

SLIPPERY SPOT

Thursday, May 17

Reading: Psalm 73

Psalm 73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. 2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.

The 19th-century hymnwriter Ira D. Sankey was walking with his young son on a cold winter day. As they came to an icy spot, Mr. Sankey said, “My boy, you’d better let me take your hand.”

The youngster didn’t want to take his hand from his warm pocket, so he disregarded his father’s suggestion. Just then he lost his footing and took a nasty fall. “All right, Daddy,” he said, “let me hold on to your coat.”

But the boy’s weak grip was not enough to hold him up when his feet went out from under him again. Getting up, he said, “Daddy, you’d better hold my hand!” He didn’t fall again.¹

Asaph wrote about a spiritual “slippery spot” in Psalm 73. He had looked around and seen the wicked prosper. He envied their seeming care-free life (73:2-5). They seemed to get away with sin without punishment (73:6-8). The people flocked to their boastful words and drank them in like water. They see no need for God in their lives (73:9-11). All this confused Asaph. He had tried to live a godly life and what had it gotten him - trouble! (73:12-15).

Everything changes, however, when the psalmist visited God’s house (73:16-22). There he heard the Word of God and worshipped with others who loved the Lord. There his questions were finally answered. All his negative thinking slipped away as he realized the final destiny of the wicked he had envied. They are the ones on “slippery ground.” They are the ones who will be “swept away.” His eyes turn from an earthly perspective to eternal values.

The closing verses of this psalm contain some of the most encouraging words for God’s people (73:23-28). God is always with us, holding us by the hand. His counsel guides us and His strength upholds us even when our own hearts fail. And we have the wonderful promise that when this life is over “afterward You will take me into glory.”

Because of these wonderful truths, Asaph is no longer on slippery ground. All the things the wicked clamor after are nothing compared to a relationship with God (compare verses 12 and 25). With Asaph, we should say the “earth has nothing I desire besides You.” While the wicked are far from God, we can rejoice that we are “near God” and we can depend on Him because He is sovereign.

Ever feel you’re on a slippery spot? Ever felt like your faith was slipping because someone got promoted over you by doing some underhanded deeds? Ever looked at the apparent leisure and care-free life of the rich-and-famous and wondered why you live to honor God? Look to God for guidance and strength. Gather with God’s people to receive encouragement and support. And always remember that it is hard to slip when we are holding on to God’s hand.

¹ Dennis J. DeHaan. “Slippery Places” Our Daily Bread, December 5, 1994.