



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"The Journey Out of a Crisis of Faith"

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Psalm 73; Psalm 103; Heb. 12:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:16-18

Have you ever had your spiritual footing start to slip—not because you stopped believing in God's existence, but because you started doubting whether following Him was worth it? That's exactly where Asaph, the psalmist, found himself. He starts Psalm 73 with a declaration—almost like a creed—*"Surely God is good to Israel, to the pure in heart."* In Hebrew, that "surely" (*akh*) means "for certain—without a doubt!"

But then, in the very next breath, he admits that he had gone through a crisis of faith – that certainty become a little foggy for him. He writes, *"But as for me, my feet almost slipped; my steps nearly slid out from under me."* This is a worship leader, a prophet, someone in public ministry—and he admits he was inches away from walking off the path. Why? Because what he saw with his eyes didn't line up with what he believed in his heart.

From his perspective, the wicked were thriving—fat, happy, powerful, arrogant—and the righteous were struggling. It didn't add up. And when life doesn't add up, our hearts start doing dangerous math. We start adding up our pain, subtracting our blessings, and comparing the answer to what someone else has. Psalm 73 takes us on Asaph's journey from envy to awe. Psalm 103 then shows us how to keep our hearts in awe, even when life tempts us to envy.

1. ADMIT WHEN YOUR PERSPECTIVE IS SLIPPING

Asaph says, *"For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity (shalom) of the wicked."* The *shalom* of the WICKED? The *shalom* that should describe God's covenant people was something Asaph thought he saw in the lives of the proud and violent. In his eyes, they were healthier, happier, and freer than the righteous. They didn't seem to struggle with the "chains" (*chartzubot*) of human hardship. They wore pride like jewelry and wrapped themselves in violence like a designer coat.

This is how distorted perspective works—it doesn't start with a crisis of theology; it starts with a crisis of focus. Asaph's focus shifted from God's goodness to people's apparent ease. The Hebrew makes his confession raw: *"But as for me, I almost slipped... I came close to being poured out."* He's saying, "I was one thought away from deciding it's all been for nothing—that I've kept my heart pure in vain." That's what envy does. It moves from looking, to longing, to questioning whether God's way is actually worth it.

And here's the honesty we can't skip: there is no recovery without confession. You can't ask God to correct a perspective you're still pretending is fine. Sometimes the

most spiritual thing you can say is, “Lord, I’m slipping.” Asaph models that vulnerability before God, and that’s where the turnaround begins.

2. STEP INTO THE SANCTUARY FOR GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

The turning point comes in verse 17: “*Until I entered the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end.*” Asaph doesn’t take his disillusionment straight to the crowd. He doesn’t “go public” with his bitterness, which he says would have “*betrayed a generation of Your children.*” Instead, he wrestles with God **privately in the place of His Presence.**

The sanctuary was where God’s truth reframed what Asaph was seeing. From a purely earthly perspective, the wicked looked secure. From heaven’s perspective, they were on *slippery places* (*ba’Chalaqot*), one breath away from disaster. Asaph realized their “shalom” was temporary and deceptive—“a ditch of delusions”, as The Message puts it.

In God’s presence, he sees the eternal equation:

- Temporary success without God = destruction.
- Temporary struggle with God = glory.

The difference between the questions of the wicked and the questions of the faithful is motive. The wicked ask, “*Does God even know?*” not to find answers, but to justify walking away. The faithful say, “Lord, I don’t understand... but I still want You.” And that desire for Him is what keeps God holding our hand when our steps are sliding. If we want a restored perspective, we must go where our eyes and hearts can be re-trained—in His presence. That’s where the fog clears, where eternity comes into focus, and where we see that the only secure footing is near Him.

3. RESET YOUR HEART BY REMEMBERING HIS BENEFITS

Once the fog lifts, how do you keep your perspective clear? Psalm 103 gives the answer: worship that remembers. “*Bless ADONAI, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*” David lists them:

- He forgives all your iniquities.
- He heals all your diseases.
- He redeems your life from the pit.
- He crowns you with *chesed* (lovingkindness) and compassion.
- He satisfies you with good things.
- He renews your youth like the eagle’s.

When envy tempts us, memory rescues us. Gratitude redirects our focus from what we think we lack to the infinite blessings we already have. David even reminds us that God doesn’t treat us as our sins deserve—He removes our transgressions as far as east from west, and He knows we are dust. When you actively bless the Lord and

recount His works, you anchor your heart in His faithfulness. That's why Asaph can end Psalm 73 with a completely different creed than he started with in his slump: *"But for me, it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord ADONAI my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works."*

From envy to awe—that's the transformation that happens when we remember who He is, what He's done, and where our real treasure lies.

CONCLUSION

When life doesn't add up, the greatest danger isn't the trouble itself—it's the perspective you develop in the middle of it. Asaph almost walked away, not because God had changed, but because his view had been warped by comparison.

But in the sanctuary, his eyes lifted from the temporary to the eternal. His footing returned. His envy turned into awe. And Psalm 103 shows us how to keep that awe alive—by blessing the Lord with everything in us and refusing to forget His benefits. Maybe you're in that slippery place right now. You're tired, disillusioned, and wondering if all this obedience is worth it. The Lord is calling you into His presence—not for a lecture, but for a perspective reset. If you'll step into the sanctuary today, He'll steady your feet, hold your hand, and remind you that *He is the strength of your heart and your portion forever*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some signs that your perspective is starting to slip?
2. Why does comparison have such a powerful effect on our hearts?
3. How does entering God's presence practically help reframe your view of life?
4. Which specific "benefit" from Psalm 103 is most powerful to remember in times of discouragement?
5. How can you make gratitude a regular part of your spiritual rhythm to guard your perspective?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Abba, You know how easily our vision gets clouded by what we see in the moment. Forgive us for the times we've envied the proud or questioned Your goodness because life didn't make sense to us. Thank You that You hold our right hand when our feet are slipping. Thank You for every benefit—forgiveness, healing, redemption, mercy, compassion, and renewal. Help us to live near Your sanctuary, to see with eternal eyes, and to bless You with all that is within us.

In Yeshua's name, Amen.