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Transcribed Message

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Message: The Vexing Path to Contentment: It's So Daily

Psalm 73

My name is Lowell, and we are reading from a psalm that was written by a man who named Asaph that maybe you've never heard of before. But the reason I picked that psalm this morning is that several times recently there have been people that have referenced it. They have just brought it up because that's been something that was impacting them, as a couple times it has impacted me as well. And as I decided to teach on it this morning, I started noticing in people's homes that there are verses from this psalm. People have known parts of this psalm that are celebrated. They're favorites. They might even be on your phone at different times from Psalm 73. So, it seemed right to me that we would dig in for all our benefit to see what it is that Psalm 73 by God's Spirit through Asaph can teach us and can bring us.

Just a couple things before we start about doubt. I would suggest to you that God is not categorically opposed to doubt. Doubt can bring certainty in a way that some things only can through that. Throughout history religion has tried to squelch doubt, has tried to discourage doubt. It has been said that doubt is a bad thing. You just need to believe what we tell you and run lockstep with the way we do things.

But then there's been the other extreme where it's been exemplary or even exalted to be a doubter, to be one who is seeking but never finding, one who is not religious but just spiritual and leave it at that. Just be a seeker but never a finder because there are absolutely no absolutes after all, right? So that's what that turns to. But the Bible, the scriptures, God's heart has a unique way to look at doubt that is instructive for us and I hope this morning as well through Psalm 73.

As you turn there, Psalm 73, we'll look at most of the verses in that. I just want to read to you little snippets of Eugene Peterson's take on Psalm 73. Eugene Peterson, among many other things, taught the book of Psalms at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. When he would teach this Psalm, one of the assignments that he would put his people through that

they hated is he would tell them: You go out into the woods around Vancouver, and you hurl at the heavens five lament Psalms every day. You just yell them out to God. That was not apparently for people who had to do that assignment. These lament Psalms which Psalm 73 is partly that, was not a favorite of theirs. It was not fun. But these are some words, some reflections from Eugene Peterson on the Psalm as he tries to express what Asaph has expressed to us.

No doubt about it, God is good. He's good to good people. He's good to the good-hearted, but I nearly missed it. Missed seeing his goodness. I was looking the other way, looking up to the people at the top, envying the wicked who have it made, who have nothing to worry about, not a care in the whole wide world. What's going on here? Is God out to lunch? Nobody is tending the store. The wicked get by with everything. They have it made, piling up riches. I've been stupid to play by the rules. What has it gotten me? A long run of bad luck. It's a slap in the face every time I walk out the door. If I had given in and talked like this, I would have betrayed your dear children. Still when I tried to figure it out, all I got was a splitting headache until I entered the sanctuary of God.

Spoiler alert, it gets better after that. But Eugene Peterson helps us see in colloquial terms how vexing that path can be, filled sometimes with doubt. Well, I invite you to Psalm 73 as we look at, first of all, Asaph's path. Asaph was the one that God used to write Psalm 73. And a little bit of a roadmap. If you've looked at your notes, it's all there. We have no blanks to fill in. Yoo-hoo. Well, there's plenty of room to write other notes, hopefully, that are helpful to you.

The roadmap, first of all, we'll look at Asaph's path, what I called brutal honesty. Then secondly, coming out of that everyone's path, including watershed moments in our lives. And then your path, your path of childlike trust, followed by the application, especially in our attitudes.

So, starting off with Asaph's path of brutal honesty, verses 1, 2, and 3. Asaph, a Psalm of Asaph. Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Truly God is good, but I look around at life and it doesn't add up, it

doesn't match. We've called this Asaph's personal theodicy. Well, a theodicy is just trying to defend God.

Let's try to defend God. He's good. He's powerful but look at all the injustices in the world. How do you defend God when you see all of that? And that was part of what Asaph wrestled with in his own life as he saw what was around him. Truly God is good, but ... but look around me. In fact, he kind of sticks some salt in the theological wound in verse 3 when he says, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. That's that word shalom. That's that word that is only supposed to be true of people who are followers of God, people that are part of his covenant. That treasured word of shalom, he gives that to the wicked and said, the wicked have that.

What am I supposed to do with that? Well, he gets envious, that's what he does. He admits that, doesn't he? For I was envious of the arrogant. It's just not right. If you go on through verse 4, through a number of the verses, he adds a number of superlatives and a number of exclusives about what it must have been like for these wicked people. They have no pangs until death. They're not in trouble. They're not stricken. Their eyes swell out through fatness. Their hearts overflow with follies. Verse 8, they scoff and speak with malice. Loftily they threaten oppression.

Well, you know, Asaph was a full-time worship leader. He was a full-time worship leader in the temple. David had assigned him to that job. He led a choir. He was every day in there helping these people sin. Some of you in this congregation have been full-time worship leaders. All we imagine is, well, you're just sitting around picking and grinning and singing, singing songs to the Lord. How could you have any sort of theodicy? How could you have any sort of trouble? You don't know what the real world is like. That's kind of what I wondered about Asaph at first. But, you know, it hits us all. Nobody's exempt.

In fact, Asaph was assigned by David to sing at the presence of the Ark when it was brought back to Jerusalem, every day with his singers. In 1 Chronicles 16, part of that song of David that they were to sing, it says: O, give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. A number of Psalms repeat those very phrases, don't they, because that's something that was important to David. It's important to us, but that was something he sang every day in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant. Even later he was still a chorister when

Solomon's temple was built. This grand temple, all these things that could praise the goodness of God, and yet in his own heart he wasn't sure. In his own heart he was struggling. So, we call that untested platitudes. He says truly God is good to Israel. He puts that at the beginning of the word. Even in Hebrew, it's an emphatic position to say truly, and it's almost like he's being a little bit dubious saying, you know, surely, it's true. I'm not convinced, but I look around and I'm not sure. But truly, surely, surely, it's true. Help me be convinced of that. So, he hesitates. He wants it to be true.

Then secondly, as we've already pointed out, he gets exaggerated with his comparisons, doesn't he? It gets even worse in verse 9. They set their mouths against the heavens. It's almost like these are god-like creatures, and their tongues strut through the earth. Therefore, his people turn back to them and find no fault. And they say, how can God know? Is their knowledge in the most high? They've set themselves up as being in control and being sovereign instead of the God who really is. And so at least Asaph's observation of these people was of a disconnected deity. God, either he's not there, or he doesn't care. And maybe Asaph was wondering, is that true in my own life? He starts descending down that dark staircase to what we've called his existential crisis in verses 12 to 14. Behold, these are the wicked, oh as it is, they increase in riches. All in vain if I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long, I've been stricken and rebuked every morning.

Asaph's path, as we follow it here, was more about losing than winning. It was a sense of futility, wasn't it? I've played by the rules, and now where has it gotten me? Nothing but bad luck. You wouldn't want to invite him to your birthday party, would you? A pessimist. But maybe you would, because actually, you see in verse 15, he didn't tell anybody. This was on his own personal inner struggle, but he wasn't willing to say it. Hey, it's my job to be a worship leader, and David might shut me out if I get honest about how I really see things. I've got to be on stage and smile and make everybody think that God really is good when I don't even know for sure. So that was Asaph's struggle.

That was partly the isolation that's described in verse 15. If I had said I will speak thus, I would have betrayed the generation of your children, so he just kept quiet about it. David lowered the age to start the Levites to serve in the temple down to age 20. This guy could have

been 20 years old when he encountered all this and realized, I haven't grown up in the faith yet. My faith can't handle reality. All I've got is platitudes. So here he is serving as a worship leader, and yet in his own heart, in his own life, he felt isolated, and it was an existential crisis for him. What does my life mean? What's really worth living for?

Simone Biles in the Olympics of Tokyo in 2020, if you may recall, withdrew even though she was the greatest decorated gymnast ever in the middle of those Olympics. She had to pull out because she got what she called the twisties. That apparently is a gymnastics term, when your body is doing flips, but your mind can't keep up or process. All of a sudden your mind doesn't know what's up from down. She started getting the twisties when she was on the vault, and you can't survive that kind of stuff. You'll end up paralyzed if you don't know how to land because you don't know what's up and what's down. For her own benefit and the benefit of her team, she pulled out because of the danger. In gymnastics they call that the twisties.

Asaph had the twisties theologically here in this psalm. The theologians call that disorientation. It's where you're oriented with the truth, then you're disoriented because you see life, and then it's time to come back to a reorientation as the Psalms always, always do. That starts in verse 16 and going on, he says: but when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task. Until I went into the sanctuary of God, and then I discerned their end. Truly you set them in slippery places. You make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors, like a dream when one awakes. Oh Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms.

His reorientation included a number of things. It included in verse 16 a persistence. He grew weary of reasoning and trying to think it through, but he didn't give up. Verse 17 is a pursuit. He went into the sanctuary of God. Verses 18 to 20 is a perspective. He saw from God's perspective truly what happens to the wicked. And yeah, I went to alliteration class in homiletics. I had to come up with another P. It's called precatation. It's actually just a confession. He's just saying in verses 21 and 22, when my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, I was brutish and ignorant. I was like a beast towards you. In fact, he admits that the people who were wicked, they actually are on, as he said in verse 18, on slippery places. Remember back in verse 2, he talked about himself being on slippery places because he couldn't figure out

what life is like compared to his theology. Now he realized when he saw the truth, when he saw it from God's perspective, truly it's the wicked that are on slippery places. It's all chronological. It's all about if I see the end like God sees the end that he reveals to us, then I begin to understand. I see the perspective, the picture. He confessed that. Maybe this is in his younger days. I was like a brute beast before you.

As a minister of the gospel, my first baptism was of a cat at age 10, and you know that didn't go so well. When you stick those things in the stock tank, they're not exactly happy about that. They don't trust my heart. After it shredded my arm to try to get back out, I realized, you know, that's kind of like what Asaph was admitting that he was like before God here. He was a behemoth is the Hebrew word. We use that word sometimes. He was a brute beast before God. He realized, Lord, I've got a lot to confess because I was pretty rugged with you about my dilemma.

Look at how Asaph did that. These are words of action. He thought about it. He thought hard till he had a headache. He went into the temple of God. He confessed. There was a point, there was an outcome to this brutal honesty that was a fruit for Asaph, and that's where we start in verse 23. Nevertheless, I'm continually with you. You hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel and afterward you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever. For behold those who are far from you shall perish. You put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. but for me it is good to be near God. I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.

How many of you have ever memorized one of those verses that I just read or had it on your wall or on your phone or anything like that? There's a number of you and maybe for some of you these are favorites. You know what that is? That's the result of, that's the fruit of, that's Asaph being willing to be brutally honest about life and trying to match it up with truth. He wrestled through this, and he gave us some beautiful verses to encourage our hearts to understand that.

Well, as we summarized on the next slide, God cares about me, verse 23 and 24. I care about God because of that, verse 25. And there was a contentment. There was a contentment

in the goodness of God that only God could bring to a doubter, in verse 28. But for me it is good to be near God. I've made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your work. I've made him that way. We think of Thomas the disciple and right away we say, oh yeah that's doubting Thomas, isn't it? Thomas was kind of a pessimist all the way through the Gospels as it pictures him. When Jesus had risen from the grave and he appeared to the disciples for the first time, you remember Thomas wasn't there. Maybe he was such a pessimist that he couldn't even stand to be with the other guys. He was just stuck in his own staircase of existential crisis. Thomas wasn't there and so he missed it. The first lesson is don't miss church; Jesus might show up. Thomas told the other disciples, unless I see it and touch it, I won't believe. Jesus didn't write him off. He didn't say I guess we've got to replace him because he's just a doubter. No, Jesus came back eight days later, and he gave Thomas everything that he needed. He gave him the opportunity. See the wounds in my hands and my feet. Touch the one in my side. Stop doubting and believe. The result of that for Thomas was an exclamation that's kind of the high point of John in John 20. He says of Jesus, my Lord and my God. The first time that it was said that strongly in the Gospels. Sorry, Carlon's in the book of John. I didn't mean to do the spoiler alert, but hey we won't get there for a couple years so we'll be all right.

Looking at the next slide there, there's a circle because I like charts and so I scribbled one out here for you. These are the conjunctives or the words that we saw in the psalm of Asaph. Truly but. There was that theodicy, that struggle going on. Behold. I've got a crisis, an existential crisis in that behold. And then there's the but. There's the turning point that says I went into the sanctuary of God and I saw something. And at the bottom of that circle truly, truly I understand from God's point of view the truth. And then yet. In our version it says nevertheless. A number of versions translate that word yet and we'll talk about this a little more in a minute. But then it. But then it comes to the behold. Behold this is the truth. I can declare what's truth and really believe it because I've gone through the struggle to reconcile life with truth. Theologians call that becoming existentially viable. It really matches up what you believe, really matches up with how you see life and how you interpret what God is doing. in Psalm 73, in Asaph's life it moved from a platitude, just something we get to sing because that's

what David wrote, to a declaration that was personal. He said this is something that I believe and I can declare it.

So, the big idea for Asaph's path. Asaph's path to certainty in the goodness of God required brutal honesty, a brutal honesty that went beyond platitudes, beyond the songs that we sing. It was a brutal honesty with his own doubts, so that he could actually find it was a brutal honesty with God until God helped him expand his understanding of who God is. It was a brutal honesty with his own dependencies. He confessed and he repented. He looked up more than he looked around and that made a big difference.

In our Seminary in a Box class where we prepare lessons that we're going to take to Toluca to teach pastors and church leaders, we have a chart. This is one of our boxes and you can maybe barely read some of that. we've talked for the last year about Bible study methods. First you start with observation. Look at the text and see what does God say and then you go to the bottom word there. You go to interpretation. What does it mean? And then thirdly you go to the application. What does it mean for us? And you see there in the middle of that picture there's a bridge. The bridge in that terminology is called a principalizing bridge. You've got to develop a principle that's true. That was true in their world in Asaph's world 3,000 years ago. That's just as true in our world today. We often call that from week to week the big idea. And in the middle of that you've got to look at the river. How much is struggling to get us to understand their world versus ours. Is there culture? Is there differences in language? Is there differences in the political situation at the time? Are there differences in which covenant they are living under scripturally? All those things matter to how long the bridge has to be. The longer the bridge is the more you have to study to understand how does that apply to us today. The longer the bridge is the more you have to explain if you try to teach that to somebody else. And so here for our path we've seen that Asaph's path was basically observation. It was seeing what the text says.

Now we go to interpretation where we say what's the principle that applies to everybody? Thankfully for you as long as you've eaten a good breakfast, you're going to be okay with this because we're only one-third of the way through. But the good news is observation is the longest, hardest part of the Bible study method. Once you exhaust your observation of

what has God actually said the interpretation and the application comes much easier. We see and we understand what God has said in the context of what he said to them 3,000 years ago and how it applies to us. So, Asaph's path coming to everyone's path. Everyone's path includes watershed moments. The big things that are life-changing for us at times or maybe even the daily things that happen.

A book I brought along for show-and-tell was actually left in one of these rooms and it said free for the taking. I needed a new bedside stand book, so I thought we'll give this one a try and it was written by Dr. Lee Warren, a neurosurgeon. It's called *Hope is the First Dose* and he had written a previous book where it was titled *I've Seen the End of You*. As a neurosurgeon the most common thing he dealt with was brain tumors, cancerous brain tumors, glioblastoma and others that that he knew the life expectancy wasn't very long. So that was a pretty common interaction with his patients that came to him as a neurosurgeon. He made a chart of four different categories of how do people respond to being told your life's almost over. I've seen the end of you.

The first category of the chart was the untouchables. It hardly phases them at all. Then there were the dippers, the people who struggle with it a little, but they get their footing back whether it's just how to cope with life or even in their faith. Then you've got the climbers who start out low and with this tragedy it really brings them to God in a way that they've never experienced before. It's a revival in their own hearts. Then you've got the crashers. The crashers live by platitudes and suddenly they have no footing.

For Dr. Warren it became very personal because suddenly he found himself to be a crasher because at age 18 they lost their son Mitch to a brutal murder. They never found the perpetrator, and it was such a struggle for him and his wife, such a struggle that they moved from the East Coast to Wyoming to set up practice there. He just had to get away from all the memories, and it was still a struggle. There were people that God would send into his life as patients who were being told you've only got a few months to live. These were people that God brought into his life to help teach him how to find hope again. One of the guys his nickname was Lucky Chuck. He got struck by lightning three different times in Wyoming as a rancher, so everybody called him Lucky Chuck. He was still here and with it. Lucky Chuck taught him

something because before when they saw the MRI, and he says we got these tests and we'll get you back when we get results. Between that time what Lucky Chuck told him was my wife and I determined ahead of time that this is how God is and nothing that you tell me is going to change that. Nothing. I trust ahead of time in who God is and that's enough. Lucky Chuck was a big encouragement in his life about how to process that. Dr. Warren called them TMT's – that massive thing that comes to each of us in our lives.

For Sue and I, one TMT was I had prepared ever since a teenager and got a calling that God is calling me to a unique thing called a prison chaplaincy, prison ministry. If I could get paid full-time to do that, even better. And God provided that. It took 15 years of schooling, grad school, post-grad clinicals, and all kinds of things that my wife had to suffer through part of that as well, where we tried to make things do. Finally, after 15 years, I signed on with the Bureau of Prisons and was a chaplain, and they transferred us to the Pacific Northwest. While we were there, we were living in a single wide trailer. In Oregon, it rains all the time, and it gets dark at about 4:30. By the time we moved there in the fall, that was kind of depressing. But we had just come through two miscarriages in Denver. We just had moved there. We didn't have a church home. We didn't have people like the River's Redeemed ladies talking last week. That's so crucial. I did something stupid at my job, and I might lose it because it was an escape risk. I was on probation, and they could just say, skip it, you're not worth keeping. And I'd have had to pay back \$50,000 for that move they paid for, and then Sue's mother just died.

All these things were piled on, and that was our TMT. That was “that massive thing”, and we were stumbling. We were stumbling. Is there a God? And do I believe in him for salvation? We were stumbling with has God really called us to all this? Or have we just been misguided and gone out on our own whims? When you stumble, it's everyone's path. We have those watershed moments where we stumble, we doubt God's goodness, and you've had them. You've had those TMTs, the massive thing, whether it's a health scare, whether it's a death of a loved one, whether it's the infertility and pregnancy loss that we heard about last week, whether it's a divorce, whether it's a prodigal child – that massive thing hits us all. But God provided Asaph, who struggled with that massive thing in his own life, and God chose to put his psalm in the Bible, believe it or not, and how encouraging that has been for us as well.

Well, the other thing that is a part of everyone's path like Asaph is to discern. For Asaph, it was when I went into the temple of God, Asaph went into the sanctuary. Now, we might picture coming into a church building like this, coming into the sanctuary, when nobody's around and just wrestling with God, just allowing the stained glass to remind us of who God is. But that wasn't what Asaph was experiencing. When he went into the sanctuary of God, it was a busy place. It was the temple, the Solomon's temple as he got older, and so there was all kinds of singing going on that he had to lead. There was scripture, there was teaching, there was interaction, there were sacrifices that you could hear out front in the yard. All these things were going on. This was a busy place that he went into to try to discern, and for God to help him discern how to understand his seeming loss of hope.

C.S. Lewis has this analogy that I've really loved, and this is a plug for big church, all right? C.S. Lewis says there were three guys in his life. There was himself that they called Jack, there was Ronald who was J.R.R. Tolkien, and there was a third guy named Charles, and these guys were inseparable friends. Charles and Ronald and Jack. Well, Charles died, and C.S. Lewis says, you know, I just thought, well, I mean, sad for all of us, but good for me. I get more of Ronald because Charles is not there anymore, right? Just the two of us. You know what he found out? He found out he got less of Ronald because what Charles did in their threesome, he invoked things out of Ronald that that only Charles could do, whether it was how he told a joke or whether it was the stories they could tell or whatever it was that he invoked. He saw more about Ronald when Charles was alive than he could understand afterwards.

Expanding that to the big God that we have, there's so many aspects of God's goodness that you and I don't understand, but the person next to you has a perspective about God that you and I can learn from. When we come to big church and we're discouraged or we've seen, especially as I'm on staff now, I know more and more of your stories of what you've been through, and just by your showing up is an encouragement to me. It's a testimony to me that you say I still trust God. I still want to worship Him. My heart wanders. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. But I know what's true, and I'm coming and I'm singing and I'm taking notes and I'm interacting with other people because God matters. I know that that's where I'm going to find the truth and find the sustenance for my life. the presence of God through the presence of

people. C.S. Lewis saw that that was the blessing of big church, just as Asaph said here. When I went into the sanctuary of God, that busy place where there's a lot of relationships going on. That's where I found the truth that God brought to me.

Well, life is a puzzle, and I know we've had a jigsaw speed puzzling contest here recently. So I throw this up as an illustration. Let's say you're in the middle of life and you've seen God do some things. You've seen the goodness of God in salvation and answered prayer, and so part of your puzzle is filled in. But you're in the middle of life and there's just a lot of life yet to go. Maybe there's some things that come into your life and you say, I don't understand the goodness of God. I've seen it in the past, but I just don't get it now. It's a blank. I don't know how to fill those pieces of the puzzle and make sense out of that. But then in that puzzle of your life, there's people like Dr. Warren that come along and help you see. It's Dr. Warren who in his struggle with that massive thing said something that was a key to his understanding. He says life is hard and God is good. You remember Asaph started saying truly God is good, but life's a mess and those two don't add up.

But then remember when we got to verse 23 he says nevertheless or yet, and so he realizes life isn't being solved for me, but God is still good. Both of those things are true at the same time and that was so important for Dr. Warren to understand as a neurosurgeon to say for his book titled *Hope is the First Dose*. We see more and more of God's goodness when we understand it from the people around us who've been through things that maybe we don't understand.

As we go into the sanctuary of God, it's vital that helps us. Those relationships help us in that third thing that is everyone's path. It's resolving, making sense of what do I do with the scripture that declares God is good all the time. In his book, *Why the Question that Never Goes Away*, Philip Yancey who has spent his whole life talking about tragedy and struggle with disappointment with God, at one point he defined faith as saying it's believing in advance what only makes sense in reverse, trusting in the goodness of God when you can't make sense out of it, believing in advance what only makes sense in reverse.

Many of you know of Joni Erickson Tata and the encouragement she's been in so many of our lives. She was a quadriplegic since an accident at age 17 and she just celebrated her 76th

birthday and she's been through two bouts of cancer since then and so many of you have found encouragement from her. She's filled in so many of the pieces of the puzzle for us to see. I can go through a lot of things physically, but I can still say with certainty, more certainty than ever, God is good. God is good all the time. One of the quotes I have gained from and have shared with others at times where she said, "God allows what he hates to accomplish what he loves", and she really believes that. God allows what he hates to accomplish what he loves. She has written that when she gets to heaven, she hopes she shows up in her wheelchair. She wants to lay that at Jesus' feet and say thank you Lord for my wheelchair. It was such a crucial faith builder because God allows what he hates to accomplish what he loves.

Fourthly, we are beholding. You saw that in verses 27 and 28. Asaph could declare that and especially verse 28, but for me it is good to be near God for I've made the Lord God my refuge. That I may tell of all your works. God is the strength of my heart, verse 26, and my portion forever. Remember the Levites didn't get a portion. They weren't given any land. They just had to trust in the offerings of the people and God's provision to be their support. That was his portion.

Everyone's path includes these things, and it takes us from a journey from something that, okay, I hold this belief, but now it takes us to the level to say, okay, this belief holds me. A belief is something that you hold, but a conviction is something that holds you. Is God really good? Is it something that holds me through things? Our path to certainty in the goodness of God will include stumbling, discerning, resolving, beholding, the TMTs of life and the dailies of life. when your boss takes the credit for something that you put all the work into. How do you see the goodness of God in that and respond in a way that honors him? When there's a bully in the hallway at your school, how do you see the goodness of God and respond in a way that honors him?

Your path, a childlike trust. Okay, I may not get through this story without choking up, but you can choke up with me. Actually, this is kind of an old story that's been told over the years. It's a preacher illustration book kind of a story, but it's pretty powerful. There was a minister flying as he often did to speak and they were going through horrible turbulence as they were flying, and he was sitting next to this 10-year-old who was reading a book and she just

curled her feet under her and just kept on reading the book in the middle of all this turbulence. Everybody was gasping and puking and everything that happens when the turbulence gets real bad, but she was just calmly just reading her book and didn't care in the least. He says, "How can you be so calm?" She says, "My daddy's the pilot and he's taking me home." Yeah, that's childlike trust. That childlike trust says, whatever the storms are, that's all right. I'm content. I'm at peace. My daddy's the pilot. He's taking me home.

Honesty about life is the first thing in our own path, isn't it? The two things I've been told that are totally honest are four-year-olds and yoga pants. Well, kids are pretty honest. My oldest grands are only three, so I don't know what four-year-olds are like, so that's why I'm picking on four-year-olds, but I bet they're pretty honest too. Imagine you have a four-year-old who has trusted adults all their life. Their parents are decent. Their caregivers have treated them well. Their teachers back in the kids' area have done splendidly and so all their paradigm about adults is y'all are really good people. I can trust you. Then you go to Disney World, and some jerk is trying to get in line and cut and be mean. Or you're at the grocery store and they're chewing out the cashier. You have to pull your 4-year-old child aside and try to explain what sometimes adults are like. You start with the word paradigm shift. Kid, you're experiencing a paradigm shift. What you thought was real isn't the whole picture. You've got to expand your paradigm. It's shifting. Life is larger than what you thought it was.

That's true for us as well. Life can be a threat to our theology if it is only platitudes. Life can be a threat to what we thought we believed and so we're scared of doubt, but Asaph wasn't. You don't have to be. It's vital to a deepening faith. It's vital because you're honest about life.

Well, the second one, sincerity about community. We've already talked about the value of big church, and we often talk about the value of small as well. Small groups and relationships where you can be honest about the things you wrestle with and see God show up in some amazing ways.

Then thirdly, childlike trust. You can't reason your way through that theodicy. You can't make sense of it just by thinking and Asaph figured that out. It just gave him a headache. He was weary from thinking about it all the time. It's about finding that relationship and I would

suggest to you that you don't try to make sense out of the world and how a good God fits into it and then decide, okay, I'm going to trust God. No, you say, I don't know all the pieces of the puzzle but I'm going to trust God and then he will help me make sense out of it. But that's the order because daddy's the pilot and he's taking me home.

For our path, it includes honesty, it includes community, it includes trust which moves us from believing in a truth to personally and like a child trusting in that truth. For me, it is good to be near God, Asaph said in verse 28. I have made the Lord God my refuge that I may tell of all your works. Your path to contentment and the goodness of God inevitably can include honesty about life and with God. It includes community where you find such encouragement from other people and it involves trust.

Let's pray together. Lord God, you've used your Spirit through your word to help us see the value of being honest about life and about our doubts. We thank you that Jesus is calling to us this morning to say, stop doubting and believe. Don't get stuck. And if you're one who isn't convinced of any of that, his calling to you first is to A, admit that you're a sinner and you need a savior. B, believe that that savior is Jesus and that his death is enough to pay for your sins. And then C, A, B, C: confess, agree with God, have that childlike trust in him that he is enough to become your friend, to let you into his kingdom and to forgive you of sins and remove them as far as the east is the west from the west. Thank you, Lord, that you do that in our life in a watershed moment, but you do that in our lives daily to remind us of all that you are, that that's enough because you are such a good God. And for that, we thank you in the good and powerful name of Jesus. Amen.