

CHURCH SCHEDULE

9/3 - Ken Storm, Holy

Communion - 11:00 a.m.

Fall Services with Harry Ylipaa,
Liviojarvi, Sweden & Guest
Speakers

9/10 - 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. &
6:00 p.m.

9/12 - Watton Church @ 7:00 p.m.

9/13 - Atlantic Mine Church @
7:00 p.m.

9/14 - Toivola Church @ 7:00 p.m.

9/17 - 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m.

9/17 - Chassell Church @ 6:00 p.m.

9/24 - Nathan Ruonovaara
@ 11:00 a.m.

Bible Study, 7 p.m.: September
6th, 20th & 27th

CONTACT

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Reminder: TALC Annual
membership dues should be
submitted no later than September
30, 2023, to Jon Lehtinen

Envy

"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked"
Psalm 73:3

Asaph, the author of this Psalm, tells us of his struggle with envy; especially with anyone who lived more comfortably than he did. Envy is an emotion of jealousy that is very close to each of us. It arises from selfishness that covets another person's possessions or qualities and can translate into hatred if left unchecked. Asaph admitted his displeasure with the wicked that have little need for God and, yet, who live carefree lives undaunted by their eternal destiny. He wanted that type of comfort too where he would never doubt his faith in God and where he would always be strong and self-reliant. Though he could see the spiritual shortcoming of a wicked life, he envied the life of the wicked nonetheless.

Like most people, Asaph envied wealth most of all. If he just had more of it perhaps his life would be less stressful; that's how he believed the wicked made it through life so easily. Yet, what puzzled him was why God would allow those who reject Him to live such rich and easy lives. Seeing that God hates sin, why would He allow the wicked to skate through life? Asaph's assessment of the wicked was that they had no fear of death, were full of pride, spoke loftily about their own accomplishments (as if they were their own) and undercut others to achieve their gains. Rarely did they mention God other than to take His name in vain. They felt no remorse in their lifestyle largely because God never seemed to punish them; perhaps God was asleep or was unconcerned with how they conducted their affairs. Thus, the wicked lived comfortably and safely with all their riches: *"Behold, these are the ungodly. Who prosper in the world; they increase in riches"* (Psalm 73:12).

When he looked at his own life, Asaph saw in the word of God that he was a sinner, no better than the wicked people he envied. However, he reasoned that his sins had previously been forgiven at the door of the tabernacle so he should be innocent of any sin; yet, anxiety gripped him for some unknown reason. To erase this guilty feeling, he tried doing good works by reaching out to the wicked; his efforts only offended them and brought rebuke from them. The harder he tried to please God the more his angst increased. The trouble in his life, the chastisement from God, and his failure to convince anybody about God's salvation through the sprinkling of blood caused him to doubt his own faith—was he lost like the wicked people he envied?

Although Asaph was unaware of what was happening, God was quietly awakening him to his sin of envy, thus, the reason for his unease. So far, he believed that God was punishing him because of some work that he was not doing, the very thought of it troubled him: *"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me"* (Psalm 73:16). However, when he fervently prayed to God, he understood that there was nothing he could do to improve his stature with God or to change anyone's life style. When God revealed what ultimately happens to the wicked, Asaph's heart was grieved for them and he was fearful for his own soul because of his foolish envy. God was calling Asaph to repent of his sin; it was up to him to answer that call.

While Asaph dealt with his envy, he was also concerned with the spiritual welfare of others. On both counts, he had to learn that he was powerless to affect change: he could do nothing to better himself in the eyes of God nor could he convince others to believe in God. All things spiritual had to be accomplished by the Holy Ghost. For Asaph, it was God's grace that awakened him to the sin that almost caused him to lose his faith: *"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped"* (Psalm 73:2). Now, he had a choice to make: either reject God's call to repent of his sin or seek God's help. He chose the latter and went to the sanctuary to confess his sin (as instructed in Leviticus) even though he had done so for other sins before. He brought an unblemished animal to the door of the tabernacle and confessed his sin of envy: *"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing"* (Lev 5:5). There the priest sprinkled sacrificial blood round about making atonement for the sin he confessed and it was forgiven by God (Lev 4:20). Consequently, Asaph rejoiced: *"it is good for me to draw near to God"* (Psalm 73:28). As for the wicked, Asaph continued to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins, with one exception; he trusted God to give the increase.

Confession and absolution of sin, as with Asaph, remains unchanged. Today, that tabernacle, where confession was made before a priest sprinkling blood in the doorway, is the physical body of a believer (1 Cor 6:19) who proclaims the gospel to penitent souls, *"be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee"* (Matt 9:2). Dear reader, pray fervently that the Holy Ghost will either awaken you to confess your sin to a messenger of God or that He will guide you to avoid all manner of sin to keep your heart clean. Do this with urgency as Jesus is coming again.

God's Peace,

Charles Korhonen