

GREATER THAN SERIES #3
GOD IS GREATER THAN MY DOUBTS
DR. ROGER BARRIER
JULY 13, 2008
PSALMS 10, 11 AND 73
S-1760

- BACKGROUND SLIDE #1: Turn to Psalm 73.

Preach It Teach It: Several announcements

- SLIDE #: [pix of two men, buddies] Today I want to share about 2 men—David and Asaph—good friends—whose lives were falling apart.

Reminds me of the new movie, Get Smart.

(Wingclips makes movie trailers available for free use to advertise for current movies)

(I will set this up and signal you when to start the video.)

VIDEO: Get Smart

Some of you are free-falling through life with no parachute and you feel like DAVID:

- SLIDE #: *Psalm 10:1: "Why, O Lord do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?"*

"God where are you?" "God, where were you?"

Where were you when my husband left me?

When dad abused me?

When I lost my job in the recession?

When my son was injured in battle?

- SLIDE #: DAVID'S COMPLAINT: "Where are you when I need you?" He doubted God's care.

On the other hand, some of you are free-falling through life and you are struggling with more intellectual issues—like his friend, ASAPH

- SLIDE #: *Psalm 73:1-5: Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. 5 They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.*

Asaph was taught that God was good to pure in heart and that God cared for His children, but that didn't coincide with his experience.

It seemed like the wicked he knew were prospering while he was having troubles.

You know the feeling. You trust God and you look around and see people doing yard work, or playing golf or going to soccer games every Sunday morning and who never goes to church and he has a new house when your roof is falling in.

Their kids have seven or eight pairs of shoes, and you can hardly afford one!

Others get promotions and you're out of work!

- SLIDE #: ASAPH'S COMPLAINT: "My life is not working like you said it would. Maybe it's not worth it to follow you after all!"

SWITCH TO ROGER'S COMPUTER

- SLIDE OVERHEAD #: Asaph was a contemporary of David. Asaph was a cymbal player who directed one of the 24 temple choruses. He composed at least 11 psalms.

David and Asaph were both authors of psalms. But their journey to faith was very different. If you examine Asaph's Psalms 73-83 you will see that his theological, rational approach to God was very different from David's personal, emotional approach to faith in God.

Asaph worked out of his Left Brain to intellectually and rationally struggle with his problems.

Left Brain: words and speech processed here; rational, logical sequential. Solves problems with organized process: Concrete sequential; focuses on the parts

David on the other hand worked primarily out of his Right Brain and emotionally interacted with his struggles.

Right Brain: Abstract random, thinks more in pictures; sees the whole (Einstein larger spatial areas); sympathetic and empathetic; random intuitive leaps of faith

How many Asaphs in the room?
How many Davids in the room?

Throw a ball. Most games are played with the right brain.

Which is better? Neither—both are needed to make a complete person.

Corpus callosum connections.
Difference between men and women.

Only one or two of us in the whole world who are perfectly balanced.

Julie is David.
Roger is Asaph.

Fight for ascendancy: "I want to be a race car driver." Won't into that—most of us have enough trouble as it is staying in our right brain.

SWITCH BACK TO TECH'S COMPUTER.

- SLIDE #: David struggled with his problem—immediately saw the big picture—immediately turned to God—and his faith flourished.
- SLIDE #: Asaph struggled with his problem—got stuck in all the details and had to figure everything out—and almost lost his faith.

•SLIDE #: ASAPH STRUGGLED because the world was not working out like it was supposed to. It is not fair that the evil people get along better than the good people.

•SLIDE #: *PSALM 73:12: This is what the wicked are like — always carefree, they increase in wealth.*

That's what bothers Asaph! How can they give God no place whatsoever in their lives and even blaspheme His name and yet they seem to do so well—while he is barely scraping by!

•SLIDE #: *PSALM 73:13: Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence.*

You ever felt that way? You are not better off than your neighbor who rejects Christ—maybe you are even worse off so you conclude: “Why, I’d be better off not bothering to follow God at all!!

You may have other Why questions that bother you.

Why is there so much suffering in the world.

Is it not narrow minded to think that Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven?

It doesn’t seem to me that a loving God could ever send anybody to Hell?

•SLIDE #: DAVID, on the other hand, STRUGGLED because people were trying to kill him and it seemed as if God were not around to help.

•SLIDE #: *Psalm 10:2: In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.*

Psalm after psalm began with the introduction “a psalm of David when....” when he was chased by Saul.

When Doeg the Edomite betrayed him,

When he faked mental illness and slobbered all over himself in front of the philistine king

When he fled from his son, Absalom.

We think of David strumming his guitar and singing songs of praise and contemplation as he mused peacefully in the pastures of Israel.

We tend to forget that for twelve years—from the ages of 18 to 30 David was hunted night and day by the crazed despot—King Saul.

We tend to forget that in his later years his oldest son tried to kill him and David barely escaped with his life while his son made love to his wives on the roof for all to see.

Soon after David fled from Jerusalem, he went to Nob to seek refuge with Ahimilech the priest.

Ahimilech gave David and his men the showbread to keep them from starving. But Saul followed David surreptitiously and murdered the priest for aiding and abetting a “fugitive from justice.”

David’s darkest hour probably came when he had to drool and stagger to feign insanity in the court of King Achish of Gath, Israel’s sworn enemy. (1 Samuel 21:12-15)

During the 78 years of his life David lost his wife, his family, homeland, friends, security and honor.

He was falling through life. Some of us are falling.

Who is after you? David had his enemies. What are your enemies?

Dad?

Loss of job?
Loss of health
Betrayal at work—at church?

David had his Goliath?
Who is your Goliath?

Cancer: Bladder Camera: “What--in the world--is that? That is not supposed to be there. “Hold real still while I see if I can cut it out.

“Probably cancer but low grade and we shouldn’t have to worry about it.”

7 days for report: Only place to go is to God. I was still a wreck. Only seen one like this in 10 years: no cancer cells.”

The Three Amigos:

El guapo has been harassing and burning and tormenting this small Mexican village.

El Guapo is on the way

Lucky Day encourages them to face El Guapo.

For some of you, fear is your El Guapo.
For some of you, Shyness is your El Guapo.
For some of you, rejection is your El Guapo.
For some of you, El Guapo is your El Guapo.

Who is your El Guapo?

•SLIDE #: DAVID’S CONCLUSION: When life is slipping away, when Goliath rises up to his full 10-foot height, you run to Almighty God.

•SLIDE #: *Psalm 10:16-18: The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.*

Read David’s psalms and get the impression that David was pouring out his heart to a friend.

Faith triumphs over doubt because of David’s intimate walk with God.

•SLIDE #: ASAPH reached the same CONCLUSION: When life is slipping away—when the world doesn’t make sense any more—you run to Almighty God.

Asaph got his feet back under him one Sunday morning when he went to church and God and he reasoned things out together.

•SLIDE #: *Psalm 73:17-19: till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. 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!*

When we go into the sanctuary to meet God we begin to see things from God’s point of view.

They really aren’t going to get away with it.

Told story of Rich Man and Lazarus to bus kids. Lazarus at gate. Dog licks sores. Asked, “Who would you rather be? All said rich man.

Told of Lazarus with Abraham and tormented. Drink? Which would you rather be? All said Lazarus.

It all depends on whether or not we see the big picture from God's perspective.

Asaph got to God another way, but he reached the same conclusion.

•SLIDE #: *PSALM 73:23: Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.*

This is such a little phrase, yet one so full of great significance. I remember when my children were small. They would be sleeping peacefully. Then something would disturb the little one, maybe a dream, and we would hear the cry of a troubled child echoing down the stairs.

Quickly I would go to the room, but I would not put on the light, for that would wake the crying baby. I would draw near to the bed and take hold of a tiny hand. It was dark, no form could be seen, but the baby hand would hold fast to mine.

•SLIDE #: *PSALM 73:24: You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.*

That is the end of the Christian! He's seen that the end of the ungodly is destruction. Now he knows that the end of the righteous is heaven! It's glory!

•SLIDE #: *PSALM 73:25: Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.*

You see his problem? He'd been thinking all along that he needed things that the ungodly have. Now he concludes that all he needs is God himself.

One of the main differences

•SLIDE #: David under constant stress. Never had time figure out the meaning of life. He was just trying to survive.

Asaph was a priest, he never experienced the hardships of David. He had too much time on his hands to try to figure out everything.

Mark rape and forgiveness.

A farmer had three sons, Son 1, Son 2 and Son 3.

None of them ever attended church or had time for God. The pastor and others had tried for years to interest them in the things of God—to no avail.

One day Son 1 was bitten by a rattlesnake. Anti-venom was not working, infection spreading, hung in balance between life and death.

Called the pastor. Help. Pray for us.

"Dear wise and righteous Father, thank you that in your wisdom you sent this rattlesnake to bite Son 1. He has never been inside a church and it is doubtful that he has ever prayed or ever acknowledged your existence. I trust that you will use this experience to bring him finally to you.

And now, O, Father, will you send another rattlesnake to bite Son 2 and another to bite Son 3, and a really big rattlesnake for their Old Man.

Two New Testament disciples had parallel journeys with David and Asaph.

•SLIDE #: Doubting Thomas needed to see the nail prints in Jesus' hands and the spear wound in Jesus' side to believe that Christ had risen from the dead (John 20:25). Only after examining Jesus' wounds did he cry, "My Lord and my God."
Jesus was patient enough to give Thomas the proof he needed. God doesn't love us any less if we question Him.

On the other hand, John the disciple lived by faith because Jesus was his close, personal friend. Jesus said "follow me" and he followed Him all the way to the cross. His faith never faltered.

Here are just a few applications to consider as we move along our spiritual journeys with Jesus.

•SLIDE #: 1. All of us have unique faith-journeys.

God loves us as we are and takes us close to His heart when we are plagued with doubt and fear.

Who handled life better? Asaph or David?

Neither. We are all on different spiritual journeys. We just want to end up in the right place—it doesn't so much matter how we get there.

•SLIDE #: 2. Both Asaph and David found strength in a relationship with the Almighty.

(Religion and relationship are not the same.).

William Coffin, one-time chaplain at Yale University, lost his son in an accident.

At the funeral the minister conducting the funeral made some feeble statement about the accident and the boy's death being God's will.

Before he could finish William Coffin stood and interrupted the preacher: "Like Hell it was God's will. When my son died, God was the first one to start crying."

A relationship with Jesus grows over time. Look for His hand in all things. Read Psalms, the Gospels, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

•SLIDE #: 3. It is possible to keep walking with God even while sorting out doubts and anger.

When Mother Theresa visited Haiti she was shown one of the most horrendous slums in the world. She was asked, "How do you explain this in light of the claims that God is a loving God? How do you explain why God would let this happen?"

Mother Theresa answered, "When I see Him, He has a lot of explaining to do."

•SLIDE #: Philippians 2:12-13: Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.