**Sermon Based Small Group: God’s Four G’s**

**The Goodness of God:  Psalm 73**

**Introduction**

* Finding your way back to God is an interesting phrase. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

**Good Becomes Bad**

* You have to go along to get along! Read verses 2–15.
  + How does good become bad with God (in our eyes)? (verse 3)
  + “Envy is so powerful that even the Garden of Eden is not good enough.” (Tim Keller)
    - Verses 1 and 13 are a contrast. How do envy and dissatisfaction make us think that we deserve better? We want what we do not have.
    - What is the fatal exchange? Who determines what is good?

**It is good to be near to God**

* Asaph presented two measuring sticks:
  + The measure of God’s goodness is that God has kept His covenant to me. He has given me Himself.
  + The measure of God’s goodness is not my daily experience (verses 21, 22)***.*** Ouch!
* Read the rest of the Psalm (verses 1, 16-28)
  + Why is measuring God by our daily experiences so compelling?
  + How does verse 1 relate to God’s covenant to Israel and to us? Why did Asaph go to the sanctuary?
  + Verses 26 and 28 get clear, “It is good to be near God.” Compare “stuff” (including experiences) to a Person.
    - “We have GOT to stop ***only*** talking about [God’s] goodness when an unexpectedly pleasant thing happens. ***Because*** God’s goodness is not dependent on an outcome or an emotion or a barely-missed-doom story.” God ***is*** good. (Sarah Thebarge, “Huffpost”)
    - Talk about verses 26 and 28. How is God’s presence better than His stuff?

**Re-frame My Desires**

* Read verse 25, “Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.”
  + The subtle difference. Mell told a story with these phrases:
    - “We don’t need all that; all we need is each other.”
    - “Oh well, at least we still have each other.”
    - How are these phrases different? “At least!” Is the difference subtle or substantial? Why?
  + Read through the Psalm again to yourself. How does God show His goodness in this Psalm? Make some notes and share them.
    - God is good not because he causes things that seem or feel ‘good’ to happen in our lives, but because in the midst of the storm, God comes closer to us than the storm could ever be. ***Choice:*** We can choose where we put God or where we see God:
      * “Me/Storm/God” or
      * “Me/God/Storm?” (Spurgeon)
* “Every longing in me is actually a longing for God.” (Tim Chester) What is your “if only”?

**Prayer**

* Asaph calls us to revisit what we know to be true, that God is good and that we need to return to God. Respond to that in prayer.
* Pray about being in God’s presence.