

Sierra's Weekly Message Action Plan



Sierra's Weekly Action Plan:

Use the Message Action Plan below to help put the things you learned this weekend into practice. If you missed last weekend's message, [Click Here](#) to listen to it online.

A Public Faith-Facing Doubt?

Psalm 73-A Psalm of Asaph Dan Wilvers-July 3rd, 2016

How do I live a public faith and that deals honestly with doubts?

We need to remember the people were reaching out to, believe that skepticism is the only sophisticated and intellectually mature position when it comes to faith and religion.

1. In Psalm 73 Asaph acknowledges his own personal struggle doubting God.

Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. Psalm 73:1

So he starts off with good theology: *"God is a good God and he cares for the pure in heart."* But down in verse 3, it says, **For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Psalm 73:3**

Then verses 4–11, He's looking at them and He says: **"They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills.... they clothe themselves with violence. ... with arrogance they threaten oppression. ... 11 They say, 'How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?' "**

What Asaph is saying is - *It's a world under a good God, yet people who are far from having pure hearts--they're having a great life. Why would a supposedly good God allow that kind of injustice, allow the powerful to oppress the poor and the marginalized?"* In short, Asaph is doubting God's goodness.

Listen to how close Asaph came to caving in--In verses 13–14, he says, “**Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments.**”

In other words, the things he understood to be true in his mind aren't so true to his experience.

Action Step: A key to an authentic life is being honest about the things that are confusing and cause doubts. But the action step is both to admit it, and to seek God for the answers.

2. So how *does* Asaph overcome his doubts?

So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! vs. 16

We all struggle to make sense of this world and God's role in it when we see suffering, and injustice. In **verse 17**, he says, **Until I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked."**

Asaph approaches God and as a result he readjusts his thinking two ways.

1. He is willing to admit his bad motives. **For I envied the arrogant ...”**

2. He comes to see that his doubts about God's goodness are based in faith as well. **18 Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. 19 How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!**

As Asaph almost slipped he sees that the lifestyle he is envying is also a "slippery slope".

Blaise Pascal talks about that in his famous “**Pascal’s wager.**”

“If you believe in God it’s a step of faith, but if you don’t believe in God or live as if God is not there, that is also a step of faith.”

Asaph is thinking, "For me to live like them would mean I would have to put my faith in there not being a God, which I can’t prove, and I would be betting my eternal destiny on that act of faith."

Action Step: Someone once said, "Doubt your doubts and believe your beliefs."

If faith is behind every belief then following Joshua's example years before Asaph is a wise step. **"Choose ye today whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."**

3. Expand your view of God

I want you to consider that when doubts come into your life, it’s because your understanding of God is too small to handle it.

Near the end of the psalm, Asaph admits how limited he had allowed his thinking to become. verses 21–23: “When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you.

Asaph owned how far off track he gotten, but he also saw God's wonderful mercy at work in his life. Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.”

The right hand (or right side) is considered to be a synonym for goodness. That means, “the right hand” and “goodness” fall in the same defining category.

Psalm 18:35 - You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; your right hand has held me up, your gentleness has made me great.

Action Step: Remember we can always trust God above all circumstances, and know His love and mercy will bring us through everything this life brings our way.

verse 24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

I genuinely hope your light of Christ will shine brightly this week!

Dan