

LEARNING FROM A MAN WHO ALMOST FELL

Text: Psalm 73:1-2

INTRO: This passage may not mean much to the man or woman who has never been in trouble--who has never had a bad day or a restless night. But to us normal folk, it has a message that is indeed a mouthful! It was a common misconception in the Psalmist's day, as it is in ours, that wicked men must always suffer in this life & righteous men must always prosper. All other things being equal, this might be so. But often all other things are not equal. Job's friends thought Job was suffering for his sins, but they were wrong. Jesus' disciples thought the man in John 9 had been born blind as a result of sin. They were wrong. We need to remember that the devil pays wages, but God gives gifts--& He does it in His own good time.

I. 'MY FEET WERE ALMOST GONE...' (vs. 2).

- A. The thing that almost tripped the Psalmist was the prosperity of the wicked, vs. 3-11.
- B. His initial reaction: Godliness is futile, vs. 12-14.
- C. Which of us could not put ourselves in the Psalmist's shoes? We have seen all the days of our lives the things that almost tripped him, & no doubt, at times, we have reacted as he did.

II. 'THEN I UNDERSTOOD...' (vs. 17b).

- A. The Psalmist wisely withheld from parading his doubts before others, vs. 15.
- B. He found the solution to the problem that almost engulfed him by sitting at the feet of God, vs. 16-17.
- C. By listening carefully to God, the Psalmist learned the folly of measuring everything by material standards, vs. 18-22
- D. When we, as he, learn this lesson, most of our doubts will dissolve into nothingness.

III. HIS FOOTING REGAINED.

- A. True prosperity, vs. 23-24.

B. Resolve to behave accordingly, vs. 25-28.

CONCLUSION: When the inequalities of life begin to get the best of us--when we observe the prosperity of the wicked & the troubles that often plague the righteous--let us return to a study of God's word, refresh our minds regarding the final end result of a life of wickedness as opposed to that of living a righteous life, get our feet again on solid ground with the realization that "truly God is good... even to such as are of a clean heart" (vs. 1).

La Porte, TX, September 23, 1979

Exton, PA, October 1, 1989

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, May 7, 1995

South Loop, Taylor, TX, June 16, 1996 (meeting)