



SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2018

INTRODUCTION:

This weekend, we are walking through Psalm 73 to show us how the reality of suffering takes on a vastly different meaning when viewed through the lens of Scripture. I share that because Psalm 73 is a psalm about the universal problem of doubt. Doubt affects us all, whether you are a believer or unbeliever. We all have doubts. Why did God do something—or not doing something? It seemed so obvious and easy : You needed this; and you had done what you were supposed to do, obeyed all the Bible told you... but then he didn't come through: You didn't get the job; she said no; the pregnancy test came back negative or the cancer screen came back positive.

Even Bible writers had doubts. Most of them did, in fact. Matthew tells us that some of them even doubted after the resurrection, and he was ascending. He's floating in the air! And... they were so confused as to what God was doing or not doing what they were sure he was going to do (Matt 28:17).

THIS WEEK'S MAIN FOCUS:

Doubt happens when the superficialities of your faith meet the realities of the world.

If you've never doubted, chances are you have only a superficial faith that's never really asked that many questions, and never gone that deep. Some of you have only inherited faith. It's not yours. You have been spoon-fed. So, God uses doubt to drive you deeper into him, to break up the shallow, childish nature of your faith. Think of doubt like a foot poised to go forward or backwards. It can drive you backwards into unbelief. But you can never go forward without picking up your foot. (Spurgeon) God creates doubts to press you deeper into him

I think of when Jesus was talking to his disciples in John 6 and a bunch of them really struggled with the difficult and unsatisfying answers Jesus had given to their questions. And a bunch of them left off following him. Jesus turns to his disciples and says, "Will you also go away?" And Peter, in one of his most shining moments, says, "(Sigh.) Well where else are we going to go? You only have the words of eternal life." There's nowhere else we can turn.

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS: PSALM 73

1. What words are used to describe the wicked in verses 4-15?
2. In verses 16-17, the Psalmist's proximity to God gives him a new perspective on the wicked he described in verses 4-15. How are the wicked described differently in verses 18- 20 because of this new perspective?
3. What specific actions does the author ascribe to God in Psalm 73?
4. Describe the theme and message of this Psalm in one complete sentence.
5. Look at verses 16-17 again. What difference does it make to look to God and worship in the midst of frustrating or devastating circumstances? How is Jesus our true and enduring hope in all circumstances?
6. In verses 1-3 Asaph describes both his trust in God and how he "almost stumbled" even within that trust. Describe a situation in your life when your circumstances overwhelmed what you knew to be true of God and you did or almost stumbled.
7. "Two things destroy envy and doubt - faith and humility." What specific envies and doubts are you dealing with and how can you have faith and humility to combat them?

APPLICATION:

1. Praise God that he is our refuge and counselor and portion forever.
2. Confess to God that there are so many things in the world that compete for our attention and affection other than him and that we so often turn away from him to pursue those things.
3. Thank God that he is good to his people and that he is the one who holds our hand
4. when we almost slip and fall.
5. Ask God to give you discernment and perspective to think rightly about what is truly valuable and from God.