

Do Not Envy the Wicked

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Psalm 73:1-2

God has abundantly blessed us in this life. More than this, He has also promised something far better after. Yet we are still tempted to envy those around us as the wicked often seem to prosper in this life. This is nothing new. In Psalm 73, Asaph wrote about the same thing. God was good to Israel, yet he came close to stumbling because he was envious of the wicked.

Why We're Tempted to Envy the Wicked (v. 3-5)

- The psalmist explained why he was envious of the wicked – he saw the wicked enjoying prosperity in life; he saw the wicked avoiding the pain of death; he saw the wicked avoiding the troubles that others were facing
- Sometimes this happens – those who reject God may enjoy success, prosperity, fame, power, influence, etc.; those who strive to serve God may miss out on these things; this should not worry us (1 Timothy 6:5-7)

Why We're Tempted to Consider Purity as Vanity (v. 13-14)

- The psalmist described the feeling that his efforts to remain pure in heart were in vain – not because he failed, despite his effort, to remain pure; instead, it was because it did not seem to profit; he was still “stricken” and “chastened”
- We must work to keep our heart pure (1 Timothy 1:5) – yet we may still suffer (1 Peter 4:12-16); if we are only looking at this life, we do have a pitiful existence (1 Corinthians 15:19)

The Final Outcome for the Wicked (v. 15-20)

- Despite the gloomy outlook at the beginning, the psalmist recognized the fate of the wicked – by coming to God, he “perceived their end” (v. 17); God would bring them to judgment; this would happen swiftly and completely (v. 19); then they would be no more and be forgotten (v. 20)
- Though we may suffer, those who reject God will ultimately be punished (2 Thessalonians 1:5-9) – this terrible fate is described in the New Testament (Matthew 13:42; Revelation 20:14-15)

The Foolishness of Bitterness (v. 21-23)

- Because of the fate of the wicked, it was foolish to be envious of them – the psalmist realized this; to be bitter about this is to be “senseless and ignorant...like a beast” (v. 22); it was not reasonable

- Knowing the fate of the wicked, it is far better to fear God and obey Him (Ecclesiastes 8:12) – bitterness can cause us to come short of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15); it will make us lose our focus (Hebrews 12:1-2)

The Ultimate Reward for the Righteous (v. 24-28)

- The psalmist knew that God would guide him to glory (v. 24) – God was more desirable than anything and everything on earth (v. 25); his flesh and heart might fail, but God was his strength and portion (v. 26) and his refuge (v. 28)
- The Lord is leading us to eternal life (John 14:6; 6:68) – we must desire a home with Him above everything else (Matthew 6:33; 16:26); by faith we understand that He will reward those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6)

Conclusion

- We may see the wicked prosper – do not envy them
- Whatever prosperity they enjoy is only temporary – God has something far better ready for the faithful
- Let's seek the Lord above all things and faithfully serve Him throughout our lives here