5. But do not despair. Victory over sin is possible because Christ died to save us from the power of sin (Rom. 7:22, 25a; 8:1).
6. We know God is continually with us. Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20).
7. Hebrews 13:5 says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”
8. Romans 8:38, 39 says, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
9. God is not only continually with us; but Christians should remember that God is also continually in us.
10. Referring to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, “but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17).
11. Then our Lord went on to say in John 14:20, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”
12. The apostle Paul refers to this in Colossians 1:27, as “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
13. So the Bible is clear – if you are born again by the Spirit of God, God is always with you and in you.
14. Notice Asaph said, “Nevertheless I am continually with thee” (73:23). Therefore, it is important that we stay continually with God.
15. James 4:8 says, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (cf. Psalm 73:28, 25).

II. GOD HOLDS ON TO US (PSALM 73:23b).

1. The Bible says that when a person puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, he receives eternal life. Asaph was trusting in the Lord (Psalm 73:28). Therefore, he had assurance of eternal life.
2. Some Christians do not believe we can know for sure whether or not we have eternal life. They think it is possible to lose it.
3. Some prefer not to use the word “lose.” They say one can “forfeit” his salvation. Either way, it cannot be “everlasting life.”
4. They believe a Christian can backslide and go to hell.
5. Well, unfortunately, it is a fact that some Christians do backslide.
6. Just the other day I received a phone call from an old friend whose wife left him for another man.

7. Unfortunately some Christians do backslide, but I do not believe a genuine child of God is going to be cast into the lake of fire (cf. John 10:27-29).
8. Asaph said, “Thou hast holden me by my right hand” (73:23b).
9. Jude 24 says, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”
10. Christian friend: God is holding on to you, and He is able to keep you from falling (cf. Phil. 1:6).
11. Backsliding is a serious problem. Christians should be aware of the dangers and consequences of backsliding.
12. God chastens backsliders, and if they do not respond to God’s chastening, God may kill them (cf. I Cor. 11:26-30).
13. Consider King Asa. Second Chronicles 14:2 says, “And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God.”
14. But later on his reign, he stopped trusting in the LORD, and he made an unwise alliance with the heathen Benhadad, the king of Syria.
15. The LORD sent Hanani the prophet to admonish him, but King Asa was wroth with the prophet, and put him in a prison house (II Chron. 16:7-10).
16. Then God sent King Asa an exceeding great disease in his feet. But rather than turn back to God, King Asa went to the physicians for help.
17. The physicians could not help King Asa because this disease was punishment from God. So King Asa died backslidden and (as far as we know) impenitent.
18. Now consider King David. When he started backsliding, the LORD sent the prophet Nathan to confront him. David acknowledged his sin and repented.
19. We read in II Samuel 12:13, “And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.”
20. Coming to the New Testament, we read that the Lord killed Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and as far as we know they were saved.
21. But if they were genuinely saved, Ananias and Sapphira did not go to hell. And King Asa did not go to hell (cf. I Cor. 5:1-5; Hebrews 12:5-9; James 1:13-16; I John 5:16).

22. Asaph had been “envious at the foolish” (Ps. 73:3). He admitted that he himself had been foolish (73:22). And he admitted he was as ignorant as a brute beast (73:22).
23. But Asaph was “pricked” in his heart, and got right with God. And he joyfully declared, “Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand” (Ps. 73:23).

III. GOD GUIDES US (PSALM 73:24).

1. There are many, many wonderful promises in the Bible, and one of the most precious is this: God has promised to guide us right to the end, and then He will take us home to glory (73:24).
2. “For this God is our God forever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death” (Psalm 48:14).
3. “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Pro. 3:5, 6).
4. “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way” (Psalm 25:9).
5. “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psalm 32:8).
6. “And the LORD shall guide thee continually” (Isaiah 58:11).
7. Just as the Lord led the children of Israel by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, He leads us today if we are submissive to His will.
8. God guides us by His Word. Psalm 119:105 says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
9. God will never lead us contrary to the Word of God.
10. God leads us by His Spirit (cf. Acts 8:29; 13:1-4; 16:6, 7).
11. Our Lord said, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).
12. Sometimes, the Holy Spirit guides us in unusual ways. Consider this true story told by Evangelist RA Torrey:
 “A friend of mine walking the busy streets of Toronto suddenly had a deep impression that he should go to the hospital and speak to someone there. He tried to think of someone he knew at the hospital and he could think of but one man. He took it for granted that he was the man he was to speak to, but when he reached the hospital and came to this man’s bedside there was no reason why he should speak to him, and nothing came of the conversation. He was in great perplexity, and standing by his friend’s bed he asked God to guide

him. He saw a man lying on the bed right across the aisle. This man was a stranger; he had been brought to the hospital for an apparently minor trouble, some difficulty with his knee. His case did not seem at all urgent, but my friend turned and spoke to him and had the joy of leading him to Christ. To everybody's surprise, that man passed into eternity that very night. It was then or never."

13. The Holy Spirit does guide and direct us but we have to be sensitive to His guidance, and willing to obey His directions.
14. When the pillar of cloud stopped, the children of Israel stopped. And when the pillar of cloud moved, the children of Israel moved.
15. RA Torrey said, "These inward readings must be always tested by the Word, and we do well when any prompting comes to look up to God and ask Him to make clear to us if this leading is of Him, otherwise we may be led to do things which are absurd and not at all according to the will of God."
16. God leads us by His providence, that is, He so shapes the events of our lives that it becomes clear that He would have us go in a certain direction or do a certain thing.
17. FB Meyer referred to this as waiting for the gradual unfolding of God's plan in providence.
18. Meyer wrote, "It is very remarkable how God guides us by circumstances. At one moment the way may seem utterly blocked, and then shortly afterwards some trivial incident occurs, which might not seem much to others, but which to the keen eye of faith speaks volumes. Sometimes these signs are repeated in different ways in answer to prayer. They are not haphazard results of chance, but the opening up of circumstances in the direction in which we should walk. And they begin to multiply, as we advance towards our goal, just as lights do as we near a populous town, when darting through the land by night express."
19. The key in this matter of guidance is absolute surrender to the will of God. RA Torrey said there must be a "willingness to do joyfully the very things we would not like to do naturally, the very things in connection with which there may be many disagreeable circumstances, because, for example, of association with, or even subordination to, those that we do not altogether like, or difficulties of other kinds. It is to do joyfully what we are to do, simply because it is the will of God, and the willingness to let God lead in any way He pleases, whether it be by His Word, or His Spirit, or by the enlightening of our judgment, or by His providence, or by

whatever way He will. If only we will completely distrust our own judgment and have absolute confidence in God's judgment and God's willingness to guide us, and are absolutely surrendered to His will, whatever it may be, and are willing to let God choose His way of guidance, and will go on step by step as He does guide us, and if we are daily studying His Word to know His will, and are listening for the still small voice of the Spirit, going step by step as He leads, He will guide us with His eye; He will guide us with His counsel to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, and afterward receive us into glory" (cf. Psalm 73:24).

CONCLUSION:

1. God providentially directs those who are submissive to His will. When David Livingstone was twelve years of age, he read an appeal for missionaries to go to China and so he surrendered to go to China. He decided to go to China as a medical missionary, and so he began to complete his medical studies. At just about the time he was ready to go, the Opium War broke out and Englishmen were not allowed to go to China. Robert Moffat was in England at that time telling Christians about the need for missionaries in Africa. David Livingstone was greatly interested in Moffat's story and said, "What is the use of waiting for the end of this abominable Opium War? I will go at once to Africa." Thus the Holy Spirit providentially led David Livingstone to Africa.

2. FB Meyer told a story of how he was crossing the Irish Channel on a dark night. The captain of the ship was able to steer the boat safely into the harbor, even though there were no stars to guide him. FB Meyer asked him how he was able to find his way on such a dark night. The captain explained that there were three navigation lights and when the three lights were lined up together, he could go straight ahead into the dock safely. In a sermon later FB Meyer used these lights to illustrate the way that the Christian may be guided. The three lights stood for the Word of God, the inner conviction of the Holy Spirit, and providential circumstances in our lives. These are ways in which we might know God's will for us.