Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"I Almost Grabbed the Wrong Safety Strap"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Psalm 73; *Psalm 22:1-9*

There are moments when life feels like the ground has shifted beneath our feet. We have been trying to walk in obedience, to keep our hearts pure before ADONAI, and yet everything seems to be going wrong. Meanwhile, someone who openly disregards Him appears to be flourishing. They have the money, the influence, the comfort, the apparent shalom. We look at their lives, then at our own troubles, and begin to wonder, "Lord, what's the deal? I thought THIS was the way toward life!" In those moments, what looks like genuine security may not be secure at all. And the One we know to be our security can seem difficult to grasp when we desperately need something solid to hold onto.

That is the crisis Asaph describes in Psalm 73. He begins with a declaration of certainty: *"Surely God is good to Israel, to the pure in heart"* (Ps. 73:1). That word "surely"—akh—is almost a creed: This I know to be true! But then he takes us into a season when his confidence nearly collapsed. The psalm traces a journey down into disillusionment and back up into clarity. It is the testimony of someone who came dangerously close to reaching for the wrong safety strap, but discovered that even while his feet were slipping, ADONAI had not let go of his hand.

1. WHEN MY EYES DISTORT WHAT MY HEART BELIEVES (PS. 73:2–14)

Asaph admits, *"But as for me, my feet almost slipped. My steps nearly slid out from under me"* (Ps. 73:2). Why? *"For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked"* (Ps. 73:3). The word translated "prosperity" is *shalom*. Imagine that! Here is a man seeking to walk faithfully with ADONAI, looking at these arrogant, boastful people and thinking, "They have the shalom ***I'm*** supposed to have!" They seem untouched by ordinary human struggles, healthy and well-fed, free to indulge every imagination of their hearts. They wear pride like a necklace and wrap themselves in violence like a garment. They scoff, threaten, and act as though nobody can stop them. And apparently, everything is going wonderfully for them.

Asaph's problem was not simply what his eyes saw, but how his heart began interpreting it. He was calculating the goodness of God by what was immediately visible. The longer he stared at their apparent success, the more exaggerated the picture became. Finally, another "surely" emerged, but this time it was the wrong conclusion: *"Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence"* (Ps. 73:13). In other words, "I've been choosing purity, denying myself, seeking to obey, and for what? They do whatever they want, and I'm the one facing affliction every morning!" Have you ever heard that whisper? Why keep dying to self when others indulge themselves and seem to get ahead?

Beware: that is precisely when false security begins to look like something worth grabbing.

2. BRING MY QUESTIONS INTO HIS SANCTUARY (PS. 73:15–20)

Asaph was trying to reconcile the books. By his calculations, righteousness appeared to add up to suffering, while arrogance and wickedness added up to success. The math simply did not work. Yet he recognized something critically important: *"If I had said: 'I will speak thus,' surely I would have betrayed a generation of Your children"* (Ps. 73:15). Had he taken his distorted calculations and publicly declared them to be the truth, he could have led others into the very confusion that was threatening to overwhelm him. His doubts were real, but he refused to turn his unanswered questions into a reason to abandon ADONAI—or to persuade others to abandon Him.

Then comes the turning point: *"But when I tried to make sense of this, it was troubling in my eyes—until I entered the Sanctuary of God, and perceived their end"* (Ps. 73:16–17). Notice that Asaph did not stop asking questions. He brought them to the right place. His questions are genuine, not belligerent: "Lord, I don't understand; please help me see." The faithful person may wrestle with genuine doubt, but the motive is still to pursue the Lord. In His presence Asaph finally saw what his immediate circumstances had concealed: the prosperity of the wicked was temporary, their footing was slippery, and their apparent permanence would vanish like a dream upon waking. The sanctuary did not change his circumstances first; it corrected his perspective. He had been leaving eternity out of his calculations.

3. HOLD TO THE ONE WHO IS ALREADY HOLDING ME (PS. 73:21–28)

With his perspective restored, Asaph could look honestly at what had happened inside him: *"When my heart was embittered and I was pierced in my heart, I was brutish and ignorant. I was like a beast before You"* (Ps. 73:21–22). Bitterness had been working through his heart like leaven, expanding and souring his understanding. But here is the wonderful discovery: *"Yet I am continually with You. You hold my right hand"* (Ps. 73:23). While Asaph was stumbling, disillusioned, and almost ready to reach for something else, ADONAI had been with him all along. The Lord had seized his hand. What Asaph could not see clearly in that dark moment had never ceased to be true: his security was not in how firmly he could hold on, but in the One who was holding him.

Now Asaph can see two very different endings. The apparent success of those far from God ends in ruin, but the Lord guides His own with His counsel and afterward receives them into glory (Ps. 73:24). Listen to the renewed certainty of his heart: *"Whom have I in heaven but You? On earth there is none I desire besides You"* (Ps. 73:25). His body may weaken, his heart may fail, circumstances may still hurt, but ADONAI Himself is his portion forever. He no longer measures blessing merely by comfort, health, wealth, or position. His greatest good is not possessing what everyone else seems to possess. His greatest good is possessing the nearness of God. That is real shalom, and no temporary success can offer anything like it.

CONCLUSION

Psalm 73 begins with the confession that God is good to the pure in heart, and ends with an even more personal declaration: *"But for me, it is good to be near God. I have made my Lord ADONAI my refuge, so I will tell of all Your works"* (Ps. 73:28). What changed? Asaph entered the sanctuary. He stopped calculating the whole of his life from a single painful moment and let ADONAI show him the whole picture. He had almost announced that obedience was worthless; now he was ready to recount the works of the Lord. The circumstances that nearly stole his confidence did not get the final word. The goodness and faithfulness of ADONAI did.

Perhaps today your feet are sliding. You have been looking at someone else's apparent success, comparing it with your own pain, and wondering whether following the Lord is worth it. Maybe you have allowed bitterness to grow, or have been tempted to exchange the true security you cannot physically grasp for something that looks immediately dependable. This is the moment to turn your eyes to Yeshua. Bring Him your genuine questions, confess the envy or resentment that has distorted your sight, and choose to draw near rather than walk away. Do not wait until all your circumstances make sense. Reach toward Him now, surrender your calculations, and ask the Spirit to restore your vision. The Lord has not abandoned you. Let Him take your hand and steady your steps. Say with Asaph, "As for me, it is good to be near God."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What made Asaph's feet almost slip, and how did his heart distort what his eyes were seeing (Ps. 73:2–14)?
2. Where do you most often feel the temptation to compare your obedience and struggles with someone else's visible success?
3. Why did Asaph hesitate to announce his conclusions, and what does that teach us about handling questions in front of others (Ps. 73:15)?
4. What would it look like, in a current disappointment or unanswered question, to bring your calculations into ADONAI's presence rather than use them as an excuse to drift away?
5. How do verses 23–28 redefine security, shalom, and the meaning of a truly good life?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, You are good, even when what I see does not seem to add up. Forgive me for envying what looks successful, for allowing bitterness to cloud my heart, and for calculating Your faithfulness by what is immediately in front of me. When my feet begin to slip, silence the voice of the liar and draw me into Your presence. Holy Spirit, give me eyes to see the whole picture, courage to bring You my honest questions, and a heart that wants You more than the things of this world. Yeshua, keep my eyes fixed on You. Thank You that You have not abandoned me, that You hold my right hand, and that You will guide me all the way into glory. Be the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.