



# The Kind of Truth That Rocks Our World

July 24, 2016 | Wonderful Mercy Church

## Psalm 73:21-23

“For my heart was grieved, embittered, *and* in a state of ferment, and I was pricked in my heart [as with the sharp fang of an adder]. <sup>22</sup> So foolish, stupid, *and* brutish was I, and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. <sup>23</sup> Nevertheless I am continually with You; You do hold my right hand.” [AMP]

# What's in the Psalms?

- It's natural for humans to attempt to organize our thoughts about God in an effort to understand him better
- But once we've created a theological system we don't like anything to upset it or challenge it
- The Psalms do violence to our tidy systems because they put life on display as it really is: confusing, chaotic, contradictory, messy

# What's in the Psalms?

- “Faced with the prospect of relationship with a holy God who speaks worlds into being, it is not surprising that we have trouble. We feel awkward and out of place: ‘I’m not good enough for this. I’ll wait until I clean up my act and prove that I’m a decent person.’” [Eugene Peterson, *Introduction to the Psalms*]

# Psalm for a Messy Life

- Psalm 73:21-22

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# Psalm for a Messy Life

- The psalmist's anger has a profound poisoning effect on his spirit — he's become envious of the wicked and offended with the Lord
- **Psalm 73:11**  
“What's going on here? Is God out to lunch? Nobody's tending the store.”  
[MSG]

# Psalm for a Messy Life

- The psalmist's anger has spiritually shipwrecked him—and it has turned him into a beast in his relationship with God
- “The idea of the beast probably refers to the monster Leviathan, the living power of evil and darkness over which God had created light.”

[George F. Knight, *The Daily Study Bible, Psalms Vol. 2* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), ©1983, p. 9]

## Psalm for a Messy Life

- If we feel far from God we believe that unless we get it together, that's where God's going to stay: far away
- That's what makes the psalmist's next statement so unexpected: "Nevertheless I am continually with You; You do hold my right hand." (v. 23)
- This is the kind of truth that rocks our world and obliterates our tidy theological systems



## John Calvin's Insight

“When a man therefore imagines that God exercises no care about him, he is not with God, as to his own feeling or apprehension; but still that man... abides with God, inasmuch as God's secret or hidden grace continues with him. In short, God is always near his chosen ones; for although they sometimes turn their backs upon him, he nevertheless has always his fatherly eye turned towards them.”

## Psalm for a Messy Life

- It's when Asaph is in the pit that God answers him—not when Asaph pulls himself out of pit
- The answer God gives is not intellectual, nor theological; rather, God gives the psalmist his own Self, his very presence: *“Nevertheless I am continually with You; You do hold my right hand.”*
- Psalm 139:7-12

## Psalm for a Messy Life

- You're a son, a daughter—Your Father is with you, even when you are at your worst with him
- Father says to us, “I am with who you are. The you I'm with is the real you—I'm not with the false self, I'm with you.”



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