

Fat Chance Comfort

Psalm 73:1-28; Luke 12:13-21 / Psalm 42:1-11

[Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 1]

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I. Why Do Wicked People Prosper?

A. The psalmist knows intellectually that God is always good to His people. “A PSALM OF ASAPH. *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*” (PSALM 73:1)

B. Without confidence in God's benevolence, faith goes nowhere. “But *without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” (HEBREWS 11:6)

C. However, a suffering believer surrounded by prosperous and unlimited evil has trouble holding on to the doctrine of Providence. “But as for me, *my feet were almost gone*; my steps had well nigh slipped. For *I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*” (PSALM 73:2-3)

D. Evil seems to prosper. “For *there are no bands in their death*: but their strength *is firm*. They are *not in trouble as other men*; neither are they plagued like *other men*. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; *violence covereth them as a garment.*” (PSALM 73:4-6)

E. What does it mean when God lets the wicked get away with outrages? “Their eyes stand out with fatness: *they have more than heart could wish*. 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.” (PSALM 73:7-9)

F. Can God really be watching when the wicked prosper and the righteous seem not to have a clue?. “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 riches.*” (PSALM 73:10-12)

G. When a strategy always seems to fail, intelligent people change tactics; are virtue and faith dead ends? “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.” (PSALM 73:13-14)

II. Answers Begin with Attitudes and Attitudes Are Adjustable

A. Getting caught in a bad attitude, giving way to heresy, really hurts. “*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*.” (PSALM 73:15-16)

B. Returning to the Bible's presuppositions can right even stubborn bad attitudes. “Until *I went into the sanctuary* of God; *then understood I* their end.” (PSALM 73:17)

C. The wicked do not prosper; their success actually anesthetizes them to their own damnation. “Surely *thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction*. How are they *brought* into desolation, as *in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*” (PSALM 73:18-19)

D. God had warned the wicked not to get comfortable. ***“To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”*** (Deuteronomy 32:35)

E. Sometimes God gives the wicked a premonition. ***“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”*** (PROVERBS 28:1)

III. God Comforts His Own

A. Nightmares disappear at dawn. ***“As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.”*** (PSALM 73:20)

B. In reality, it is those comfortable in a sinful world who should be fearful. ***“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.”*** (PROVERBS 4:18-19)

C. Getting caught envying the wicked really makes a believer feel stupid. ***“Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.”*** (PSALM 73:21-22)

D. Bad attitudes are not enough to wilt Providence; God is faithful. ***“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”*** (PSALM 73:24-26)

E. Get the right attitude and share it. ***“For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”*** (PSALM 73:27-28)