

# The Good Life

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 73. Psalm 73, we're going to read the whole chapter.

Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped. I had nearly lost my foothold, for I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

They have no struggles. Their bodies are healthy and strong. They're free from the burdens common to man. They're not plagued by human ills.

Therefore, pride is their necklace. They clothe themselves with violence. From their calloused hearts come iniquity. The evil conceits of their minds know no limits.

They scoff and speak with malice. In ignorance, they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.

[ 1 : 02 ] Therefore, their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, how can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge? This is what the wicked are like.

Always carefree. They increase in wealth. Surely, in vain I have kept my heart pure. In vain I have washed my hands in innocence.

All day long I've been plagued. I've been punished every morning. If I had said, I will speak thus, I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God.

Then I understood their final destiny. Surely you have placed them on slippery ground. You cast them down to ruin.

How suddenly they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.

[ 2 : 06 ] When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant. I was a brute beast before you. Yet I am always with you.

You hold me by your right hand. You guide me with your counsel. And afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you?

And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish.

You destroy all who are unfaithful to you. 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. Let's give our full attention to God's word. Keep your Bibles open there to Psalm 73.

[ 3 : 13 ] And I have a question for you this morning. Are you living the good life? What is it? How would you define it?

Google it and you'll be inundated with books and lectures and wall plaques telling you what the good life is and how to live it.

It's variously defined by pleasures, peace, contentment, happiness, love, wealth, health, success, power.

On and on it goes. And evidently, few are living this good life as evidenced by the popularity of such books and letters and wall plaques.

For those who are seeking it and finding it ever out of reach and reaching for the next thing. The world has its way of defining the good life.

[ 4 : 16 ] And so does God's word. And particularly here in Psalm 73, he tells us just that. The question that's pressed hard upon us is just this.

What is the good life? And it's important for us to get this right. Lest at the end of life we find we live for all the wrong things.

And chase the good life where it was never to be found. I had a minister friend who told me that he preached Psalm 73 to his congregation at least once a year.

So here it is. Psalm 73. Who wrote this Psalm? Well, you see it there in the title. A Psalm of Asaph. Asaph was a godly man in Israel. He was a worship leader. He was a songwriter. He wrote 12 of the Holy Spirit inspired Psalms that we find in our Bibles.

[ 5 : 23 ] That the Old Testament church sang as they gathered in public worship. And this is one of them. This was a song that was sung in Israel.

And in this Psalm, Asaph describes the good life as defined by the world. And then as he by grace had come to know it himself.

His concise summary of the good life is found in the last verse. Verse 28. Verse 28. But as for me, it is good to be near God.

It is good to be near God. He not only says it at the end of his song, but also right up front in verse 1. Surely, God is good to Israel.

To those who are pure in heart. He's speaking here not of the whole nation of Israel, but the true Israel within Israel, defined as those who are pure in heart.

[ 6 : 29 ] They're the true people of God. Washed and cleansed from their sins. Made right with God through faith in the coming Messiah.

No longer enemies of God, far from him, but now reconciled and brought near to God. And so they enjoy this special goodness of God to his special people.

So for Asaph, since God is good, the good life is living near this God who is so good to his people. And notice this is something that Asaph is absolutely certain of. Surely, he says, I have no doubt about this fact.

But being a godly man, Asaph is also an honest man. And so he confesses to us that he was not always so sure about God's goodness to him.

[ 7 : 32 ] Or that living near him was indeed the good life. And so intense was the struggle that he had within him that he nearly abandoned the good life altogether.

He tells us about it in verse 2. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped. I had nearly lost my foothold.

Maybe you've been walking on a wet mop floor or on the ice and almost slipped and wiped out. Only barely catching your balance in time to be kept from falling.

Asaph says, that's what was happening to me. And let me tell you how it happened. He tells us how he nearly lost his grip on the goodness of God and on the good life of living near him with a pure heart.

He says, it was because of two things that I saw. He saw the prosperity of the wicked on the one hand. And he saw the afflictions of himself on the other.

[ 8 : 43 ] First, what he saw in the wicked. He says, I nearly slipped. Verse 3. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

So as he looked at the wicked, he saw that they lived without God. Not near him, but apart from him.

Forgetful of God with no concern for God. No concern for obeying his commandments. No fear of his judgment. As Psalm 10.4 says, in all of his thoughts there was no room for God.

It was a God less life then that the wicked are living. A life without God. A life without God is a wicked life.

It's a wicked thing to be content to live apart from God. Well, that's what they were.

[ 9 : 42 ] They were just living for themselves, not him. And yet, though they were wicked, they were prospering and succeeding in life. Everything was going well for them.

And that was the galling thing for Asaph. They not only sin, but they actually prosper by their sinning. They tell lies in order to get off the hook and not bear the consequences of their evil actions.

They get away with murder. Literally. They steal and cheat. And yet grow even more wealthy. And not only are they prosperous and wealthy, they're also carefree and healthy.

He says in verse 4, they have no struggles. Their bodies are healthy and strong. They're the ones with sculpted bodies and beautiful bodies.

Verse 5. They're free from the burdens common to man. They're not plagued by human ills. They somehow seem to escape all the troubles that afflict the rest of us.

[10:51] Their kids never get sick. They never get diseases and die. They never have these problems in their cars breaking down. They just seem to live above the common afflictions of life.

And rather than these blessings from God moving them to give thanks to God, the giver of every blessing, they are ungrateful and even arrogant.

Not only do they fail to give God thanks, but they actually are proud of the way that they're living.

Verse 6 says, Therefore, pride is their necklace. They boast as if their health and wealth and success was all deserved and earned by them.

They're not beholden to any. Not even God. And so they think they're so important. After all, look at all my health and wealth, prosperity, fame, and ease.

[11:56] Verse 9 says, So proud and bold in their arrogance are they that their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.

They're so arrogant that they brag as if they own heaven and they own the earth. They've got life by the tail and are so proud of themselves for it.

And what do we find in the arrogance? Is it not true that those who are arrogant and think of themselves as better than others are often the ones found oppressing others, misusing others, abusing them, taking advantage of them, stepping on them as they're making their way to the top, pushing their weight around, crushing all who get in their way?

They've got the money and the lawyers to sue and to oppress those without the money. And so verses 6b to 8, it says, They clothe themselves with violence.

They can be violent to other people. From their callous hearts come iniquity. The evil conceits of their minds, that's their own self-importance, knows no limits.

[13:16] They scoff and speak with malice. And in their arrogance, they threaten oppression. And so they're bold in their sinning, and they use their money and power to oppress others.

And yet, in another sense, they're popular. Not only the rich, but also the famous, the icons of culture, the entertainers, the actors, the movers and shakers of society.

Verse 10 says, So that their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They look to them as, wow, they're living the good life.

And so they want to hear what they say. And so they watch as they're interviewed on the talk shows, and they read the magazine. What? They turn to them and just drink up whatever they say. And all the while, these could not care less about God, His commandments.

There's no fear of God before their eyes. Rather, they mock God. They dismiss God as if He's ignorant of how they're living. Verse 11, they say, How can God know?

[14:32] Does the Most High have knowledge? Does He know about my wickedness, about my violence, my arrogance, and all the ways that I am cheating and stealing and sinning?

No. And so they not only put other men down, they even put God down as if He's beneath them. Now, Asaph sees this.

He sees the wicked. Living like that. And He sums them all up in verse 12. So this is what the wicked are like. He's just describing. Now, this brief summary.

They're always carefree, and they increase in wealth. Not a care in the world. Careless of God and others. Living only for self and the pleasures of sin.

And all the while, they just get richer and richer. Now, that's what Asaph saw. Now, that's what Asaph saw. The arrogant, wicked, prospering. Meanwhile, how are things going for godly Asaph?

[15:39] Well, not so well. Not so good for Asaph. Notice what we see about Asaph.

Asaph, who makes every effort to live a holy life before God. Every effort to keep His heart pure and His hands clean. Verse 14.

Verse 14. He says, All day long, I have been plagued. I've been punished every morning. In other words, I don't get away with anything.

They get away with murder. I don't get away with anything. If I sin, God is disciplining me for my sins. I wake up to my problems every morning.

And they follow me all around, all day long. Like a plague. And His conclusion to the matter is given in verse 13. Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure.

[16:38] In vain have I washed my hands in innocence. So, He sees the wicked prospering. He sees Himself, the godly, suffering affliction.

And He says, What have I got to show for my holy living? For obeying God. For killing sin. For denying myself.

Keeping myself pure. Both on the inside and the outside. Nothing but problems. That's all I got. That's all I've got is troubles.

It's all been for naught. What? What's the use if this is all I get? Surely in vain have I kept myself pure. How different is this surely of verse 13 than the surely of verse 1?

You see how He had slipped in His thoughts. Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure. Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure. Oh, Asaph is low, isn't he?

[ 17 : 44 ] He is not so sure now. He's to such a low state that he's now sure that the wicked were the winners. And that the godly are the losers.

At least he is the loser. He's allowed the prosperity of the wicked and his own troubles to twist his definition of the good life.

He begins to define the good life as the life of the prosperous wicked. And he begins to envy them. To wish he was them. That he could somehow trade places with them.

And all this is because of what he saw. Folks, when we start living by sight instead of by faith in the unseen, we get into deep trouble.

We put ourselves in slippery ground, in danger of falling, in danger of confusing what the good life is really all about. So Asaph was seen through green eyes of envy.

[ 18 : 52 ] You know, envy always distorts reality. When you're suffering with envy, the grass always seems greener on the other side.

And you can start to think that the wicked are not suffering at all. And to begin to exaggerate their prosperity and to diminish their troubles. That's what Asaph did.

I mean, he acts like they never have a sniffle. They never have anything wrong with them. That's the way we can feel when we're being beat up in life. And we look at others and we somehow think they're escaping it all.

But don't think for a moment, godly, that the prosperous wicked have no troubles common to man. It is the rich and the famous who are often checking in and out of rehab programs for alcohol, drug abuse, depression, suicidal tendencies.

Divorce and remarriage and divorce and remarriage and divorce and remarriage are wreaking havoc upon their personal and family lives. And yes, they do get diseases.

[ 20 : 00 ] And yes, they do get old and die. Just like everyone else. And beneath their makeup, their beauty is fading. And their popularity is being replaced by the upcoming stars.

Asaph, we need to be assured that whatever we see on the tabloids, on the television, whatever we see, we can know this from the word of God, that the way of the transgressor is hard.

It's hard. It has its hardness. Asaph was only going by sight and thought they somehow lived without it. Though they outwardly appear to have untrammelled success, they have troubles like you do.

So Asaph was in deep, deep trouble. His feet were starting to slip. He was ready to give up his walk with God and his keeping his heart and hands pure and to pursue the sinful pleasures with the world.

And while this was going on inside of his head, he had to keep it to himself. Remember, he's a leader in Israel. He's getting up before them and leading them in the worship of God.

[ 21 : 17 ] And he says, if I would have spoken what I was thinking, I would have caused the children of God to stumble. So he had to keep it in.

And so he's wrestling with these things in his own mind without speaking of it. And he says, the more I tried to understand this, the wicked oppressed, the wicked prospering and the godly oppressed, the more oppressive that it was to me.

Until. There's this great until. What was the turning point in Asaph's life as he's now looking back on it and telling us about it? What changed his perspective?

What kept his feet from slipping and altogether falling away from God? Well, he tells us, this was oppressive to me until, verse 17, I entered the sanctuary of God.

And then I understood their final destiny. So this is the second part of the psalm. He told us how he was losing his foothold and how his perspective was skewed in the first half.

[ 22 : 29 ] Now he's telling us how he regained his foothold on the goodness of God and what the good life really is for the righteous. He says, I entered the sanctuary of God.

And there I got understanding. When you come into the sanctuary of God, you don't check your mind at the door and just come in and emote with your emotions.

You come in with your mind. And gain understanding. Oh, how we need the regular worship of God in the sanctuary where God is, where his truth is heard.

It corrects our wrong thoughts about God, about ourselves, about the wicked, about the good life.

We saw it again this morning, this whole series on the worldview in Sunday school.

So we need this to reorient our minds, our understanding to what the good life really is. And that's what happened to Asaph.

[ 23 : 36 ] You know, God knew we would need a weekly adjustment. And he gave us the Sabbath, the Lord's Day, a day of rest and worship to focus our eyes on God and his word.

And to fix our minds on things unseen and eternal. To help us not walk by sight, but to walk by faith in the unseen God and his truth, in his word.

To ever be reminded of the good life. Not as the world defines it. In which we live. We live in that atmosphere. And are often affected by it and pressed into its mold.

But the good life as it is in truth. And it's here in the sanctuary where the truth of God is preached.

That the cheap and the short-lived substitutes of the good life are exposed for what they really are.

Now, when Asaph went into the sanctuary, what did he see? Remember Old Testament worship in the temple. There was a lot of blood, wasn't there?

[ 24 : 48 ] There was a lot of sacrifice going on in the sanctuary. And it all pointed to the substitutionary death of Jesus for sinners.

And that was something that he got a new perspective on as well. Well, as well. The truth that is now made plain in the gospel. By the sacrifice of Christ in our place on the truth.

And we see that. As we gather around his word. So, there's a challenge here. Are you seeing life?

Are you just seeing it? Or are you understanding it?

Understanding was found in the sanctuary. As God's word defines reality. As it really is. As the good life. As it really is.

And the lie. That the world presents it as. So, what did Asaph come to understand in the sanctuary about these wicked, prospering people? Well, he says, I understood their final destiny.

[ 25 : 54 ] I understood their end. Now, you don't see their end. No, you see them prospering. But they're on their way somewhere. They're going to a destination.

And that's what Asaph saw. They're living with their pleasures of sin for just a short season to be followed by an eternity in hell.

And so, before we judge things by the easiness of the broad road. And see the straight and narrowness of this narrow road.

We need to remember the destination. The one leads to life. The other leads to destruction. Verse 18.

This is what he saw. Surely. Here's another surely. Now he's getting back to what is really sure.

Surely, God, you place them, them on slippery ground.

[ 26 : 57 ] You cast them down to ruin. How suddenly they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies, as nothings.

These important somebodies are really nothings to God when he rises to judge them. And it's the prosperous wicked, then, who are the ones who are on slippery ground.

They're the ones who are ready for a sudden fall that will come upon them. The ruin and tears of hell from which they'll never recover. And that truth changes everything for Asaph.

These people are not to be envied. They're to be pitied. Theirs is definitely not the good life when eternal life is the end of it. So Asaph repented of his folly, of ever envying the wicked and thinking that they were living the good life.

He tells the Lord in verses 21 and 22, When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, when I was in that state, I was senseless and ignorant.

[ 28 : 10 ] I was like a brute beast before you. I was a dumb ox. How could I ever be so stupid as to envy the wicked?

This is his repentance. But now by faith in the truth that he understands in the sanctuary, he sees that the good life was his.

The good life is really mine with all my afflictions. And notice how he defines it. Verses 23 and following. So that's what they have to look forward to.

They live under that Damocles sword that's just hanging over their head that any moment could sweep them away into eternal tears. But by contrast, verse 23, Yet I am always with you. You hold me by my right hand. Remember what his summary of the good life is, is to be near God. And we're starting to hear that from him, aren't we?

[ 29 : 18 ] I'm always with you, near you. You hold me by my right hand. How close must God be to hold you by your right hand?

Verse 24, You guide me with your counsel. And afterward, you will take me into glory. You're my guide through this life.

And then you personally will receive me into glory. Oh, now he's talking about his future destiny. Not to perish with the wicked. But glory.

And that for a hell deserving sinner that I am. What a future destiny for such a sinner. Divine guidance here with God's counsel and glory hereafter.

That's the good life. Verse 25, Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire beside you. You know, Asaph couldn't always say that, could he? He was desiring the prosperity of the wicked.

[ 30 : 25 ] He couldn't say, I have nothing on earth I desire beside you. No, he wanted what they had. I thought I had to have that to be happy. I thought I had to have this to have the life that was really good.

And I thought that if God was good, he had to give it to me. But now he begins anew to enjoy God himself. As the greatest good. In heaven and on earth.

It's in the sanctuary that we come to appreciate the true worth. Faith looks to him as he's presented in the scriptures and in the sanctuary.

And the world loses its seductive attraction. Because we see him as our priceless treasure. And then we say, You can have this old world. Give me Jesus.

I'd rather have Jesus than silver and gold. I'd rather have Jesus than their health and wealth. Their popularity and beauty and all the rest. If I have nothing besides him, I'm rich beyond telling.

[ 31 : 41 ] But friend, you can have everything without him. And you will be poor in life and poor for eternity. How rich I am since Jesus came my way.

Redeem my soul and turn my night today. How very rich. How rich I am. Heaven itself has no higher treasure than Jesus. Is that why you want to go to heaven?

If not, I wonder if you're saved. I wonder if you really know what it is that you've been saved from and saved to. For God has called us to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

That's salvation. And I have no greater joy than knowing Christ. Nothing greater in heaven or earth. And then he goes on in verse 26.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Notice Asaph's circumstances have not changed. He's still struggling with poor health.

[ 32 : 40 ] He's saying, My heart, it may give out on me. My strength, it may fail. So he's still got a peck of problems.

But God is his. He is his strength in this life. And he is his portion forever. I get to have him forever. And so his whole definition of the good life, you see, has been restored, put right. And his feet are no longer slipping. He's back on firm ground.

I have God as mine. And my portion, both in life and in death and forever and ever. So he comes to the last two verses and sums up the good life.

It's living near God. The contrast with the prosperous wicked could not be clear in these words, far and near.

[ 33 : 40 ] Look for those two words, far and near, in these last two verses. Verse 27. Those who are far from you will perish. You destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

Now what is there to envy in that? Verse 28. But as for me, it is good to be near God. God. I have made the sovereign Lord my rescue. I will tell of all your deeds.

Are you living near God? Intimate with God. Close, tight relationship.

The Bible tells us that we all like sheep have gone astray. We have turned each one to his own way. We've strayed from God.

We have put distance between ourselves and God. We are far from God. We are content. We were content to live without God.

[ 34 : 43 ] That is one of the greatest sins. To be content to live without God. We were made for God. We were made by Him. We were made to glorify Him. He sent His Son to save us from our sins.

And we say, no thank you. I'm doing fine without Him. Don't need Him. Don't want Him. Just to live far from God is a wicked, wicked life.

And that's the way we all came into this world. We had gone astray, away from God. But this good God in love for this rebellious, wicked world sent His one and only Son into this wicked world to bear the punishment of God's infinite wrath that our sins deserve.

That whoever turns from going his own way and comes back to God through faith in Jesus Christ should not perish but have everlasting life.

And what is everlasting life? Jesus tells us in John 17, 3, this is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

[ 35 : 57 ] Have you been brought back to God? No longer far from God. No longer not caring about God. Now He's everything to you.

Now He's the sum of your life. To know Him. Paul writes to the Ephesian Gentile believers saying, you were separated and far from God but now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Do you know it? It took the blood of Christ to bring us sinners near to God. God is so holy and we are so sinful that there is no way that we can be brought near to God unless the Son of God is damned in our place.

And that's what happened. And that's what happened to these Ephesians and Paul's. You were far and you've been brought near by the blood of Jesus. Just by trusting in what He's done for sinners. Him shedding His blood. Him being punished in our place. That's what brought you near. Peter says the same in 1 Peter 3.18 Christ died for sins once for all time.

[ 37 : 20 ] The righteous one for the unrighteous to what? To bring us to God. salvation is about bringing us in relationship of nearness to God when we were far from Him.

Are you living near God? Oh Jesus, blessed Redeemer, sent from the heart of God. Hold us who wait before Thee near to the heart of God.

To live near to God is to walk with God. It's to talk with God. It's to listen to God as He speaks in His Word.

It's to lean on God. It's to live this shared life of fellowship, nearness to God. A life lived with Him. A life lived upon Him.

A life lived for Him. It's all about Him. That's the life. The good life. That's why He saved us. That we might live near Him.

[ 38 : 27 ] And that alone is the good life. It begins here and it continues on into heaven forever. It's in walking near Him that we find fullness of joy and everlasting pleasures at His right hand.

So, since living near to God is the good life, you can live it whatever your outward circumstances are. Isn't that encouraging? Living with God, living with Jesus, you can live the good life in joy and in sorrow.

Are you living with Jesus in joy? Are you living with Jesus in sorrow? You can. You can live with Jesus in sickness.

You can live with Jesus in health. You can live with Jesus in plenty. You can live with Jesus in want. There was an old widow living alone in poverty, forgotten by her family, in pain and poor health, and her minister would visit her and he would invariably ask, how are you doing?

And she would say each time, I'm doing well in the things that count. Doing well in the things that count. She'd learned what Asaph learned, that the good life is living near God.

[ 39 : 54 ] That's what counts. That's what matters. It's well with my soul that there's nothing between my soul and the Savior. All my sins are forgiven, blotted out, forever remembered no more by the blood of Jesus.

Jesus is mine. I am His forever and forever. He's my Savior. He's my Lord. He's my King. He's my helper.

He's my best friend. As for me, it's good to live near God. Now what about you? Can you say that this morning?

Or if you were honest, would you have to say that you're still seeking the good life apart from God? That for you, the good life doesn't have to do with communion with God.

The good life has to do with everything apart from God. Even the good things that God gives. Health, wealth, prosperity, all the rest. But that's the good life without God.

[ 41 : 02 ] Oh, you may throw Him a bone once in a while, but He's not the real good in your life. You go on seeking the good life that way and you'll never find it.

It's only found near God, the one we were made for. And only the Savior Jesus can bring you near Him. What are you choosing? Those are the only two choices in life, to live near God or to live without Him.

And it's the oldest strategy of the devil to get you to believe that the good life is found apart from God. That was the strategy He used with Eve in the garden in her perfection, wasn't it?

God to entertain doubts about the goodness of God's heart toward her. He slandered God's goodness. God's really not out for your good, Eve.

He's not really wanting you to enjoy the good life. Oh, He's put a restriction in your life, hasn't He? You see, He's holding back on you. No, if you want the good life, it's going to be found in distance from God.

[ 42 : 11 ] Follow me. I'll lead you to the good life. Are you believing the slander of the devil this morning instead of the truth of God? If you haven't come to God through faith in Jesus Christ, I must tell you, you're still believing the lie.

The only way the devil can keep you apart from God is to hide from you the goodness of God. And He does that with His lies. He doesn't want you finding real life, eternal life in the Lord Jesus.

Is God good? Esaf says yes. Calvary says yes. He's good beyond telling. And oh, that today you would taste and see if you're without Christ.

If you're still seeking good apart from God, that today you would taste. Just taste and see how good the Lord is. Receive Him and you'll find what we have found.

That living near God is the good life and that living near Him makes you want to get even nearer, still nearer, close to His heart.

[ 43 : 25 ] So make the sovereign Lord your refuge. Put your trust in Him to save you. And then with Asaph, you will say to the Lord, I will tell of all your deeds. believers, there's an application here for us.

Asaph teaches us that even the godly can get so out of sorts at times that we begin to wonder if keeping our hearts and hands pure really is the good life.

That maybe we've been wrong and really they're the ones that are walking off the winners. And we start to envy them and we fail to appreciate what is ours in Christ.

What kind of a witness do you think Asaph was while he was envying the wicked? He didn't have anything good to say about God.

And that's why he realized it and kept his mouth shut. But that's not what we're called. We've been saved to be his witnesses and to tell how good he is. But when Asaph was brought back to reality and found once again that the good life is to live near God, he says, I've taken refuge in the sovereign Lord.

[ 44 : 43 ] I will tell of all his deeds. You couldn't stop him then as he kept telling others of how good God is and what he's done for hell-deserving sinners like himself.

Fresh from the battle and more sure than ever, Asaph declares for one and all to hear, surely God is good to Israel to those who are pure in heart and the good life is living near to this good God.

And so our witness, believers, is to be the natural overflow of a heart that's thrilled with Jesus Christ. A heart that can't get over how good God is to us personally.

He's so wonderful that we must tell others about his goodness. And if you have nothing to tell to others, it could be a sign that you've lost sight of Christ.

You've lost sight of what a glorious thing it is to be a Christian. To be saved. To no longer be far from God and perishing at any moment, but to live with God in fellowship with Him.

[ 45 : 51 ] May the Lord increase our enjoyment of Him to where it overflows in telling others. Let's stand and sing nearer, still nearer, and may this be the prayer of our hearts as we sing.

Maybe some of you for the first time call out to the Lord to save you. Draw near through faith in the Lord Jesus. And however many times we have drawn near, let's make this our prayer again that we would draw still nearer.

Oh, our great God of grace and mercy, when we had wondered, every one of us turning to our own way, straying far from You. You didn't need us, but we desperately needed You.

We could not draw near to You in our sin. that You gave the ultimate sacrifice of Your Son who made the ultimate sacrifice of His own life in our place, that through His blood we might be drawn near.

By Your Spirit, You have drawn us to this Savior, to His blood and righteousness, and to this life of nearness to You. Oh, would You bring others to taste and see how good You are and just what life is meant to be and can be for them if they would come to Christ.

[ 47 : 15 ] Save people today. We confess our sins, Father, that we're often like godly Asaph, hankering after what the world has, living by sight instead of by faith.

Thank You for this weekly adjustment in the sanctuary, singing Your praises, seeking You in prayer, reading Your Word, hearing it preached, keeping of the Lord's Supper.

All these things, Lord, You knew we would need to make it through this journey all the way home to heaven. So we thank You and help us to make the most then of this day, the market day of our soul, to fix our eyes on that which is unseen.

Thank You that we have Your presence with us and Your counsel through this journey and then glory forevermore. We give You thanks in Jesus' name.

Amen.