

## SPIRITUAL CRISIS

### Psalm 73

#### I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Everyone who watches Hallmark movies... knows that in each one of these movies there is always a crisis time...when the romance between the man and woman who are the subjects of the movie... appears to be doomed.
- b. Up to that point... everything appears to be going good... but then a crisis hits... and it looks like the romance is over.
- c. The crisis time usually comes with about 20 minutes left in the movie ... but don't worry... in every movie the crisis is resolved ... just in time for the Hallmark kiss between the man and the woman... and the romance and relationship is saved.
- d. In Psalm 73... the author writes in a very honest way...about a crisis time in his life... a time when he had a crisis of faith...a crisis in his relationship with God.
- e. This man was not an unbeliever... he was a believer.
- f. We know that believers can have times... when they question what God is doing... or has done in their life... and in the world around them.
- g. I believe we can learn a lot from the crisis of faith... that the writer of Psalm 73 went through.
- h. First... I want you to see that this man begins this Psalm with the conclusion... *Psalm 73:1 (NKJV) "Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart."*
- i. The Psalmist is saying... I want you to understand... there was a time when I questioned God's goodness... there was a time when I questioned God's fairness.

- j. There was a time when I had a real spiritual crisis in my life... and in this Psalm... I am going to tell you about that crisis.
- k. But before I begin my story... I want to tell you the conclusion.
- l. I may not understand all that God has done and I may not understand all that God is doing in my life and in the world... but I want you to know and I want you to understand ... that God is good ... and I will never question His goodness again.
- m. So what caused this crisis of faith in the life of this believer... and how was it resolved?

## II. THE PROSPERITY OF SINNERS-

- a. The spiritual crisis in this man's life began... when he began to focus on what appeared to be ... the prosperity of sinners.
- b. The Psalmist is a believer... but one day he began to look around at what appeared to be the prosperity of those who didn't believe.
- c. *Psalm 73:2-12 (NLT2) "But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone. For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness. They seem to live such painless lives; their bodies are so healthy and strong. They don't have troubles like other people; they're not plagued with problems like everyone else. They wear pride like a jeweled necklace and clothe themselves with cruelty. These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever wish for! They scoff and speak only evil; in their pride they seek to crush others. They boast against the very heavens, and their words strut throughout the earth. And so the people are dismayed and confused, drinking in all their words. "What does God know?" they ask. "Does the Most High even know what's happening?" Look at these wicked people, enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply."*
- d. We know that not all saved people are poor... and not all lost people are rich.

- e. But this man began to focus... on how prosperous and at peace many lost people seemed to be.
- f. These people did not believe in God... these people did not care about God ... they did not give God a second thought.
- g. If they ever said anything about God... it was usually in a curse word.
- h. Yet, these people appeared to be...prosperous, blessed and successful.
- i. They had nice homes ... they had land... possessions... they had big money in the bank... they were healthy and strong... they were respected, admired and celebrated by the world.
- j. But they never acknowledged God as the source of their blessings... they never thanked God for their blessings.
- k. And they were prideful... they thought they were better than other people ... they thought they were more important than other people... and they scoffed at the idea that they had a need for God.
- l. These people ignored God's law... they ignored God's commands ... they lived the way they wanted to live...they did what they wanted to do.
- m. If they felt like ripping someone off they did it... if they felt like lying they did it... if they felt like sleeping with someone... they did.
- n. And it looked like God never did anything to them... it seemed as if the more they strutted around... and the more they lived the way they wanted to... the more prosperous they were.
- o. These people had no fear of God... and it looked like they had no fear of death.
- p. The Psalmist saw that when many of these unbelievers died... they died in peace... they died with a smile on their face... and the world celebrated their memory.

### III. THE PROBLEMS OF THE SAINTS- (Prosperity of Sinners)

- a. The crisis in this man's life came... when he compared the apparent prosperity of many sinners... with the problems that many saints... those who believe in Christ... experience in this world.
- b. *Psalm 73:13-16 (NLT2) "Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason? I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain. If I had really spoken this way to others, I would have been a traitor to your people. So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is!"*
- c. The Psalmist said... "I don't understand it... I don't understand how many people who ignore God ... who reject God... who even hate God ... seem to live in peace and prosperity.
- d. While people like me... people who love God... people who strive to live clean and holy lives... people who want to live lives that honor God... people who want to obey God's law and His commands.
- e. Have to scrimp and scrap just to get by in life... and we have so many troubles and trials and struggles in this life.
- f. And the Psalmist asked God... "How is that fair?"
- g. The Psalmist said it came to the point where he was asking himself ... "Is faith worth?... Is living for the Lord worth it?... Is giving and serving and sacrificing for God worth it?"
- h. To put it in New Testament terms... the Psalmist was asking... "Is the Christian life worth it?"
- i. When the Psalmist had this crisis of faith... he was miserable and confused... he did not want say anything to anyone else about what he was feeling... and discouraged them and drag them into his crisis.
- j. *Psalm 73:15 (NLT2) "If I had really spoken this way to others, I would have been a traitor to your people."*

k. The Psalmist was in full crisis mode... so what did he do?  
(Prosperity of Sinners...Problems of the Saints)

#### IV. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SANCTUARY-

- a. The Psalmist said... he went to church... he went to God's house ... and in God's house... when he listened to God's Word being proclaimed ... he finally understood.
- b. *Psalm 73:17-20 (NLT2) "Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked. Truly, you put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction. In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors. When you arise, O Lord, you will laugh at their silly ideas as a person laughs at dreams in the morning."*
- c. You get the idea... that for whatever reason...it had been a while since this man had gone to church.
- d. One of the great values about attending church... one of the great values about hearing God's Word taught and proclaimed in the church ... is that it helps Christians to keep the right perspective about life.
- e. The more a believer misses church... the more their thinking and their perspective on life... will be dominated by the lost world.
- f. This is one of the reasons the Bible says in Hebrews 10:25... that Christian are not to forsake the assembly of the church.
- g. That is what happened to this man... he started missing church and the ways and the thinking of the world started to dominate his life mind and life.
- h. When this man got back in church... where the Word of God was being faithfully preached and taught... when he returned to worship ...and he returned to reading his Bible as he should... then he understood the destiny of those who are lost.

- i. There is no reason for believers to envy those who are lost in this world... no matter how rich they are... no matter how famous they are... no matter how powerful they are... no matter how much the world adores, celebrates and worships them.
- j. There is no reason for you and me... to envy the lost celebrities of this world.
- k. Because no matter how wonderful their life may seem in this world ... the moment these unbelievers close their eyes in death... all the good and plenty they had in this world is gone... and they are lost forever.
- l. Here is the destiny of the lost... *Psalm 73:18-19 (CSBBible) "Indeed, you put them in slippery places; you make them fall into ruin. How suddenly they become a desolation! They come to an end, swept away by terrors."*
- m. Remember the question Jesus asked in *Matthew 16:26*... "*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*"
- n. For the believer... all of the pain, suffering, struggling, troubles, trials and persecutions that we will ever face will be in this world... all of that ends when we die... and we go to be with Christ in Heaven.
- o. But for the unbeliever... all of the joy, pleasure and plenty that they have will be in this world... that all ends when they die.
- p. The unbeliever does not rest in peace when they die... they do not go to a better place when they died.
- q. When an unbeliever dies...the pain and suffering ... and the terror... of a lost eternity separated from God begins.
- r. When the Psalmist understood the eternal destiny of those he had been envying... he confessed his sin... and he asked God to forgive him.

- s. *Psalm 73:22 (NKJV) "I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You."*
- t. The Psalmist said... "Lord, I am sorry that I questioned your goodness and your fairness...I was as stupid as a dumb donkey...to envy the lost."
- u. Here is a believer... who is repenting of his sin... believers today don't repent like believers use to... today believers just let their sins keep piling up... they let their sins keep hindering their fellowship with God... their usefulness in God's service... robbing them of joy... and all that God wants to do in their life.
- v. When was the last time you as a believer... really confessed and repented of any wrong you have done?
- w. That unthinking generic prayer that we often pray... "Lord, if I have done any wrong, please forgive my sins..." does not cut it... our confession needs to be real, right and specific.

(Prosperity of Sinners...Problems of the Saints... Perspective of the Sanctuary)

## **V. THE PROMISE OF THE PSALMIST-**

- a. When his crisis of faith was over... the Psalmist returned to the Lord ... he returned to the sanctuary... he returned to the Word ... he returned to the people of God... he returned to the work of God.
- b. And the Psalmist vowed that even if he did not understand what God was doing or not doing in his life and in the world... he would never again question the goodness and the love of God.
- c. So the Psalmist ended his Psalm as he began it... by declaring that God is good.
- d. *Psalm 73:28 (NKJV) "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 Your works."*

## **VI. CONCLUSION-**

- a. There are many things that I don't understand in this world... and I don't always understand what God has done or is doing in my life and in the world.
- b. But many years ago... I settled my heart on this truth... God is good ... He is faithful... and He is my Lord... and whom am I to question His goodness, love and wisdom?
- c. No matter what happens to me in this world...I will serve Him to my dying breath... no matter what... because I know a better day is coming.
- d. It is foolish to envy the lost people of this world...who are rich, powerful and famous.
- e. Like the Rich Man in the parable of Jesus ... when they die they leave that all behind for a lost eternity.
- f. What is your destiny?...it all depends on what you do with Jesus Christ.
- g. Please trust in Him... gospel