

A Conflict Psalms 73

by Harvey Brubacker

This sermon reflects on the importance of choosing the right battles in life, focusing on the internal struggle against sin and the flesh rather than external conflicts. It emphasizes the need for humility, gratitude, and the transformation of the heart by God to overcome sinful desires. The message highlights the power found in surrendering to God's will and following the example of Christ in selflessness and sacrifice.

Scripture: Psalms 73:1, Romans 8:5, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Exodus 16:4, Isaiah 41:10, 1 Corinthians 15:55

Topics: "Choosing Battles", "Surrender to God's Will"

Description

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Transcript

Good morning, brothers and sisters, children. I would like to start by just reading a Psalm, Psalm 73. Truly God is good to the upright, to those who are pure in heart.

But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant, I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they have no pain, their bodies are sound and sleek.

They are not in trouble as others are, they are not plagued like other people. Therefore pride is their necklace, violence covers them like a garment, their eyes swell out with fatness, their hearts overflow with follies, they scoff and speak with malice. Loftily they threaten oppression, they set their mouths against heaven, and their tongues range over the earth.

Therefore the people turn and praise them and find no fault in them, and they say, how can God know? Is their knowledge in the most high? Such are the wicked, always at ease, they increase in riches, all in vain, they increase in riches. All in vain I have kept my heart clean, and washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I have been plagued, and I'm punished every morning.

If I had said I will talk on, if I said I will talk on in this way, I would have been untrue to the circle of your children. But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome, a wearisome task.

Until I went, sorry, until I went into the sanctuary of God, then I perceived their end.

Truly you set them in slippery places, you make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, they swept away utterly by terrors. They are like a dream when one awakes, on awakening you despise their phantoms.

When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, I was stupid and arrogant. I was like a brute beast towards you. Nevertheless, I am continually with you.

You hold my right hand, you guide me with your counsel, and afterwards you will receive me with honor. Whom I have in heaven, whom have I in heaven but you, and there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is my strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Indeed those who are far from you will perish, but put an end to those who are false to you. But for me it is good to be near God. I have made the Lord God my refuge to tell of all your works.

I was just blessed reading that psalm. I was just looking through the psalms and came across this one. I think it's easy for us to forget about eternal rewards and suffering and just be living in the now.

When we do, it's easy to start thinking like David and seeing seeing false Christianity, false teaching prevail, even just wickedness in general. I just had a few other thoughts, something I was thinking about, just observing people in the past and present and just in all time. Kind of in the thoughts of war, you know, what do we think about when we think about a war? I was thinking of war at first and then I thought that there might be better words.

We aren't very familiar with war here. I don't think any of us have ever seen war as far as I know, but we've seen lots of conflicts and fights and just any kind of fight. I was thinking about fights and in our teen years when me and my were around my age anyways, I have a lot of brothers, but when we were in our teen years, early, mid teen years, we had this pretty big blue heeler mix dog that was our pet.

Anyways, that dog was a little bit territorial and we didn't help it. We didn't curb its desires either or its fight. Actually, I think we probably encouraged him, but our neighbor would often come and his son's dog would trail with him.

Ofentimes, as soon as these dogs saw each other, they had to stand off and they were bristled up. Quite often, they would get into a fight and we just thought it was really great. Well, not that great, but we certainly didn't try to stop it as quick as we should have.

There's something in our nature that I think especially young men that like to see some kind of a fight, some kind of a conflict. Anyways, in this case, this conflict, there's different kinds. I was just thinking about different kinds of conflicts and how we need to choose which ones.

There is a war. There's a conflict that every one of us, every Christian, every single person in this room should have. It's not against other people.

It's not watching dogs fight or anything like that. It's against sin and it's against ourselves. Maybe for the children, I don't know how many children here have pets or at least have some kind of animal that can be trained.

I know a number of families here have dogs. Different dogs do different things. Different owners train their dogs different ways.

I was thinking of our fight against sin and ourself could be compared to an owner or a child or an owner. Maybe an adult would be a better example because children don't always train their pets in the right way. Between a person and his dog, making a comparison, drawing a parallel between that and how God has given us a spirit.

God has given us humans a spirit that knows right and wrong. The dog would be like our carnal man that wants to go this way, wants to go that way, wants to do this thing. We as the owner are supposed to keep this dog trained, supposed to keep him from not biting other people, not whatever that animal wants to do.

We have to keep him in control. Maybe I'm getting out on a limb a little bit with that analogy. It could go a lot of different ways.

I'm sure we've all seen someone that has an animal that is not trained at all. It's pooling, it's masked around. Maybe it's a little person or maybe it's a young person and the dog is really big.

It just pulls this child, this boy or girl, just around wherever it wants to go. If someone comes around that the dog wants to bark at or maybe even bite, that dog will just pull the child over. But if that dog becomes trained, it can walk by the side of its master and will obey its commands.

I believe that's how God wants us to control the carnal desires, the carnal body that we have. I might read Romans. There's some things I wanted to, at least a few verses I wanted to read in Romans 8 that talk about the spirit and the flesh.

It's maybe kind of talking more about circumcision. He's talking about the law in here too, but I think it could be applied to this. I'll just start in verse 5. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit.

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For this reason, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God and does not submit to God's law. Indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Here we see that if we follow our flesh, it brings us into conflict with God, and that's that conflict, that's that war that we need to have is against the will of our carnal person. That's what God is calling us to, is to control our anger, control our lust, control our passion, whatever the thing is, control our tongue, control our feelings, and bring them into subjection to God's law. I think this is impossible.

It is possible to a certain extent, but it's impossible unless God has given us that new heart, that heart of flesh. If we don't have that deep desire for that, in some way or another, we will just be following that dog around. If we're the owner, we will want what that dog wants, and so we'll just follow with it instead of training it and bringing it under subjection.

Anyways, yeah, let's fight the right fight. There's many kinds of battles, and there's only one. Well, maybe not only one, but the right one is, the right battle is the one that's against sin and flesh, not against people or whatever that thing is that we're troubled with.

Anyways, that's all I had. If anybody has any comments or corrections. Yeah, thank you.

I appreciate that. I don't have many thoughts. I have many thoughts, but not many thoughts I'm going to try to share, but it seemed like a clearer picture came to my mind about, not that this is the first time I thought it, but this body we're given is how God gave us a way to express our spirit.

When we just follow this body around, the spirit is not, no, not even that. The spirit is still in control. If the spirit is that way, then the body is going to do that thing that is within.

I appreciate the idea that our thoughts, our lusts, our passions, our feelings, all these things are an expression through the body from the spirit within. So we look at it, and I had this thought that God gave us this body whereby we can express what we want to express, and we have that freedom of choice. Thank you.

I appreciate the message, too. I was looking for that place. Okay, I found it here, 1 Corinthians.

The place where Paul talks about the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us being saved, it is the power of God. Harvey mentioned about that inclination in boys and young men to kind of like to see a fight or a conflict, and I think behind that, there may be multiple reasons. I think that's true, but I think behind that is that inclination within people and especially boys and young men to see power.

When all is said and done, they want to see who's the strongest, who's the fastest, which of these dogs has the most power, and who can win. I think that's why people are sports-crazy. Yeah, just driven to see either to see who can win, who can fight the best, or if their person, who they like, can out-fight their dog or whatever.

But in Christ, we find that the real power, the true strength is in the one who can lay down his life, who can take up his cross. To the world, this is just foolishness. That somebody would shut their mouth, and like a sheep goes to the shearer, and as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearer is done, like that somebody would in that way just allow themselves to be smitten, pierced, without putting up a fight, without resisting, because they know beyond what people see, they know what's right.

They know what God wants. They know what pleases the Father, and that they can just quietly lay down their life like that. That's real power.

It takes, as Harvey mentioned, it takes us getting rid of that heart of stone, and getting a heart of flesh. To see that, and to do that, recently we were reading Uncle Tom's Cabin, and in that book, I just, I really like that book. And Uncle Tom, to me, is just this shining example of somebody like this who, and even in the, as I understand it, like in a lot of the racist fights that are going on today, like Uncle Tom has taken on a negative meaning.

Like if you get called an Uncle Tom, you're being called something, you know, it's a negative term, but oh, to be an Uncle Tom, like a man that can just quietly and patiently bear all the injustices done to him, to being a martyr, you know, without having to fight to make sure everybody knows that he's right. And yet, all the slaves that beheld it, like knew that, man, this guy has something that's right. He is in the right.

There is where the real power is. Yeah, thanks. Thanks, Harvey.

Yeah, I'm thankful for those reminders and the reading of that passage. So, David says something like that. What was, where was that verse about, he is envious at the foolish when I see the prosperity of the

wicked.

Yeah, I think that was just a moment's time in his life. And then later in the chapter, he realizes the end of them and the destruction of the wicked. And so it goes.

And I like your, bring it into where we're living today and false teachers and stuff. And um, last week I read a story. Um, and I forget where I got this story.

A man named Nate Saint was being honored in this certain book, which I wouldn't really know it was a catalog. I wouldn't, wouldn't think that someone could get a lot of good spiritual food out of that catalog, but for some reason I have it. And so I, uh, I read it, kind of put my, put Sasha to the test and asked him if he can catch up on what's, what's the matter with the story.

It was a, the life story of a man named Nate Saint. And he, he was being represented as a great Christian. In his younger years, he had practiced aviation quite a lot.

And then, and he ended up being a missionary in Ecuador that flew, flew supplies for missionaries to some native tribe. Um, but in between there, he, he also, it was also said how he, uh, he, uh, uh, developed some great skill flying a certain, uh, military aircraft. It said what the, what the name and number was of it, but so, and then once he was flying goods and stuff to the missionaries, he, uh, there was observing the warlike, um, savages, maybe they call them, or some, some bad name for these people that didn't, didn't know anything about peace, didn't know anything about, um, I guess getting along or probably some of them got along, but they sure were full of, uh, uh, of, uh, unrest and, and probably into some dark spiritual things.

But, but I was just asking him whether, whether that was a real Christian. And I think for the most part, he, he realized that no, this man himself was warlike, like flying a big, flying a big, uh, missile plane is nothing more peaceful than being a, than being a, I guess they call them warlike, um, uncivilized third world type of, uh, Indian tribe. And anyhow, that, that's where my mind went and just want to, um, I want to share that.

Thank you for those reminders. We need to be on guard and on these fall things. Yeah, I really appreciate that and just praise God.

I appreciate that message, Harvey, and I, I appreciate all the comments. I just had one thought or observation as I was reflecting on what you were talking about that, that desire in, I suppose it's in the hearts of everybody, but it seems like it's especially in the hearts of boys or young men to, to, uh, observe conflict. I, and you didn't say it this way, but almost as entertainment.

Um, I, I think it's interesting that you don't have to teach anybody, certainly like a dad who, who's into that, who's into conflict as entertainment could also pretty easily impart that to his boys. But I think that's just by observation, that's something that just seems to be pretty natural. And, uh, by contrast, choosing the conflicts of, of fighting sin and flesh is something that I think people universally shrink away from just an interesting contrast.

Just one is, one is after the flesh observing conflict. I think I heard Joel say recently that like in Haiti, uh, the normal response to watching somebody fall off their motorbike or get hurt out on the, out on the road is to laugh at them. And, uh, that's just normal.

I don't know that maybe it's something that's absorbed culturally, but I think you don't have to teach people that. And then, um, yeah, I just, all I wanted to, to mention was that, that contrast that just like you have to train a dog to do, to do right and to do good. We need to train our consciences appropriately and, and, and train them to not shy away from, from picking those other conflicts.

One thing I've, one thing I figured out or I'm figuring out, like when you're, um, when Harvey was reading, he kept saying they do this and they do that. And there, uh, some, I noticed I was doing this thing, so I thought I'd talk about it, but in my head, I was saying, I do this, I do that. Um, and it, I at least, I at least have the same, there's something in me that, that would want to laugh at somebody falling off of a motorcycle.

I'm sure in the past, I, I have done that. Uh, at some point, at some point, something changed. Um, and, uh, there, um, this is a saying, but, but for the grace of God, there go I. It would be like that.

I don't know what it is, how, how, how it is he worked in my life or how circumstances happened in my life that I'm not, I'm not on some awful track or, or like having any of these qualities, you know, that, that the psalmist was, was describing, but it's something to keep, um, like we don't want to have an attitude of, yeah, they do this and they do that and some people do that. Like, it's so important to maintain, uh, humility, uh, for, for where we are. I mean, it's so much of God working in us, um, that keeps us from, that has kept us from continuing on the wrong tracks that, that wrong track that, that we were on.

Um, it's, think of, um, you know, you can read, read about, I don't know, the children of Israel and the manna and you'd be like, oh, how could they get sick of manna? Oh, they had it so good. Oh, look what God did for them and how unthankful we are. But the, the, those are not, those are not accounts of what the children of Israel did in those situations.

Those, as we read that, we should be like, this is what, this is what we did. I complained when God was giving me manna. I was unthankful.

Like, it's foolish to think we would have done any better. Like, that is what, that is what people did and I'm a people and that's what I did and it should be like, oh, why did I, why did I do that? Oh, I'm, uh, I want to repent. I want to repent of being ungrateful for the manna that he gave me in the wilderness.

You know, that is, I'm, I'm made out of the same dirt, uh, that, that they are. Um, uh, pretty, a pretty, like, uh, touching moment in my life. There was a movie, I didn't see it, but it was about a boy and he had a dog and the dog was really faithful to this boy, really good to this boy.

Even though I didn't see the movie, I did see the, a scene when one day the, it's real inconvenient for the, for the dog to be there, the dog somewhere he doesn't supposed to be, but he doesn't know. He's the, he's the boy's friend and he wants to be there and the boy's like, get out of here, get out of here. You're messing, you're messing something up.

And, um, something like there's, there's even people that are mean to the boy and they don't want the dog to be there. And so he like, to appease these people that are mean to him anyway, he kicks the dog and it's like, uh, this dog, I mean, the dog didn't know any better. He's super faithful and the kid kicks him and he just like is instantly filled with regret.

And it's like, when you're watching the movie, I didn't see the movie, but, but I understand how stories work. And that's just like this thing that gets you in the gut. Like, Oh, why did he do that? And an old, uh,

an old friend of mine said one time it was a, it was a big revelation in his life when he realized he said, I kicked that, kicked the dog.

That's why, that's why it hurts. Anyway, just like, um, just to, just to be humble and not like, as we, as we recognize other people going wrong directions and, uh, uh, making bad choices, just not to, for there not to be any scorn in our, in our recognition of the difference between them and me or them and us. Like it's with, it needs to be mixed with, with great gratitude and humility that God, it's this mysterious thing.

Why did, why did some Jews, uh, receive Christ and some didn't? You know what? I don't, I don't know what that ingredient is of God working in men through their lives or in certain circumstances, but if he's, if he's done that in our lives, it's, nothing to, uh, it's nothing to be proud of or, or boast, boasting in. Christ our God, to Thee we raise, This our hymn of grateful praise. O'er the joy of human love, Mother, sister, parent, child, Friends on earth and friends above, For all gentle thoughts and love.

Christ our God, to Thee we raise, This our hymn of grateful praise. O'er the church and evermore, Lifted holy hands above, Offering up on every shore, In pure sacrifice of love. Christ our God, to Thee we raise, This our hymn of grateful praise.

O'er Thy selfless gift divine, To our race so freely giv'n, For that great, great love of Thine, Meets on earth and joy in heaven. Christ our God, to Thee we raise, This our hymn of grateful praise. Come, children of Zion, and help us to sing, Loud and full of praise to our Savior and King, Whose life once was giv'n our souls to redeem, And bring us to heaven to reign therewith in.

In regions of darkness and sorrow and pain, We all lay in ruin, in prison, in chains, But Jesus doth follow us with His precious blood, The ransom worldwide hath He'll bring us to God. O come to the Savior, and take up the cross, Seek treasures in heaven, come, thou hast but lost. His mercy invites us, and let us confide, O why should we linger when He is so kind? We'll fear not the dangers that lie in our way, His arm will protect us by night and by day, Endless we must suffer, and pain shall be there, Till Jesus shall take us where sufferings are o'er.

Day by day, and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials near, Trusting in my Father's life bestowed, I'll know cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure, Gives unto each shame a healing trest, Loving me is part of pain and pleasure, Meaning go with peace and rest. Every day the Lord Himself is near me, With a special mercy for each hour, All my cares He then would bear and cheer me, He whose name is Counselor and Power.

The protection of His child and treasure, Is the charge that on Himself He laid, And as my days my strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made. Help me then in every tribulation, So to trust Thy promises, O Lord, That I use my faith's sweet consolation, Offer me within Thy holy Word. Help me, Lord, when time trouble meeting, E'er to day pass from the Father's hand, One by one the days of moments fleeting, Till I reach the promised land.

Lord, in the rainy day, Jesus, my Savior, Wait in the coming day, Jesus, my Lord. Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph for His foe, He arose a victor from the dark domain, And He lives forever with His saints to reign. He arose, He arose, Alleluia, Christ arose.

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