



## Do you like...?

Are you more comfortable with things that are crisp and clear cut or with things that are more murky and flexible? Why?

⇒ Care to share a few examples?

## Messy and confusing, yet also clear and comforting

### Psalm 73 <sup>(NIV)</sup>

#### 1. Read Psalm 73:1-14

##### *A psalm of Asaph.*

- <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 had almost slipped;  
I had nearly lost my foothold.
- <sup>3</sup> For I envied the arrogant  
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- <sup>4</sup> They have no struggles;  
their bodies are healthy and strong.<sup>[a]</sup>
- <sup>5</sup> They are free from common human burdens;  
they are not plagued by human ills.
- <sup>6</sup> Therefore pride is their necklace;  
they clothe themselves with violence.
- <sup>7</sup> From their callous hearts comes iniquity;  
their evil imaginations have no limits.
- <sup>8</sup> They scoff, and speak with malice;  
with arrogance they threaten oppression.
- <sup>9</sup> Their mouths lay claim to heaven,  
and their tongues take possession of the earth.
- <sup>10</sup> Therefore their people turn to them  
and drink up waters in abundance.
- <sup>11</sup> They say, “How would God know?  
Does the Most High know anything?”
- <sup>12</sup> This is what the wicked are like—  
always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.
- <sup>13</sup> Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure  
and have washed my hands in innocence.
- <sup>14</sup> All day long I have been afflicted,  
and every morning brings new punishments

⇒ What “messy and confusing” dilemma does Asaph share?

⇒ How has witnessing these “messy and confusing” situations impacted your heart and faith?

## 2. Read Psalm 73:15-20

<sup>15</sup> If I had spoken out like that,  
I would have betrayed your children.  
<sup>16</sup> When I tried to understand all this,  
it troubled me deeply  
<sup>17</sup> till I entered the sanctuary of God;  
then I understood their final destiny.

<sup>18</sup> Surely you place them on slippery ground;  
you cast them down to ruin.  
<sup>19</sup> How suddenly are they destroyed,  
completely swept away by terrors!  
<sup>20</sup> They are like a dream when one awakes;  
when you arise, LORD,  
you will despise them as fantasies.

⇒ Asaph then fast-forwards to the end – how things end for the wicked. If you're talking with a non-believer, how can you share what Asaph wrote here in *truth* and *love*, with *gentleness* and *respect*?

## 3. Read Psalm 73:21-28

<sup>21</sup> When my heart was grieved  
and my spirit embittered,  
<sup>22</sup> I was senseless and ignorant;  
I was a brute beast before you.  
<sup>23</sup> Yet I am always with you;  
you hold me by my right hand.  
<sup>24</sup> You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will take me into glory.  
<sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

<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> Those who are far from you will perish;  
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.  
<sup>28</sup> But as for me, it is good to be near God.  
I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge;  
I will tell of all your deeds.

⇒ Asaph's head and heart were...

a. in a bad place when:

b. in a good place when:

⇒ When my head and heart are in a "bad place," the most helpful things I can do are:

## Messy and confusing, yet also clear and comforting

### Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

<sup>27</sup> “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

<sup>28</sup> “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

<sup>29</sup> “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

<sup>36</sup> Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

<sup>37</sup> He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

<sup>40</sup> “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. <sup>42</sup> They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

1. Jesus told the crowd the story of the good seeds and the weeds. Later, Jesus told his disciples (and us) what this story means. Look in Matthew 13:36-43:
  - a. The one who sowed the good seed is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. The field is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. The good seeds stand for \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. The weeds are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. The enemy who sows the weeds is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. The harvest is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - g. The harvesters are \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Jesus plants the seed. Jesus knows exactly and entirely what’s going on in the world – with believers and non-believers. Jesus will return and his angels will assist in carrying out perfect judgement on all.
- ⇒ Both Psalm 73 and Matthew 13 show us that life is messy and confusing. As you reflect on these two sections, what are some prime examples of “messy and confusing” in our world today?
- ⇒ God gives clarity and comfort despite our messy and confusing world. What clarity and comfort do you see in Psalm 73 and Matthew 13?
- ⇒ Share a few situations where it’s been important and a helpful blessing to know the above. (For instance: “This unfair / tough / confusing situation happened: \_\_\_\_\_. It was important and helpful to know that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_.”)
3. Based on what God’s taught you in Psalm 73 and Matthew 13, what should YOU:

DO? (and NOT DO?)

PRAY?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Prayer

Dear Jesus, this world can be so confusing... to me. You know all. You are in loving control of all things now and forever. You are never confused. Increase my trust in your wisdom, love, and rule. Don’t let my heart be troubled by today’s problems. Let me clearly see this world, my place in your kingdom, and your great love. In your name, Jesus, I pray. Amen.