

Standing On God's Slippery Slope

Deut. 32:35

Psalms 73:16-20

Intro: This message is adapted from Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. In this very famous sermon Edwards captures exactly how God views sinners and what His plan is for them.

We have looked at how the lost think, what they have to look forward to and even tried to understand what it means to be lost. Today we are going to look at our lost friends from God's perspective.

How does God view the Lost and what is His plan for them?

The text for his message comes was from Deuteronomy 32:35 and the simple phrase ***"Their foot shall slide in due time."*** My text, however, comes for Psalm 73:16-20. In that text the Psalmist give us a very clear picture of God's plan for the lost.

[Stand/read Deut 32:35/pray/dismiss jr church]

In our day and age there is always a strong urge for Christians to envy the wicked, to become enamored with the wealth and prosperity of the wealthy lost.

It was no different in the Psalmist day. Asaph, the author of Ps 73 deals with the age-old problem of the seeming prosperity of the wicked and the equally troublesome problem of the suffering of the godly.

After going over the problem and the fact that it is no longer a problem for him, he says ***"Truly God is good..."*** Having made is peace with the fact that God is good and therefore nothing will ever shake is confidence in that one over riding fact he has to make a confession that he had some doubt (Vv. 2-3). He lays out those doubts in Vv. 4-16). He ends by coming to the conclusion that even taking time to consider these things were ***"...too painful for [him]"*** (V.16).

Then he tells us how he came to the place to where he could stand with God and say that ***"Truly God is good"*** even when his eyes told him otherwise. He says that it began when he ***"went into the sanctuary of God"*** because it was then and only then he ***"understood...their end"*** (V. 17).

Asaph's eyes were open to the truth about how God views the wicked. Throughout the Bible the word wicked is synonymous with the lost; so for us today what Asaph came to understand about the wicked we can be assured that God has the same view of the lost, they are ***Standing On God's Slippery Slope***.

What does it mean to be ***Standing On God's Slippery Slope***?

Standing On God's Slippery Slope Means The Lost...

I. Are Always Subject To His Wrath (V. 18)

- A. When you walk on a slippery place with every step you take you could slip and fall no matter how careful you are the fall is only one step away
1. **ILL:** One time while stationed in Alaska we had to take our dog to the vet. We drove to the vet and as the case is in the winter every thing was slippery.

When I got to the vet I could see that the parking lot,

which set on a slight hill, was covered in packed snow which is nothing more than ice.

I got out of the truck very slowly and took the dog inside. When I came back out I walked very carefully to the door of the truck, and just as I reached out to open the door my feet went out from under me.

Sally said, when I crawled into the truck, “what happened? I saw you at the door one minute the next thing I knew you were gone.” Just that fast I had fallen.

When I got to work one of my soldiers said, “Sergeant, there is something wet on the elbow of your shirt.” When I looked I had split open my elbow.

2. The lost are always walking on slippery places and at any moment their life could be taken that they would step out into a Christ-less eternity.
3. In his famous sermons, Jonathan Edwards puts it this way:
“There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God.” By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God’s mere will had in the least degree, or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment.”
4. The truth is that the only thing that keeps your lost friend or loved one out of hell today is God’s pleasure, the arbitrary will of God.

5. Peter tells us that **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”**(2 Pet 3:9).
- B. It is God’s desire that all come to know him but even though he is long suffering; **“...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Heb 9:27)
- C. But, because they have been placed in **“slippery places”** at any moment they could experience the great fall into God’s wrath

Standing On God’s Slippery Slope Means The Lost’s...

II. Destruction is Sure, Sudden, and Will Be Very Great

(V.19)

- A. This cannot mean any kind of temporary destruction;
 1. They think they are supposed to *spend all their days in wealth* and death had no hold on them
 2. Devise their own view of what death will bring so that cannot be considered destruction
 3. This destruction spoken of here must be an eternal destruction
 4. The destruction on the other side death—hell and destruction
 5. They flourish for a time, but are undone for ever
 - a) Their ruin is sure and inevitable
 - (1) He speaks of it as something already done—*They are cast down*;
 - (2) Their destruction is as certain as if it were already accomplished
 - (3) He speaks of it as God’s doing, and therefore it cannot be resisted: *Thou castest them down*
 - b) It is swift and sudden;
 - (1) Their damnation does not sleep

- (2) **“how are they brought into desolation as in a moment!”** v. 19
- (3) It comes easy, and will be a great surprise to them and all those around them.
- c) It is severe and very dreadful.
 - (1) It is a total and final ruin: **“They are utterly consumed with terrors,”**
 - (2) The terrors that consume them will be their guilty consciences
 - (3) A knowledge that they have turned their backs on a Holy God
 - (4) They find that all that they trusted in can now not shelter them nor strengthen them
 - (5) Not the least bit of comfort or hope will remain
 - (6) There will be nothing more to give to them;
 - (7) The higher they were lifted up in their prosperity the harder will their fall be when they are cast down into **destructions** (the word is plural) and suddenly *brought into desolation*

Standing On God’s Slippery Slope Means The Lost...

III. Prosperity Will Ultimately Fail Them V. 20

- A. Actually, it is better to be despised
 1. In verse 20 there it says that when the **“Lord... awakest, thou shalt despise their image”**
 2. When the Lord’s judgment day comes He will despise all that they had – despise their image.
 3. On that day all that they had will be as no more than a shadow
- B. So what we see is this:
 1. What their prosperity is now is nothing but an image,
 2. a vain show, a fashion of the world that passes away;

3. it is not real, but imaginary, and it is only a corrupt imagination that makes it a happiness;
4. it is not substance, but a shadow;
5. it is not what it seems to be, nor will it prove what we promise ourselves from it;
6. it is as a dream, which may please us a little while
7. Isaiah tells us a hungry man **dreams that he eats, but he awakes and his soul is empty**, Isa. 29:8
8. A man is never as rich or honorable as he dreams he is
9. Why should we envy a man real wealth is merely a dream?
- C. What will be the outcome of his dream, his prosperity?
 1. God will awake to judgment, and plead his people’s cause
 2. They, the lost, will be awakened out of the sleep of their carnal security, and then God will despise their image;
 3. He will make it appear to all the world how contemptible it really is
 4. And according the Psalm 52:6-7, **“The righteous ...shall see and fear, And shall laugh at him, saying, “Here is the man who did not make God his strength, But trusted in the abundance of his riches, And strengthened himself in his wickedness”**
 5. Think of how the Lord despise the rich man’s image when he said, **“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!”** (Lk. 12:19-20)
- D. We ought to think of the lost as the Lord does because his judgment is according to truth, and not to admire and envy that which he despises and will despise; for, sooner or

later, he will bring all the world around to his way of thinking.

Conclusion: Though **“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”** (Jn 3:16) he also says that **“...whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”** (Rev 10:15).

Therefore we are command to go on a rescue mission. The old hymn by Fanny Crosby is still true today:

*Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.*

*Though they are slighting Him, still He is waiting,
Waiting the penitent child to receive;
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently;
He will forgive if they only believe.*

We have a job to do and we need to be about that job; reaching sinners who are **Standing On God's Slippery Slope. They are always subject to God's wrath, Their destruction is sure, Sudden, and Will Be Very Great and Their Prosperity Will Ultimately Fail Them.**

We need to be rescuing those who are **Standing On God's Slippery Slope**