

Reflection Questions: Psalm 73:1-20

For the message, "The Difference An Eternal Perspective Gives" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on August 12, 2018

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Psalm 73:1-20

A summary of the message: Asaph was confused at how to reconcile the existence of a good God with the presence / flourishing of evil. In fact, he was almost about to ditch his faith and throw his hat in with those who lived as if God didn't exist. That is, until he went to worship, and then he gained an eternal perspective. Evil didn't have the last word, but rather God does. As the crucifixion of Jesus shows us, the flourishing of evil is temporary.

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- How does the idea of a God of justice who will set this world to right set with you? Is this something you easily embrace? Something that unsettles you? Something you have questions about?
- How does the temporary flourishing of evil that God allowed at the crucifixion of Jesus help you process other instances of evil that leave you scratching your head?
- How does this text help me to understand the good news of Jesus? (See also the quote from Tim Keller below.)

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- What kind of community is this text calling us to become for the sake of the world?
- How do we encourage one another with the hope of God setting this world to right without becoming self-righteous?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- How does this text challenge the thinking of our city, especially as it relates to questions about the presence of evil and the existence of God?

- How does this text serve as Good News for those outside the faith? What kind of new life / future in Christ is this text calling our city to experience?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

- Lord, help me to remember _____
- Jesus, thank you _____
- Spirit, enable me to _____
- _____

Key Quotes from the Message:

- CS Lewis, “My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of ‘just’ and ‘unjust’...? What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust...Of course, I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too—for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my private fancies...Consequently, atheism turns out to be too simple.”
- Psalm 37:1-2, “Fret not for yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.”
- Genesis 18:25, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?”
- John Frame, “The Bible is preoccupied with the problem of evil.... The whole Bible address the problem of evil, for the story turns on the entrance of sin and evil in the world, and on God’s plan for dealing with it.”
- Tim Keller: “The Bible says that Jesus came on a rescue mission for creation. He had to pay for our sins so that someday he can end evil and suffering without ending us. And if this is true, though we still have no answer to the question of why he allows evil to continue, we know he can’t be doing so out of indifference or detachment. God takes our misery and suffering so seriously that he was willing to take it on himself.”