

Faith Cumberland Presbyterian
Church In America

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Cleveland, Ohio 44112

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Message:

When You Want To Quit!

Psalm 73:1-17

Rev. Dr. Anthony W. Johnson

When You Want To Quit

Biblical Text: **Psalm 73:1-17** =====> **Live up to what you know is true whenever the mysteries of life breeds bitter doubts!**

Psalm 73

God Is My Strength And Portion Forever

- 01 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.
- 02 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.
- 03 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 04 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.
- 05 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.
- 06 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.
- 07 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.
- 08 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.
- 09 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.
- 10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.
- 11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?
- 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.
- 13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.
- 14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.
- 15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.
- 16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;
- 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

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- 18** Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.
- 19** How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.
- 20** As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.
- 21** Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.
- 22** So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.
- 23** Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.
- 24** Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.
- 25** Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
- 26** My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.
- 27** For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.
- 28** But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

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Introduction

We have a favorite saying, "God is good and all the time God is good!" But as we sit here today, we may acknowledge the goodness of God, but the truth is, we struggle if we don't get what we want from God. If God is good, why is staying faithful to Him so difficult?

We must deal with our faulty perception of what God's goodness is and what it means. Is God's goodness for everybody or must we earn it? How do I earn more of God's benefits?
Why do I get so little from God while everybody else washes under the showers of heaven's blessings?

Sometimes life is unfair when your hard work is ignored, and others who do very little are credited and elevated for your labors. After this, we're ready quit! The truth is, we struggle with faithfulness because our service to God has conditions: Lord, bless me or else!

When You Want To Quit, your notion of what is good and what is not, is faulty. This is an old-aged problem. Why do the ungodly get a free pass for their wicked ways? But when saints sin they are divinely whipped. Is God really good or is God unfair and biased?

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- Why did the Israelites have to wait 430 years in grievous slavery?
 - Why did Paul have to suffer death by beheading for preaching?
 - Why did the child David conceived with Bathsheba have to die?
 - Why do drug dealers get filthy rich selling their poison to kids?
 - Why did God permit the Assyrians to plunder, destroy Jerusalem?
 - Why hasn't God make us wealthy as those running Wall Street?
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When You Want To Quit comes about when you struggle with the fact God's word is saying one thing, but your experience says something else! These moments challenge our faith, tempting us to run off on a mental tantrum. This leads to our pulling away from God in devotion, service, and trust!

▶ The costs of quitting on God

At times the truth we know conflicts with how truth unfolds in our daily experiences. We may think God's goodness is strictly for believers. If we experience pain and struggle, while the ungodly grow fat, we are tempted to quit, thinking that God is unfair. Quitting on God:

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- is the beginning stages of the devil's stronghold forming in your life
 - you've decided not to trust God and patiently wait for change
 - shows that you are turning your thoughts, meditations from God
 - you have traded God-dependency for self-sufficiency (failure)
 - you've taken matters into your own hands: now God must prove...
 - you don't think you need God as much as you did yesterday
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Taking our eyes off of God is a spiritual liability. We react so quickly to the circumstances of life, rather than trusting in God's goodness. Though we point fingers at others when things go wrong, we are really questioning God. The fact is, we are blind to the true picture.

In our Text, the Psalmist knows God is good, but his conviction is in doubt when he sees the wicked prospering. Why would a good God pour blessings on the undeserving?

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God is good, a fact we know for sure; nevertheless, we are apt to protest God's wisdom when He pours goodness on our enemies and those claiming no allegiance to God; **we envy the ungodly when they enjoy God's benefits too!**

God's goodness was unquestionable in the camp of Israel. Israel tasted God's blessings in the land, crop, and the cattle. The Israelites enjoyed steady prosperity when they were obedient to God. Even so when Israel erred, God showered mercy and knew it.

Like the Psalmist, saints are convinced of God's goodness. How often have we been the target of God's mercy? How much of God's goodness daily falls on us unaware? Even so, our faith is shaken when we see the ungodly enjoy God's benefits. **How can this be?**

► The truth about the goodness of God

The real problem when others prosper is we've decided they are not deserving as we are. We think God's goodness is our reward for being faithful. **Listen to God speak:**

"..I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" [Exodus 33:19]

Our hearts are distempered because we want God to withhold His goodness from those we disapprove of. God pours His goodness on all men unconditionally. But our twisted thinking is uninformed about what God's goodness really is. **The Bible ascribes goodness to God:**

- * God's goodness pours on all mankind, regardless of one's spiritual condition; there is no absence of good in God
- * God's goodness does not deliver your every desire and ambition; goodness aims to bring you into conformity
- * God's goodness is expression of mercy, aiming to draw us to intimacy and fellowship with the Godhead
- * God's goodness can be expressed by the afflictions that keep us seeking His face; we are God's children

When You Want To Quit because others reap benefits you don't think they deserve, or you don't think God blesses you enough, then you presume to know better than God. One's final destination is determined by faithfulness and not by material blessings.

01 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

02 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

03 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

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- God is good: to those who are good, they see God as being good
 - God is good in relationship to His people: who can criticize God?
 - Clean heart: is not sinless, but is totally committed to God
 - Psalmist knows God is good, but his heart is opened to doubt
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The ungodly display their wickedness wherever they work, play, or sit; they are proud of sinfulness and are not happy until they do evil; their greatest achievement is seducing the godly to sin and to question God's goodness

When You Want To Quit on God because someone enjoys life better than yourself, you are then walking by sight and not by the certainty of faith. The physical eye is unable to discern truth in whatever it sees. The physical eye uses sin and selfishness to cope.

The physical eye peers out in the world and lusts after fleshly glitter the world offers. The truth is, Christians can relate to the world according to physical appetites. As humans, Christians accuse God of divine unfairness many times over when the ungodly prosper.

▶ **God's goodness is no respecter of persons**

God's goodness means there is a constant generous provision for all of His creation. No man, godly or ungodly, will be absent from God's goodness. Even so, we must never interpret God's goodness as a stamp of approval for sinfulness. **The Bible tells us:**

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb" [Psalm 37:1-2]

The ungodly misinterprets goodness something deserved, but unaware of their doom. The godly cling to God because of daily affliction prevents them from receiving God's goodness as a license to settle in a life of sin. **How do you receive and repay the goodness of God?**

To envy the ungodly in their material success shows lack of understanding why God shows goodness. God lavishes goodness on man to compel him to love his God and live upright. To keep you close, God may decrease success and increase your affliction

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- Ungodly suffer no burden: are strong and in good health, die easy
 - Ungodly brag and fully as if having a license to do wickedness
 - Ungodly untroubled in life, are better off, though worse than others
 - Ungodly love violence as a garment; are greedy and gluttons
 - Ungodly are proud being wicked; show boastful arrogance in self
 - Ungodly appear favored by providence: are enriched in world
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The godly are ever tempted to reason their efforts to live holy, to do the right thing brings little profit; a look at the ungodly who seem to prosper by cheating and conniving, tempts the godly to think living holy doesn't pay

We may be saved and love God and be committed to the faith. But in times of trials and frustration, we are apt to react sinfully. It's as though we put aside our faith to throw a spiritual tantrum when we are not properly rewarded or somebody is blessed more.

If the truth be told, most of us ponder, "what good is striving to live right if we are still struggling to make ends meet?" Our expectations for being a Christian betrays us. We are not expecting to hurt, or struggle, or be less materially blessed than others.

▶ Life of the godly

Where is God's goodness when Christians are chastised for their sins? When Christians sin they are rightly rebuked by God to the point of godly sorrow. There is seldom a day the Christian does not taste God-directed affliction. Recall Jesus' warning to His Disciples:

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" [Luke 9:23]

Christians need reminding they are Jesus' disciples. Disciples will follow Jesus in all regards to faith. As Jesus was afflicted, we will be too. Your affliction is God's goodness in action!

▶ Go into sanctuary with God

When You Want To Quit go into sanctuary with God! Your image of the ungodly prospering is a false reading. To rightly interpret what goes on in this world, we need God's wisdom. God instructs us how to live upright in spite of the perceived prosperity of the ungodly.

Only in God's presence can we perceive His glorious plan for those call upon His name!

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

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- Psalmist doubts value of holiness: sees no advantage to living right
 - Psalmist careful to cause offense in struggle to understand God
 - Psalmist feels striving to live pure has resulted in no personal gain
 - Psalmist dare not propagate ill doctrine against the truth of God
 - Psalmist was apt to err, grow in doubt, frustration of his afflictions
 - Psalmist enters God's presence: able to judge rightly God's plan
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Conclusion

The point of the message is this: when we fall into the trap of **envying the ungodly** we are questioning **God's sovereignty**. Hear this word: **"the Lord directs the steps of the godly!"** Your life is **charted by God** and you need to **know and live** according to His **specific plan**.

When **life complexities** confront us, take care not to **run off** course. Our human instincts says we don't get our fair share. We **pray, obey God**, and **clean up** our ways, but for what? **God's Word** says one thing, but **our experience** tells us differently, so **we are troubled!**

We are likely to suffer a **spiritual breakdown** when doubt prevails. What follows is a **spiritual retreat** from what we know to be true; then our **devotion to God** falls victim, bringing about **total collapse**. But it does not have to be this way, if **we learn** to:

- **Be content**: little with righteousness than great treasure with trouble
 - **Draw nigh to God**: He comforts us, give us answers when we need
 - **Seek God's wisdom**: we must **adjust our life** to fit **His perspective**
 - **Know the Word**: we know **God and His plan** through illumination
 - **Examine yourself**: confess **ignorance, doubts, fears, anxieties**
 - **Be strong witness**: you are a **testimony to others** who struggle
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Questions to **life complexities** are rarely solved. It is in man to search **God's ways**, but they are **beyond knowing**. In other words, God does not reveal **His secrets**. Even so, God urges us to **trust Him** and live within **confines of faith** and according to **His wisdom**:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" [James 1:5]

Never quit nor give up, but hold on to what you know is true and always trust God!

Message Reflections: 1. Do you think the righteous deserve to be wealthy? 3. Does God owe you for serving Him and living right?
2. What is your response when the wicked prosper? 4. What doubts have you neglected to take to God?

=====> **Kindle the will** ==> **Energize the will** ==> **Disturb the conscience** ==> **Stir the heart**

Meditation

Prayer: =====> **2 Corinthians 13:5: Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith**

Father God, we come now, humbly, to ask you for divine wisdom so we will appreciate your goodness; O God, forgive our ignorance of your holy character; O God, is good to all souls because goodness reigns in you; forgive us, O God, when we quit when selfish desires are not honored; we acknowledge, O God, you know what we need; thank you for denying us those things will do harm to us; we confess Jesus, through faith, for eternal life; we give you the **praise, glory and honor**, in Jesus' Holy Name; Amen.

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- **Quit:** in despair **keep trusting:** God **blesses us** more than **we know** • **Quit:** we need **God's Spirit, wisdom** to rightly **judge the world**
• **Quit:** God's chastising is **reflects His love:** He disciplines **His own** • **Quit:** leave **governance of world** in the hands of **Almighty God**

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- **God is good:** to those **who are good,** they **see God** as **being good** • Psalmist knows **God is good,** but his heart is **opened to doubt**
• God is **good in relationship** to His people: **who can criticize** God? • Psalmist simply **struggles to stay firm** in his **convictions, beliefs**
• **Clean heart:** is **not sinless,** but is **totally committed** to God • Psalmist admits **sin of envy:** angry that the **ungodly prospers**

Application: There is no question of the goodness of God; believers taste of God' goodness daily; being saved we taste of God's mercy; it is generally understood the righteous are blessed and the wicked are punished; in real life that is far from the truth; we carry on with life, striving to live right; you enjoy some success; one day you notice how the ungodly are living luxuriously; we despair after life hands us disappointments, sickness, death; truth is when the wicked flourish we can be bitter with God!

- 04 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.
05 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.
06 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.
07 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.
08 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.
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11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?
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- Ungodly **suffer no burden:** are **strong** and in **good health,** die easy • Ungodly **brag and fully** as if **having a license** to do **wickedness**
• Ungodly **untroubled in life,** are **better off,** though worse than others • Ungodly **love violence** as a garment; are **greedy and gluttons**
• Ungodly are **proud being wicked;** show **boastful arrogance** in self • Ungodly appear **favored by providence:** are **enriched in world**

Application: You notice the ungodly are enjoying life; they rarely go without their desires being met; they enjoy the finer things in life; even in their wickedness, they get fat on the riches of the world; they escape the burdens that come with those struggling to make ends meet; the ungodly are naturally corrupt, who enjoy spreading their violence and do so with pride; the ungodly will not be denied their lascivious desires; why do the ungodly get a free pass, while the righteous are frequently chastised?

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14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.
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- Psalmist doubts **value of holiness:** sees no advantage to **living right** • Psalmist careful to **cause offense in struggle** to understand God
• Psalmist feels **striving to live pure** has resulted in no **personal gain** • Psalmist dare not **propagate ill doctrine** against the **truth of God**
• Psalmist was **apt to err,** grow in **doubt, frustration** of **his afflictions** • Psalmist enters **God's presence:** able to **judge rightly** God's plan

Application: The righteous can err when they make judgments out of their despair; like the Psalmist, we must go to God and unload all our cares and anxieties by giving them to God; the Psalmist goes to the sanctuary, where God dwells; today, we can go to God and be enlightened about His providential plan; it pleases God to reveal to spiritual things prepared for His children who love Him; the righteous will be envious of the wicked when they discern their situation with human perspective

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"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me..."—Psalm 139:23-24

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Isaiah 40:25 : To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Colossians 1:10

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

2 Peter 3:7

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Psalm 3:6 : I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.

Psalm 38:19 : But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

Psalm 106:1 : Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 5:5 : The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

Proverbs 1:15-16

15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

Job 21:13 : They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

1 Peter 5:6-7

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

09 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

1 Timothy 4:8

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but **godliness is profitable unto all things**, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

2 Peter 2:9

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

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Proverbs 3:12 : For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Hebrews 12:8 : But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Proverbs 10:16 : The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.

Psalm 37:1-2

- 1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
- 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

Proverbs 3:31 : **Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.**

Psalm 49:12-13

- 12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.
- 13 This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings.

James 1:5

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Proverbs 2:6 : For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Matthew 5:45

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Psalm 145:9 : The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Exodus 33:19

And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

Ecclesiastes 2:22-23

- 22 For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?
- 23 For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

Ecclesiastes 8:17

17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

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- 21** Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.
- 22** So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.
- 23** Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.
- 24** Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.
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